Good-enough mentoring: a model of black pastoral counseling for the black male pastoral counselor working with African American men

Willie Floyd Goodman Jr
Interdenominational Theological Center

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GOOD-ENOUGH MENTORING:
A MODEL OF BLACK PASTORAL COUNSELING FOR THE BLACK MALE
PASTORAL COUNSELOR WORKING WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN

By

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2001
GOOD-ENOUGH MENTORING:  
A MODEL OF BLACK PASTORAL COUNSELING FOR THE BLACK MALE  
PASTORAL COUNSELOR WORKING WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN

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ABSTRACT

GOOD-ENOUGH MENTORING: A MODEL OF PASTORAL COUNSELING FOR THE BLACK PASTORAL COUNSELOR WORKING WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN

by
Willie Floyd Goodman, Jr.
May 12, 2001
247 pages

This dissertation presented Good-Enough Mentoring as a model of Black pastoral counseling for the Black male pastoral counselor working with African-American men suffering from Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). This dissertation utilized the Self Psychology of Heinz Kohut; the Black Liberation Theology of James Cone; the political cultural discussion of nihilism from Cornel West; and the Afro-centric cultural re-education modeling of Na'im Akbar to treat the intrapsychic condition described by the technical term, NPD.

The operating thesis for this dissertation was African-American men could be supported into the achievement of their life goals and dreams via the empathic responsiveness of Good-Enough Mentoring. This type of supportive relationship provided intrapsychically soothing, culturally confrontive, and communally re-educative empathy. The operating assumption of the method was that comprehensive re-education between African-American men was necessary for facilitating African-American male life goal and dream
accomplishment. It was assumed that this type of mentoring is better achieved with a Black male pastoral counselor.

The problem addressed in this dissertation was African-American male internalization of white supremacy. This is an oppressive European American consciousness that affirms its greatness and superiority in contrast to the inferiority and wretchedness of the African and any other ethnic group. This problem corporately manifests as nihilism, depression that stereotypically predisposes African-American male character and demeanor toward certain convulsive behavior and emotional incohesion.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter 1 Introduction and Methodology
This chapter has a two-fold function. First, it provided an overview of the dissertation by identifying the problem, the suggested solution, and definition of basic operating terms. The norm of Good-Enough Mentoring and the goal of transformation in therapeutic relatedness were established. The primary limitation of the project was also described. Second, this chapter presented the constructivist methodology for utilizing psychological, theological, and cultural resources when emphasizing with precision, challenges to African-American male relatedness.

Chapter 2 A Summary of the Self Psychology of Heinz Kohut
This chapter presented the particular emphasis of Kohuts' work upon narcissistic development as psychological support for the model. His psychology was used
to frame the problem and its resolution. The chapter is clear to distinguish Kohut's work as borrowed Eurocentric psychological conceptions useful for understanding the internalization of cultural stereotypes. This internalization formed psychological trauma that manifested as relationship difficulty for many African-American men. Later extrapolation upon Kohut's theoretical constructs to include African psychic experiences of internalized white supremacy helped the treatment of African-American male psychical discord.

Chapter 3 A Summary of the Black Theology of Liberation of James Cone

This chapter presented the Black Liberation Theology of James Cone as theological dimensions for diagnosing, treating, and reflecting upon internalized white supremacy as debilitative intrapsychic self-experience. This work appreciated Cone as the progenitor of Black Liberation Theology; therefore black male experience grounded the norm for theological discussion of the problem. The model's movement in theology helped many African-American men's understanding of their debilitation in the common Western Christian theology vernacular of sin; particularly, modern political and cultural impediments to them because of their skin color. This chapter purported Black male redemption as comprehensive of context, affected by their physical, spiritual, emotional, political, and social self-experiences as persons of African descent.

Chapter 4 Cultural Assessment Cornel West

This chapter presented a cultural-critical discussion of a particular aspect of West's work, nihilism and the cultural response of prophetic collaboration.
Nihilism served as cultural diagnostic descriptors of its corporate effect upon the psychical development of individual African Americans. The element of collaboration informed the model’s resolution of the problem. West provided the cultural critique that helped the fundamental collaboration between the Black male pastoral counselor and the African-American male counselee to resolve the problem described in the dissertation.

**Chapter 5 Cultural Re-education and Mentoring Na’im Akbar**

This chapter introduced the work of Na’im Akbar, particularly the category of Black Psychology referenced as Natural Psychology. This psychology respected the historical and spiritual constructs of African traditions for interpersonal relatedness. Akbar described the internalized tragic African experiences in the Western US-American culture as comprehensive *mis-education*. His work brought into relationship with Kohut’s discussion of narcissism oriented literacy as healthy culturally sensitive conduct.

**Chapter 6 Good-Enough Mentoring: The Model and Pastoral Theological Reflections**

This chapter contained the comprehensives of model presentation and reflection, as well as, case introduction and application. The expectation was a shift that represented new comprehensive intrapsychic and ideological well-being for men of African descent within Western US-American culture.
Pastoral Theological Reflection I

Specifically, this chapter presented the utilization of key concepts borrowed from the indicated resources for developing the model. The terms supported the norm of Good-Enough Mentoring and goal of transformation in therapy. This was intrapsychic health and a shift in cohesive interpersonal relatedness and cultural identity.

Pastoral Theological Reflection II

The chapter presented the representative case of an African-American male counselee suffering from internalized white supremacy. Movement in the case demonstrated the counselee's self-confronting shift to Black, one living in prophetic collaboration with his community. The case demonstrated the use of the model as cultural re-education for the Black male pastoral counselor and the African-American male counselee.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This chapter re-presented the key movements in the dissertation while affirming its limitations. It also speaks to considered expectations, which undergirded the development of the dissertation. Areas of intrapsychic health and relatedness that need further exploration are also presented. Finally, this chapter also asked for a later comparison study of similar nature between women of African descent.
Dedication

To the only wise God, be dominion and power forever. Amen.

That I may live long in the land that the Lord my God has given me,

Honor

To my father, the Rev. Willie F. Goodman, Sr. (d. 1987)
To my mother, Isabella P. Goodman

To my grandparents,
Mr. and Mrs. Floyd and Caldonia Goodman (d)
Mr. Will (d) and Mrs. Gussie Peagler

Much love to my sisters, brothers and extended family.

Much care for the
Members of the Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church and
Christian Education Center Inc., Duluth, Georgia

W. F. G., Jr.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Dr. Edward P. Wimberly, Dr. Calvin W. Kropp, Dr. Edward L. Smith
Dr. Carolyn L. McCrary and Dr. William T. Perkins

To all my brothers....

Special Acknowledgments to

Ms. Jackie T. Goodman-Cook, Ms. Chonita Williams, Ms. Carrie Cooper,
Mrs. Bernice Jackson, The Rev. Kevin Jackson, M.Div., Mr. William C. Tindol,
and The Rev. April C. Wells, M.Div.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The introduction portion of this chapter functions as a guide for the layout of the dissertation. Subsequent short overviews of each chapter delineate transitional movements from problem to solution. The methodology portion of this chapter delineates the dissertation and the measures undertaken in forming the devised model of Good-Enough Mentoring for pastoral counseling.

The more significant challenge for this Black male pastoral counselor was making the transition from pastoral counselor to pastoral theologian. This was the move from giving sole attention to conducting a type of specialized pastoral care toward critical reflection upon the pastoral counseling relationship and its procedures. Further challenge for this Black male pastoral counselor was the specific critical reflection upon his pastoral counseling relationships and the procedures supporting his responsive care for individuals, couples, and/or families experiencing pain. In so doing, he\(^1\) gave attention to the process of the counseling, as well as, the progress reported by the counselees with whom the

\(^1\)This author will use general masculine references throughout this dissertation. Inclusive gender references are used as the material reflects male and female experiences.
demonstrated willingness to resolve their problem(s).\(^2\) Generally, the consequence of the pastoral counseling relationship was healing, disciplined, honest, soothing confrontation done in a fashion that helped the counselee to regain or develop a sense of joy of self in life.

The transition to pastoral theologian challenged the pastoral counselor to critically evaluate the pastoral counseling process, its relationship and procedures with African-American men. The objectives of pastoral theological reflection were the following: 1) to bring to bear on the pastoral counseling process resources in the disciplines of psychology and theology that described and interpreted the human condition; 2) to speak to the action of God in the lives of persons; and 3) to gain an understanding of the transformation process taking place in the pastoral counseling relationship or event.

These reflection objectives were accomplished with this particular group as demonstrated through the use of case material and borrowed resources. The internal dialogue of the cases, resources and this presentation made this dissertation a project in pastoral theology. It was helpful for this pastoral counselor in making his transition to pastoral theologian to think of this dissertation as a series of transitions or movements in pastoral theological

reflection upon his pastoral counseling relationships with African-American men. Each chapter fulfills this pastoral theological reflection objective. This process became an appreciating transformation in the lives of some African-American males in pastoral counseling.

The layout of the dissertation reflects the following: First, attention was given to observations from within the pastoral counseling situations that suggested a common problem among African-American men. Second, a statement of that problem based upon the observed commonalties in the relationships. Third, a statement about possible solutions and definition of significant terms, as well as, a selected literature review that helped to frame the problem and possible solutions. Fourth, selected multidisciplinary resources reviewed with the intentional search for concepts and ideas that help address the problem(s) and provided solutions. Fifth, a model developed outlining the steps of pastoral counseling building on transitions one through four. Finally, a case analysis made utilizing the various transitions.

**The Pastoral Counseling Concern**

This Black male pastoral counselor did most of his practice with African-American men. His relationships with these men engendered its own idiosyncrasies, prompted questions concerning treatment and analyses of their respective cases, and challenged him to process his counter-transference in a
fashion that was facilitative of his work with them. Basically, the concerns of African-American men in this pastoral counselor's practice clustered around their achievement of life goals and dreams.

Life goals are those tasks that make up day-to-day living: e.g., work, timely payment of bills, having a place to live, respect for others, and the maintenance of significant relationships. These and other similar life tasks are completed so that mature men experience themselves capable of caring for self, which is represented as relating in their family, community, and the larger culture. The regular completion of these tasks prepared African-American males to be realistic about their dreams and the self-fulfillment that accompanied family construction and community involvement.

Dreams considered in the context of mentoring relationships are distinct from daydreams. They provide a sense of the future self, which reflects that which one wishes to become. Although a dream may include a particular job or family construct, it transcends those specific achievements to indicate a heroic self-image. This image of the self is capable of motivating the man to the commitment and responsibility needed to achieve his dream. It gives shape and

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substance to the wishes, longings, and phantasies to be a special person in the world of adults. Forming a viable adult life is the ability to dream and develop the ideas and allusions that sustain striving and effort, which ultimately brings achievement to fruition.  

The meta-concern of many African-American men has been their respective exploration of those internal blocks that hinder formation of a viable adult life. They also speak of external blockage to achievements that promote realistic self-esteem. Although it is not commonly articulated, the general desire was for continual experiences of feeling good about self and supported by a healthy dream-life. The counselees in this counselor’s practice discussed the wish for mentoring that would help them have positive self-experiences; the achievement of their life goals, as well as, dreams.

There are hindrances to African-American males’ achievement of their life goals and dreams. These hindrances promote his failure and are intrapsychic, interpersonal, and cultural in nature; thereby, making them internal and external blockages for him. For the discussion in this dissertation, these factors are categorized and addressed as his internalization of white supremacy. This is a European-American consciousness that is based on its affirmation of its greatness and superiority in contrast to the inferiority and wretchedness of the

4bid.
African and any other ethnic group.\textsuperscript{5} Consequentially, Europeans Americans are deemed able to fulfill their dreams and achieve their life goals. Furthermore, white supremacy is understood as the cultural norm for white oppression. It is a pervasive ethic in every attribute of U.S.-American culture.

Transition Two

Statement of the Problem

The significant problem representing this pastoral counselor's practice in this dissertation is that many African-American men suffered from their internalization of white supremacy. This black male pastoral counselor observed intertwining psychic and cultural helices of white oppression as producers of stereotypes which culturally predisposed many of the African-American men in his practice to failure in their achievement of life goals and dreams. The African-American males in this practice seemed to represent a larger population of men who have internal conflict with these cultural stereotypes that generally framed a negative U.S.-American cultural consensus of them. The internalization of white supremacy and conflict with these stereotypes generally manifested as either feelings of anger or vague feelings of depression. Subsequently, African-

\textsuperscript{5}Na'im Akbar, PhD. \textit{Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery} (Tallahassee: Mind Production and Associates, 1996), 33.
American men moved back and forth between the poles of their feelings in every interpersonal and cultural relationship.

Given the previous description of the problem, this pastoral diagnostician determined that many African-American men suffer from a problem in the self. Generally, there can be certain destructive tendencies such as addictions, homelessness, chronic unemployment, and sexual promiscuity that represent dysfunction in the self. Often, in African-American men, this dysfunction seemed promoted by the narcissistic rage generated by self-destroying empathy failure experiences in the family, community, and the larger society. In restatement, it is suggested by this pastoral counselor's practice that empathy failure experiences are influenced by white supremacy. The internalization of this influence manifested extremely destructive relational energy, which weakened the self of African-American males. However, two impressions are suggested by the pastoral counseling relationship. First, empathy failure in family, community, and the larger culture are influenced by white oppression. Second, the specific type of pastoral counseling relationship, inclusive of mentoring, as impact upon healthful African American male responsiveness to described empathy failures.

Failure in the positive receipt of empathy from significant persons during the early development suggested the differential diagnosis of Narcissistic
Personality Disorder (NPD) for selected African-American males. NPD is a diagnostic term that refers to a self suffering due to disruptive narcissistic development. Simply, it is a self in search of another self to idealize. This search is inclusive of the need to be reflected by and/or aligned with another self. Because of the frustration of the self in its failure to receive this type of interpersonal training in relationship with a significant other for accomplishing this task, the narcissist is exploitative in his interpersonal relations.

Personalities framed by disorders in narcissistic development require attentiveness in pastoral counseling to the significant use of the pastoral counselor's self to maintain cohesion in the self of the counselee. Furthermore, African-American men diagnosed as suffering a narcissistic personality disorder suffer this type of incohesion in the self. When maintained under the conditions of white oppression and internalized white supremacy, they are generally ambivalent in their feelings. This usually indicated managed narcissistic rage, interpersonally exploitative in practice and these men were culturally novice in achievement. Their self-experience was one of heightened anxiety with a

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dominating sense of shame and accompanying feelings representing continuous self-devaluation.

The pastoral counseling relationship with African-American men who suffered from narcissistic personality disorders generated pastoral theological reflection that lead to notable transformation in African-American male narcissistic self-experience. As such, the reflection included a methodology for training narcissistic men to cope with empathy failures while more effectively using their rage. The comprehensive nature of the problem included pastoral theological reflection upon the impact of family, community, and society as social and cultural contributors to African-American men possessing a weak and/or incohesive sense of self. Personalities formed under this multi-layered system seemed to predispose African-American men to fail in the achievement of their life goals and dreams.

Weakened black cultural infrastructures in black communities further exacerbated failure in achievement of life goals and dreams for African-American men. A limited number of cultural icons suggest black achievement. However, there seems to be significantly more persons in black communities that represented failure than achievement. Also, observations from this pastoral counselor’s practice seemed to indicate that much of the African-American male counselee’s convulsiveness reported and experienced in pastoral counseling can
be attributed to African-American male search for sources of encouragement toward achievement. Albeit negative, they looked for cultural sources that countered the dominant culture's intentional support of narcissistic convulsiveness often expressed in violence against self, and other significant interpersonal and communal relations.

**Transition Three**

**Possible Solutions to the Problem**

In accordance to the types of questions asked and concerns spoken to by African-American men at the onset of their therapy, they needed a therapeutic response that addressed their concerns for achievement. Questions that represented achievement of life goals and dreams dealt with intrapsychic well-being, the impact of parental relationships, the health of their relationship with family, peers, employment opportunities, and the management of conflicts and appropriate responses in all of these areas. This list continued with questions that indicated African-American male need for particular type of relatedness in pastoral counseling. The relationship needed to have the capability of helping them process their empathy failures, as well as, provide guidance in the resolution of problems that affected their day-to-day living.

Suggested by this Black male pastoral counselor's practice, problem statement, the proposed solution to the problem, these African-American men
needed the type of mentoring made possible by a pastoral counseling relationship framed for their empathic support. This mentoring relationship in pastoral counseling would help African-American men to critically assess their life goals and dreams. This assessment need be undertaken in relationship with a mentor, who through the work of the relationship demonstrates his best interest toward them as mentee(s).

This type of work in this Black male pastoral counselor’s practice began with the hypothesis that suggested the need for a mentoring relationship. A thesis was developed through the continuing progress of differing pastoral counseling relationships. The thesis was that African-American men could be supported in the achievement of their life goals and dreams in the context of the pastoral counseling via the provision of a specific type of mentoring relationship designated as Good-Enough Mentoring. The relationship is designed to do the following: 1) enabled African-American men to heal via a process of intrapsychic exploration; 2) confronted their internalization of white supremacy via knowledge of self with respect to Black cultural awareness; and 3) experienced empathy with the Black male pastoral counselor through their appropriation of the relationship with the pastoral counselor. By participating in this type of pastoral counseling relationship, Good-Enough Mentoring, African-American men were
expected to experience the amelioration of their depression, which facilitated their respective achievement of life goals and dreams.

In order to fulfill this thesis, resources were needed that intentionally explicated comprehensive Black experience in this U.S.-American culture. This was intentional research for sources that referenced the Black experience in general and African-American male self-experience in particular. These references aided this pastoral counselor-theologian in his diagnosis, interpretation, and formulation of a pastoral theological analysis of the pastoral counseling relationship and method of treatment. The objective was to represent transformation in the self of the African-American male counselee. The suggestion of the thesis was that transformation in African-American male counselees was accomplishable through having a good-enough mentoring relationship with a Black male pastoral counselor.

**Transition Four**

**Borrowing Transition**

This transition was the move in pastoral theological method that represented the establishment of the norm for the dissertation and the model. The norm sets the criteria for resource selection and use. The norm is *good-enough* mentoring. It was also the prescribed positive empathic responsive work of the relationship and was conceptually cued from D.W. Winnicott, pediatrician
and object relations theorist.\(^8\) Winnicott used the metaphor, *good-enough* to describe maternal functioning as providing sufficiently for the child to get a good start in life. Sufficient provision was the mother's response to the spontaneous gestures of her child. This type of response promoted healthy narcissism. The emotional environment created by the good-enough mother was a facilitating environment that promoted cohesion in the self. The selection and use of concepts from other disciplines was determined based upon their critical exploration and support of this norm. All borrowed concepts from each of the supporting disciplines helped this Black pastoral theologian to diagnose, interpret, and treat the needs of African-American men.

As a general overview, these African-American men were concerned with self-cohesion that is related to the need for *good-enough mentoring*. This type of mentoring experience necessitated the provision of transforming relatedness. That is, the comprehensive provision of an empathically supportive and intrapsychically confrontive relationship that heals narcissistic injuries.

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\(^8\)Winnicott speaks of the good-enough mother as sufficiently providing for the child's needs, at particular developmental periods in the relationship with the mother. The mother changes and adapts according to the changing needs of her child, and gradually a decreasing the growing child's dependence. The child's maturation will often correspond with the mother's resumption of her own independence. Michael St. Clair, *Object Relations and Self Psychology: An Introduction*, (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1986), 70.
Good-Enough Mentoring is a pastoral therapeutic response designed to help African-American men heal the fragmentation resultant from systemic exacerbation of narcissistic injuries. This researcher found that many African-American men in his practice experienced negative cultural empathy. This is generalized non-receptivity of U.S.-American culture to their mentoring needs or empathy demands. Therefore, U.S.-American cultural experiences are included in this exacerbation.

**Transition Five**

**Pastoral Theological Methodology**

This transition provided a model that illustrated intervention in the lives of African-American men. The model described the practical meaning of good-enough mentoring. The model also drew upon different disciplinary resources as it described intervention and the provision of good-enough mentoring. Methodology is then demonstrated via the means by which transformation in the counselee and counselor is achieved.

**Goal of Therapy**

The goal for this type of pastoral counseling was self-transformation in the African-American male counselee. This transformation was represented in his improved or increased ability to articulate and negotiate his concerns to get his needs met. Also, it is a specific change in the African-American male
counselee's value system. He practiced his transformation in relationship with the Black male pastoral counselor. The instructional nature of the relationship allowed him to learn healthy conduct of self with significant family and communal relations. By doing so, he developed the emotional stability for addressing systems of family and communal values as truthful or distorted guides to his current self-understanding. Comparatively, he learned better management of his narcissistic demands for empathy.

Definition of Terms

African-American: This term refers to male counselees and the cultural condition of continued oppression of persons of African descent that is resultant assimilation into oppressive U.S.-American culture. African-American is a term of assimilation and for this dissertation is not interchangeable with Black.

Afro-centrism: The encouragement of African-American men to be aware of ethnic resources that demonstrate Black competence in living. This is more than Black race pride, which, in essence, is reverse racial discrimination. It is a stance of commitment to articulate feelings, experiences, and criticism from the perspective of comprehensive ethnicity as related to the African in Western US-American culture.

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**Black:** This term refers to the pastoral counselor and the stance he assumes in the process of the pastoral counseling relationship. He operates within an increasing individual and corporate ethical commitment to the liberation of African-American men from White oppression. This symbol entails recognition that racial pride in any form is destructive to the self.

**Constructive research process:** The particular research style undertaken in this dissertation that intentionally ferrets through available resources for insights specific to African-American men. European-American resources are used as both instructional and supportive to African-American resources, as they are not often considered critical enough on their merit. For example, Kohut is specifically used in this dissertation because, at this time, an African-American psychologist was not found to have done the comprehensive intrapsychic research relative to narcissism. There are African-American psychologists doing work with descriptive cultural diagnoses closely related to narcissistic personality complexes. These are included in this research.

**Good-Enough Mentoring:** It is the norm for both Black pastoral counseling with African-American men and pastoral theological reflection framing the model for cultural re-education in this Black male pastoral counselor's practice. It encourages psychological introspection from the ethical perspectives of black cultural awareness and liberation theology. It's meaning is relational and
includes counselor qualities of empathy, genuineness, respect, and approachability.

**Men or Male:** This is the general reference to the gender grouping that is other than women or female that is the focus of the therapeutic response in this dissertation. This designation refers to persons that were the primary participants in this model of pastoral counseling. They are persons of African descent within the US-American culture seeking help with a problem that is peculiarly connected with their genitalia, respective lives and social-political condition. This reference also points to those participants in the pastoral counseling relationship with a certain common cultural history that is peculiar to men of African descent.

**Mentoring relationships:** The relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is built upon the strength and belief in the dreams of the mentee. By such belief, the mentor helps the mentee to believe the dream is accomplishable. The ideal mentor relationship involves a mentor that is about a half-generation older than the mentee; serving as a sponsor, guide, teacher, advisor, or confidant, and at times, functioning simultaneously in all of these roles. The mentor is the transitional figure that helps the mentee create a space in which imagination is tested. In reality, this is a future self to be realized.
**Model:** This is a conceptual presentation of intervention in the lives of African-American men via a method of Black pastoral counseling for intrapsychic health and cultural re-education.

**Pastoral Counseling:** A specialized type of pastoral care that is undertaken for the health of persons while simultaneously helping to establish a communal sense of relatedness for the African-American male counselee. For this dissertation, this specifically refers to Black pastoral counseling. This type of pastoral counseling has the methodological thrust of specifically attending to the intrapsychic effects of White supremacy upon African-American men.

**Chapter Descriptions**

Chapter 1, "Introduction and Methodology" is an overview of the dissertation and the process of its development. Cursory descriptions of resources, model formation and definitions of significant terms are provided as guides in exploring and confirming the thesis. Steps in determining possible solutions in response to psychological, theological, and cultural concerns of African-American men are described in the practice of this Black male pastoral counselor. This chapter explained the norm and presented the intent of developing a model in response to presented concerns that closely approximated the intrapsychic conditions and experiences of specific pastoral therapeutic relationships with African-American men.
Chapter 2, "A Summary: The Self Psychology of Heinz Kohut" presented an overview of self psychology with a particular emphasis upon the work of Heinz Kohut. As the father of Self Psychology, his work was compared to Freudian psychoanalysis in this chapter. Also, his work was contrasted to that of object relations theorist, Margaret Mahler. This comparison and contrast was undertaken in this chapter because both Kohut and Mahler are considered extremely effective upon the various fields of psychology developed in the US-American culture. Additionally, each concentrated on the formation of the self in their respective works, but from different perspectives. Mahler did her exploration from the perspective of infant interactions with parents while Kohut explored the perspective of adult recalled experiences.

Although he is not African-American, Kohut was used because his personality descriptions and theoretical response to narcissism closely approximated this Black male pastoral counselor's experience with African-American men in practice. Adjustments were made to his theory to compensate for needed Black experience descriptions. However, his theory offered the added insight of the impact of culture upon the formation of the personality. This segment in his theory is a little explored venue in self psychology that aided this pastoral counselor's.assessment of the historical impact of the comprehensive
Black experience on the self of the African-American men in the selected cases of this dissertation.

Chapter 3, "A Summary: The Black Theology of Liberation of James Cone" represented the selected discipline of black liberation theological support for the analysis of the problem and cases of African-American men in this pastoral counselor's practice. This chapter presented an overview of the work of James Cones, the father of Black Theology of Liberation, and the progenitor of many facets of liberation theologies around the world. This overview included criticism and support of Black Theology, as well as, Cone's critique of his work.

Black Theology of Liberation was selected because it normatively speaks to the collective effect of white oppression upon African-Americans. It established the oppression experiences of Black people as a moral point of departure for discussing the doctrines of the Church. More importantly, it established the liberation of Black people as the theological norm for God-talk and God-relatedness. Simultaneously, Black Theology of Liberation challenged traditional white Christian theology and church to engage in the liberation of Black people and others that are continually oppressed by its support of totalitarian capitalist agendas that continue to enslave the poor. Furthermore, Black Theology addressed corporate failure of Black people and church to achieve comprehensive Black liberation. Black theology consequentially
challenged the pastoral ministries of the Black church to translate the impact of Black pursuit of liberation into the lives of individual African-Americans.

Chapter 4, "Cultural Assessment: Cornel West" presented discussion of selected subjects, racism and nihilism in the work of Cornel West. This chapter considered these themes as descriptions of significant contributors to the collective depression of African-Americans in the United States of America. This corporate depression is considered undercurrent to the normative self-experience of every African-American male and is rudimentary to his achievement failures.

This type of political cultural assessment was added to the selected disciplines of self psychology and Black theology because it described the cultural milieu of nihilism in which African-American men form and maintain interpersonal relations. This cultural milieu possesses certain factors that represent cultural pre-dispositions of African-American men toward failure. Furthermore, this type of cultural political philosophical criticism addressed the corporate depression of African Americans and its impact on relationships, politics, and economic empowerment. The critique aided this pastoral counselor in assessing the impact of race and the internalization of white supremacy upon the corporate self of African-American men.
Chapter 5, "Cultural Re-education and Mentoring: Na'im Akbar", was used because his work specifically addressed black ethno-psychological and cultural needs of African-American men in a creative fashion. His work delineated specific African-centered spirituality, as well as, interpersonal and communal development as counter to internalized white supremacy. These descriptions guided this researcher’s model development as counter to the affects internalized white supremacy upon the self and life of African-American men in his practice. Akbar’s work offered a critique of Black Liberation Theology and framed a pragmatic political guide that has the ability to help African-American men by bringing together differing groups of Black people.

The critical insight of African and Black history traditions that undergird Akbar’s work was sought to comprehensively address the assurance of African American psychosocial competence. This resource was needed because of the absence of attention to black experiential psychosocial and relevant cultural competence in Kohut. This researcher also deemed Akbar’s direction in Black psychology as intra-psychically and culturally supportive of African-American men working to achieve their life goals and dreams. This chapter contained the specific discussion of Akbar’s descriptions of the psychosocial and cultural re-educative needs of African-American men. These are later applied in developing the model of Good-Enough Mentoring.
Chapter 6 presents "The Model: Good-Enough Mentoring" and "Pastoral Theological Reflections I and II." These are applications of specified borrowed terms and concepts from the resources of self psychology, Black theology, cultural criticism and re-education modeling for African Americans. Positive consequential use of terms and concepts are demonstrated via the representative case of Walker. This case demonstrated support of the pastoral theological norm of Good-Enough Mentoring for this project.

Chapter 7, "The Conclusion" presented the expectations and summations of this Black male pastoral counselor by revisiting the thesis. A review of the included material, as well as, inferences for future development of the described ongoing Black pastoral counseling project is provided.

**Literature Review**

The above resources have been selected because the writer felt they were the best available resources that most closely approximated the pastoral counseling experiences of this Black male pastoral counselor. These resources formed the fundamental bases to begin theological reflection. The importance of this research for the field of pastoral theology was the inclusion of cultural and political dimensions along with the psychological and interpersonal dimensions when discussing intrapsychic and theological well-being. These and similar resources aided this Black male pastoral counselor-theologian's diagnosis and
reflection. Narcissistic personality disorders in African-American men are intrapsychic responses to their internalization of white supremacy. This internalization leads to a dysfunction of self.

The following is a selected literature review. Specific research in resolving the stated problem was the need for mentor relationship. This venture is not new in addressing the psychosocial needs of African-American men. Nancy Boyd-Franklin and Anderson J. Franklin, *Boys Into Men: Raising Our African American Teenage Sons*\(^\text{10}\) offered critical admonitions to families and communities for becoming vibrant resources for channeling teenage male angst in the US-American social context of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. The Franklin’s make genuine in-roads in addressing the problem from their respected psychological perspectives. The comprehensive nature of the problem indicated an amalgamate impact upon the African-American male, his family, his community, and the state of his being.

Resources in Black psychology like Na’im Akbar addressed a form of mentoring. The numbers of resources are increasing, but not fast enough.

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Joseph Tilden Rhea, Charles W. Mills, William H. Grier and Price M. Cobb addressed racial feelings and issues of African-American men that support their need for mentoring. Contiguous mentoring resources like Shelby Thomas Wyatt for Black boys and men supported the notion that emotions and personal self-esteem considerations are necessary for strengthening associated internal structures.

Beyond African-American men, Donald Capps in The Depleted Self: Sin In A Narcissistic Age described what appeared to be the more dominant personality type emerging for the last three to four decades. It is the narcissist, a type of individual—or self—for whom the past psychosocial and cultural distinctions between guilt and guilt feelings, real and neurotic guilt, have no longer

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As described by Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, this new self, as the dominant personality of our times, experienced anxiety rather than guilt.\(^{17}\)

Erik H. Erikson was helpful in further understanding development of the narcissistic personality. Shame aside from guilt is the axial center of the personality for the narcissist. "This is an infantile emotion [that] supposes one is completely exposed and conscious of being looked at—in a word, self-conscious. One is visible and not ready to be visible..."\(^{18}\)

Gershen Kaufman, *Shame Psychology: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes* was helpful in understanding the construction of the shame-based personality. He referred to scenes that occurred in family and communal relations as building blocks of the personality. Such scenes are internally recorded experiences of intrapsychic tests during normal development when


establishing autonomy. Kaufman indicated that failure in support of autonomy from significant others produced the shame-based personality.¹⁹

These sample references represented the literature reviewed in support of this Black male pastoral counselor's understanding of shame, the benefit of mentoring, and structuring of the self. The particular benefit has been the narrowing consideration of the specific type of fragmentation in the self of African-American men in pastoral therapeutic relations. The men of this practice exhibited a specific type of narcissistic personality disorder, *paternal empathic mentoring deficiency*. The developed definition of this type of fragmentation of self is related to the degree of failed healthful paternal mentoring received by the son. Failure in the degree of internalized energy from the paternal mentoring relationship negatively impacted the son's narcissistic development. There was insufficient balance for over-closeness to the maternal self-object. It can be determined that an African-American man's inability to facilitate healthy intrapsychic structuring is attributable to the internalization of a paternal relationship that does not equip him with the internal structural support necessary for healthful self-cohesion.

A later discussion of cohesive internal structuring in terms of Self Psychology, Black Theology, and cultural criticism formed the bases of the model for Good-Enough Mentoring and its application presented in this dissertation. This model supported traditional indices of sound emotional and physical health. They are the ability to love and work. For African-American men suffering under this disorder, the quality and degree of experienced oppression weakened his ability to interpersonally represent these indices. These qualifiers for comprehensive manhood affected his ability to support self and devise family, communal, and cultural interpersonal relations.

Limitations of the Project

The project was limited to a selected group of African-American men who were diagnosed as having Narcissistic Personality Disorder. In no way should the results of this research be generalized to all African-American men. This research included qualitative focus upon a few cases with the intent to describe pastoral counseling with this limited group of African-American men.

While limited, this research is also delimited. It included several dimensions. Its multi-disciplinary use of resources from psychology, theology, and culture for developing this model is both a strength and weakness. The research was based on the work of this Black male pastoral counselor. There is need for research with similar or different postulations on comprehensive African-
American male health. There were basic assumptions that undergirded the constructive methodology of this project. The pastoral counselor had the opportunity to choose resources within the limiting research categories that best responded to the needs of the counselee. However, the selected resources were expected to justify the type of facilitated mentoring environment developed with this method of pastoral counseling. This method promoted an intentional use of the best descriptive resources that supported a particular type of pastoral therapeutic relationship with African-American men. This relationship was expected to help them learn the best emotional management of self-oppressing experiences in family and community.

**Conclusion**

This introduction provided an overview of the dissertation by identifying the problem, the suggested solution, and the definition of significant terms for introducing the dissertation. The norm and the goal of therapy for the dissertation have been established, as well as, the limitations of the project. The work of actualizing the dissertation began with a discussion of methodology followed by a representation of included disciplines and primary resources. These were psychology and the Self Psychology of Heinz Kohut; theology and the Black Liberation Theology of James Cone; cultural criticism and the Cultural Conceptualization of Cornel West; Black cultural awareness and the Cultural Re-
Methodology

This dissertation is a Black pastoral theological project with seven chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. It employs a type of ethno-pastoral cultural analysis that supported building a conceptual model of Black pastoral counseling and Black pastoral theological reflection upon included cases. Selected resources within the tradition of Black presence in Western culture are employed as a means for exploring the thesis and drawing conclusions about the work of this Black male pastoral counselor with African-American men.

Pastoral theological reflection upon internalized white supremacy as affecting African-American male achievement of life goals and dreams within this dissertation are based upon insights from this Black male pastoral counselor’s practice with African-American men. Analyses from the disciplines of psychology, theology and a political philosophical cultural critique of racism supported the assessment of significant transformation in African-American male counselees. Such transformation was deemed the result of their experience of good-enough mentoring in the context of the Black pastoral counseling relationship. Significant portion of the discussion in this dissertation attended to
the effects of internalized white supremacy upon the intrapsychic development of African-American men. White supremacy was interpreted as a racial ethic, which undergird personal and cultural attitude, perception, and performance of African-American men. This interpretation referenced a European American consciousness that is based on its affirmation of its greatness and superiority in contrast to the inferiority and wretchedness of the African and any other ethnic group.

Common cultural stereotyping of African-American men under this type of cultural mindset continually built in African Americans a sense of their inferiority which, in-turn, promoted their non-achievement of life goals and dreams. Nihilism, the collective depression of African Americans is considered the corporate manifestation of internalized white supremacy. Nihilism is often noticeably displayed in the lives of African-American men as convulsive violence toward self, family, community, and the larger culture. These expressions of violence are the externalization of internalized oppression.

When African-American men are provided with Good-Enough Mentoring in the context of the pastoral counseling relationship they can both confront their internalization of white supremacy and achieve their life goals and dreams. This thesis has been oriented in the expectation that good-enough mentoring, a perspective in Black pastoral counseling, can address the self and cultural
oppression of racism. The model addresses internalized white supremacy via pedagogy of re-educating the self to more healthfully respond to fail empathy experiences. The instructional aspect of the model is conceptually a type of ethno-pastoral analysis, which relies upon resources that facilitate a type of educative therapy. Furthermore, this Black male pastoral counselor’s commitment to the liberation of African-American men coming for pastoral counseling responded to the specific effect of nihilism and the counselee’s lament concerning an inability to achieve their life goals and dreams.

For this type of analysis and model building, casework was the best starting point for doing Black cultural criticism and pastoral theological reflection. The cases represented the indigenous African-American male experience and the struggle to be free from the oppression of internalized failed empathy experiences with family and community. These failed experiences are the effects of internalized white supremacy in every familial, communal and cultural relationship.

Good-Enough Mentoring addresses interpersonal and communal ills, as well as, their effects upon African-American men from the perspective of Black Liberation Theology, Self Psychology, Black philosophical cultural criticism, and Cultural re-education. Good-Enough Mentoring supports this re-education method in Black pastoral counseling by addressing the empathy needs of
African-American men. The gratification of these needs from family, community, and culture encourages African-American men toward the achievement of their life goals and dreams. Failure in this regard results in normative narcissistic personality disorders that are the self-experiences of continual depression and devaluation.

In *Models of Black Theology: Issues in Class Culture and Gender*, Julian Kunnie demonstrated the Black theologian's address of racial issues. In summary, the theologian must develop indigenous methodologies of social and historical analysis. By indigenous methodology, he indicated "...that primary dependence is upon native black resources and ingredients that are drawn from and particularly relevant to black history and experience, with a secondary reliance upon nonblack sources." As such, Good-Enough Mentoring and its method of cultural re-education is a model in Black Theology. It addresses racism and its effect upon the psychological and cultural development of African-American males. Good-Enough Mentoring assumes traditional dominant culture psychological and theological reflection resources are insufficient for addressing African-American male cultural, theological, and psychological concerns. These resources provide functional explanations for the impact of internalized dominant culture values that are inherent in white supremacy. Additionally, these values
result in the psychosocial, theological, and cultural ills of many African-American men coming for therapy with this Black male pastoral counselor.

**Norms Sources for Black Pastoral Theological Reflection**

The basic assumption for doing Black pastoral theological reflection in this dissertation was that religious or spiritual experience is fundamental to Black people. Furthermore, this experience is generated through some form or relationship, but is not necessarily dependent upon the organized expression of group gatherings in churches or mosques. Sources in black theology orient and establish the norms in this dissertation for the purpose of this discussion.

The first norm was that theological reflection begins with the indigenous experience of the people doing the reflecting. With this in mind, this Black male pastoral theologian turned to his pastoral counseling relationships with African-American men. He particularly considered their experiences as primary sources in establishing norms for Black pastoral theological reflection. In short, it was the indigenous experiences of African-American men and the generalized experience of African Americans in pastoral counseling with him that was the starting point for pastoral theological reflection.

The second norm was the theological consideration of what God has to do with African-American men and God's work among them as particularly indicated

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21 Julian Kunnie, *Models of Black Theology: Issues in Class, Culture and*
in Judeo Christian traditions regarding the man, Jesus of Nazareth. The third norm was emphasis upon Afro-centrism, which will be utilized to further explicate African-American male concerns in a move toward a liberative ethic of love and its radical demonstration toward comprehensive communal relations and achievement of goals.

A critical concern was the constructive process of this dissertation as the engagement of resources: Particularly, the language in psychology, theology and culture that speaks respectfully to and descriptively of the collective African experience of African Americans. Collective African experience refers to the conditions of the Africans brought to this country as its stabilizing economic commodity. This occurred over a 300+ year period of slavery. Included in this collection are the experiences of their children and descendants in continuation of this economic legacy.

One enters this type of discussion to determine the current relevance for researching the psychological, theological, and cultural health of African Americans. The challenge for this pastoral counselor-theologian was to find sources that speak to the particular collective experiences of African-American men without experiencing impairment by the resource or the need to apologize for doing the research. Limiting the resource base relative to healthy minds and

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spirituality was that most of the wellness studies of African-American men have centered upon addiction and homelessness recovery.

Other mentoring studies that limited the resource base with youth and adult males have been completed with youth at risk. These are distinguished from the research in this dissertation because those research projects promote a Western culturally sensitive-racial utilitarian beneficial use of the body in African-American men. This is not the type of comprehensive health and men’s awareness promoted in this dissertation. The primary resources of the dissertation support the corrective, healthful intrapsychic support of self in management of the physicality. They are the ethno-psychology of Afro-centric psychologist Na’im Akbar, the theology of liberation of James Cone, and the cultural criticism of Cornel West. However, the psychology of the self of Heinz Kohut is used in this dissertation as a respectfully descriptive resource for discussing the psychological conditions of African-American men. His psychology of the self particularizes self-formation as the result of injuries to the self. Self-cohesion is the result of non-traumatic injury and the internalization of positive empathy responses.

Every social encounter has an accompanying degree of trauma or injury it inflicts, which, in-turn, contributes to the health and/or dysfunction of the self. Within that frame, what was often observed in African-American male self-
presentation represented varying degrees of traumatic injuries to the self. This trauma began with core relatedness in the family and broadened to include the concentric relatedness of society and culture. All, of which, contributed to the health and dysfunction of the self. This conclusion seemed significant for future studies in the comprehensive African-American male health. This pastoral theological reflection upon African American consciousness is a part of a larger stream of research and conversation surrounding African American psychosocial and psychosexual well-being.²¹

David Tracey's Method of Correlation

The constructive process for evaluating the cases presented in this dissertation represented typical African-American male concerns for themselves and their significant relations. These cases were core to their particular constructive use within the method of critical correlation for this dissertation. David Tracy developed the critical correlation method in distinction to Paul Tillich's method of correlation. Tillich's basic pastoral theological supposition is that all problem-resolutions are found in Scripture and resources such as common human experience and language. Tracy's development indicated that

additional psychology; history, cultural examinations, etc. are used in tandem with Scripture and theology. All of these resources are utilized as tools of reflection for meaning-making in common human experience.

Development of a constructive critical correlation methodology assumed the following two-fold benefit based upon critical correlation referencing of the cases: 1) The method is to present what has been done in the therapeutic process of good-enough mentoring with the expectation that the languages of psychology, theology, and culture can effectively describe the phenomenology of the therapy while explaining transformation in the client in terms specific to used resources. 2) The method makes comparative considerations in psychological, theological, and cultural self-cohesiveness while individually exploring new horizons in the self-maturation of every African-American man coming for therapy with a Black male pastoral counselor. Exploration of new horizons within the hermeneutical frame of a type of constructivist methodology had the goal of helping each African-American man in therapy to establish means for achieving his dreams and life goals. This was accomplished via facilitated articulation of his problem in a way that promoted his self-healing. He came to terms with varying failed empathy experiences in significant relationships.

presentation and comprehensive in its discussion of the psychological, theological and cultural concerns of African-Americans. The ways in which African-American men have come to understand themselves in Western US-American culture. These ways inform their problem-resolution strategies. There are various consciousnesses that have been shaped by slavery, as well as, pre- and post-slavery experience. All of which support established cultural values and meaning when interpreting Black male life. Each must be brought with precision into conversation with the other as health is ascertained. Therefore, any discussion of the conditions of African-American men is applied psychology, theology, and cultural criticism.21

The hermeneutical underpinning of this type of case-driven constructive reflection assumed the fundamental benefit of correctional reflection. However, idiosyncratic Black male life experiences precipitated this Black male pastoral counselor's understanding and interpretation of narcissistic injuries as demands for empathy in therapy. The methodology allowed the pastoral counselor to bring into conversation the different disciplines of psychology, theology and culture, and their respective resources that theologically and culturally emphasize the precision of African American relatedness. The cases used in this dissertation

The research of this dissertation was frontline work with African-American men. It began with presented problem areas (e.g., addictions, interpersonal relationship violence, and job maintenance). Age-appropriate transitions in these areas were frustrated by the counselee's failed attempts at achieving their life goals and dreams. The conditions and frustrations of these men seem representative of the conditions of African-American men in the larger culture. The metaphor of *good-enough mentoring* was raised in response to these frontline pastoral therapeutic encounters. In the session talk, some of these African-American men asked for pedagogical supports that facilitated their achievement of life goals and dreams.

This Black male pastoral theologian discovered several layers of accountability when assuming a therapeutic stance outside of the general purview of pastoral counseling. The scholarly challenge of constructing a method is to test of the method in the field and evaluate the derived benefit. This perspective of Black pastoral counseling is urging the field to take advantage of its often-unnamed accountability for transmitting values. This critique recognized the field's active preservation of cultural values via its specific use of the medical paradigm of diagnosis. Interpersonally distressed persons are helped through therapy to adjust to commonly acceptable emotional dispositions as a means of maintaining a particular social order. In essence, the function of pastoral psychotherapy is to help persons resolve their *conflict* with the internalized cultural images. These internalized cultural images are a part of the self-
concept. Within this frame, this Black male pastoral counselor considered successful cultural empathy to be as powerful in preserving self-cohesion as successful parental empathy in forming and maintaining the self. Successful cultural empathy is the experience of African-American men discovering institutions and persons that support their achievement of life goals and dreams. It is a sense of being in-tune with the culture and the culture reciprocates.

This Black male pastoral theologian is interested in promoting genuine conversation out of a larger communal relatedness that represents or lays the groundwork for positive empathic responsiveness from varying ethno-centric perspectives. How the relatedness was framed is a socio-cultural work in progress. He was encouraged to do the work, and make it scholarly and simultaneously practical for immediate discussion, digestion and use. Scholarship requires setting African-American male experience in distinction to other critical voices within the larger culture. This includes exhibiting African-American male experience as a starting point for doing theology, while distinguishing his experience from European and European American patriarchy and patriarchal attunement.

This is not an unfamiliar challenge in the scholarship. Jacquelyn Grant critiques James Cone for sexism in his Black Theology of Liberation because he does similarly in theology. Fundamentally, Cone's work does not attend to
women's concern by assuming a masculine norm in his theology. The distinction of liberation theology applied in Good-Enough Mentoring was the precise awareness of there not being normative African-American male and female experience. African-American male experience was brought into serious dialogue with feminist, Womanist, African, and Asian criticism, as well as, the horizontal considerations of heterosexism, economics, and ecology via pastoral theological reflection. Inclusion of these areas in the conversation as affecting African American male self awareness and cohesion are the major posts of a model of Good-Enough Mentoring, a method of pastoral counseling for the Black male pastoral counselor working with African-American men.

Pastoral theological reflections oriented in case study fully exposed the need for the hermeneutic of Good-Enough Mentoring as appreciating narcissistic demands for empathy and its benefit. Good-Enough Mentoring, as a comprehensive metaphor representing the constructive nature of this project and the method of pastoral counseling, critically affirmed the benefits of masculine relatedness, which is consistent with Womanist and feminist criticism of patriarchy. Good-Enough Mentoring within the pastoral counseling relationship also facilitated appropriate and non-hierarchical use of power in all African-

American male relationships. This type of mentoring helped to build a different normative framework for developing African-American men.

A View of Transformation

The need to address the collective consciousness of African-American male concerns was made apparent by the resolutions gained from the practice of this Black male pastoral counselor. Address of the consciousness and report of the resolutions in this dissertation assumed the presence of a corporate condition of nihilism in the African-American men of this practice. This condition was instructive for determining needed empathic responsiveness and recognizing similar concerns of each African-American male counselee. The expected outcome of the research was the development of a method that is applicable whether or not African-American men are in this Black male pastoral counselor’s practice.

The objective of comprehensive transformation was the experience of individual self-cohesions and cooperative expression of this change in tandem with the larger corporate cultural experiences of African-American men. The phenomenological task of the pastoral counseling relationship challenged and supported these men finding systems that helped them maintain the resulting change of the pastoral therapeutic relationship. The expectation was the emphatic accomplishment of their goals and moving toward achievement of dreams.
As earlier stated, the need for competent scholarship assumed accountability for framing criticism of the larger culture as a significant contributor to the self-experience of disenfranchisement for many African-American men. From the inception of this project, this pastoral counselor worked to format a presentation of his work that clearly described the *experience-problem-resolution triad* in the lives of many African-American men. Transformation was presented as movements in pastoral theological reflections. Therefore, the project required a type of ethno-pastoral cultural analysis. The pastoral theological concern was transformation and the mutual experience of it between the Black male pastoral counselor and counselee.

There were two non-negotiable concerns that represented transformation in the African-American male self when using this constructive critical correlation method of pastoral theological reflection. First, there must be a definitive sensitivity to the emotional needs of African-American men. Second, there was a sense of transformation in the self of the Black male pastoral counselor.

When working through the non-negotiable, subsequent attention was given the emotional work normally associated with the care demonstrated in pastoral counseling. Explorations guided by the movements outlined in this dissertation afforded African-American men various opportunities to learn about their socio-cultural sensitivity from other African-American men. These lessons were significant and they have not been healthfully taught or framed in other studies when discussing the use of power relative to patriarchy, feminism, and
womanism in all relationships. The effect was the failure to be in conversation concerning the idiosyncratic positioning of African-American men; nor have studies in the distribution of power provided relevant excursions in discussions of ethnicity in combination with the before mentioned non-negotiable categories.

This project supported feminist and Womanist scholarship in their critique of patriarchy as a disheveling source of inequitable power usage in relationships between men and women. Additionally, it supported the cultural criticism of power being distributed along race lines. Ultimately, these discussions aligned male monetary sufficiency with a small percentage of the population while the larger portion lives at or barely above poverty. However, African-American men seem to bring a different paradigm for determining transformation. Rather than power, the issue for them is one of authority\textsuperscript{23} and the exercise of it.

Wimberly, \textit{Relational Refugees: Alienation and Reincorporation in African American Churches and Communities} discusses the deprivation of African-American males with regard to the cultural categories of economic viability, family maintenance, educational support, and political participation sufficiency in these categories. There is some degree of self-sufficiency in these categories that

\textsuperscript{23}Edward Wimberly, \textit{Relational Refugees: Alienation and Reincorporation In African American Churches and Communities} (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 75-84. The Million-Man March of 1998 was a valiant socio-cultural move in correcting the collective sense of deprivation in African-American men. However, the dominant cultural experience of many African-American men with regards to these categories has not changed. Many do not live the full advantage of care for themselves, their families, and communities as surmised by patriarchy. African-American men have not historically held full power possession of their selves, their families, or self-determination within this US-American culture.
represent patriarchal power in the US-American culture. He also speaks to the frustration of African-American men when successful management of these categories is present in their lives, but the socio-cultural prerogatives often afforded European-American men is not made available to African-American men. From his discussion, it was discerned that exercise of personal authority remained a significant concern for many African-American men.

Reflection and experience of transformation is relevant to African-American men learning to exercise personal authority amid interpersonally disheveling experiences. These are alluded to by Wimberly and herein described. African American men do not often have full-possession of a sense of personal power for the purpose of self-actualization although all the amenities are present. The cases in this dissertation indicated African-American men continuing to work at the discretion of corporate societal power structures, which determined needed authorization to be with and ultimately keep their families. They are continually employed without a real sense of corporate authority due to corporation's interest in settling minority quotas that often prefer African-American women in resolution of two minority quotients. Overall, educational and political systems eliminated their sense of personal authority by targeting them as discipline problems.

Responding to concerns relative to the exercise of personal authority as significant indication of healthful transformation was significant for African-American men because they are equated to other men in the complicity of abuse
of power toward women and children. This was rightful consideration due to non-empathic patriarchal, social and cultural structures. However, it seemed that African-American men have not generally been given the tools for conducting their life with the particular advantage of patriarchal power in US-American culture. The responding result seemed to be convulsive behavior. Again, this type of critical analysis considered economic viability, management of family, educational resources, and participation in the political decision-making processes as hallmarks of patriarchal attunement for US-American culture.

Conclusion

As to current awareness, this dissertation is the first comprehensive work in the field of pastoral counseling that spoke to the empathy-responsive needs of African-American men. These needs are categorized as personality formation, cultural education, self-concept and God-relatedness. The sphere of healing and support of it, via this African-American scholarship within these categories frame the critical metaphor of this dissertation, Good-Enough Mentoring. This concept will be further explored and applied via case presentations.

Secondly, when working through the non-negotiable, transformation took place with the pastoral counselor and the counselee. The Black male pastoral counselor's work raised the awareness of the field to the social, cultural, psychological, and theological idiosyncrasies of Black male pastoral counselors in practice. The supervisory relationship supported by personal therapy helped to normalize counter-transference issues, which are related to the collective
consciousness of African Americans. This type of collective awareness facilitated the address of treatment possibilities by reviewing other inclusive determinants for pathology. Health is determined and accomplished in relationships between African-American men.\textsuperscript{24} The Black male pastoral counselor and the African-American male counselee cooperatively work through the diagnosis of the pathology and its treatment.

Because of the need for practitioners in the field working with African-American men, this Black male pastoral counselor presented this incomplete comprehensive frame as an empathically reflexive model of pastoral counseling for working with African-American men in pastoral counseling. It is incomplete because the parallel question that must be considered is, "What is the difference in the model and its results when African-American men work with African-American women pastoral counselors?" Also, prospects for future adjustments in this method are relative to the pastoral therapeutic relationship with sons of narcissistic fathers and presumed attachment concerns represented in their intrapsychic organizations. The field of pastoral counseling was considered an integral part of the cultural milieu. The field possesses basic knowledge and skills for helping the larger culture to slow its continual injury of the corporate African American self.

\textsuperscript{24}Jawanza Kunjufu, \textit{Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys} (Chicago: African American Images, 1985), 5-15.
CHAPTER II
A SUMMARY
THE SELF PSYCHOLOGY OF HEINZ KOHUT

This chapter is an overview of the work of Heinz Kohut, the father of Self Psychology. The overview includes the definition of three key concepts: narcissism, empathy, and transmuting internalization. These concepts anchor this presentation of Kohut with specific discussion of a narcissistic line of development in the self and provide descriptions of the manner in which narcissistic disorders of the self occur. Several volumes of Kohut's work will be used in this presentation. The secondary resources of Rudolf Susske and Michael St. Clair are used to simplify definitions and summarize shifts in Kohut's development of his psychology of the self.

The rationale for using Kohut in this dissertation is his descriptive explanations for narcissistic personality disorders, as well as, the little discussed sector of his theory in which he discusses the effects of culture upon narcissistic development. It is assumed that something in his theoretical practice required him to fully adjust his application of Freudian-based psychoanalysis. Toward the end of his practice, he gave attention to children and the culture's empathic responsiveness in the promotion of narcissistic organization of the personality.
In this dissertation, Kohut is demonstrated beneficial for the development of Good-Enough Mentoring model of Black pastoral counseling in the treatment of representative cases of African-American men. The model asserts that intrapsychic structuring is dependent upon both internalized parental relationships and cultural images that represent empathic responsiveness. Kohut's discussion of the impact of culture is a little discussed venue in his work, but this Black male pastoral counselor has found this sector of his theory of psychology of the self to be helpful in treating African-American male counselee's suffering from Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).¹ A significant assumption for this author is that self psychology explains the affects of parental and cultural empathic responsiveness upon the formation of the personality.

For this dissertation, Kohut's psychology of the self is additionally interpreted as a psychology for describing the corporate narcissism of the dominant culture. As such, evaluation of the cases is done with the consideration that narcissistic personality disorders are theoretical descriptions of

¹African-American men were not included in Kohut's counselee population. This is considered a deficiency in his work because specific racial cultural descriptors are missing in his psychology because of this absence. It is suspected that African-Americans, were equally if not more affected by changing conditions of the US-American culture Kohut observed at the time of his writing. It is assumed within the last seventy-five years that African Americans received their primary cultural affirmations in the Civil Rights Movement. The Movement followed WWII and the Korean War in culmination of a number of general cultural shifts for African Americans. In addition, this Movement contributed to a different degree of narcissistic awareness among African-Americans, European Americans and other ethnic groups alike.
personality disorders exercised by and internalized from the dominant culture. The narcissist is the dominant personality type for the current cultural milieu.

African Americans experience NPD, but the experience is filtered through the Black ethno-centric cultural and political experiences of the African Holocaust, slavery, integration and post-integration. African-American men coming for pastoral counseling with this Black male pastoral counselor responded similarly to therapy in comparison to their European-American male counterparts. However it noted that their therapeutic response is filtered through comprehensive Black ethno-centric cultural experiences. Kohut was used as additional reference to present basic descriptions of African-American male narcissistic personality disorders layered with African American specific descriptors for treatment enhancement.

**Cultural Awareness in Self Psychology**

In *The Restoration of the Self*, Kohut supported the notion that changes in culture had impact upon personality organization. He indicated that analysts, with the aid of colleagues in the neighboring disciplines of sociology, history and such, facilitated insight in answering an important question. *What is the length of time that tends to be interposed between the ascendancy of certain psychotropic social factors and the shift of predominant personality patterns or predominant forms of psychological disturbance produced by shifts of these certain social*
This derivation in his theory seemed to widen the scope of his work while answering the question. This derivation was partial impetus for the type of research this Black male pastoral counselor undertook in this dissertation. This pastoral counselor was encouraged to build upon and distinguish his theoretical insights in response to Kohut’s question and those devised from within his pastoral counseling with African-American men.

At the time of his practice, Kohut observed the gradual decrease of neurotic-complex disorders treatable by the Freudian drive psychology. He saw an increasing number of narcissists that could not tolerate the therapeutic stance of abstinence in drive psychology. Abstinence refers to the performance of the therapist in psychoanalysis. He/she serves as a blank screen upon which the analysand reflects the issues of his/her neurotic complex with minimal input from the therapist. The presence of the analyst is sufficient for the neurotic working through their neurosis.

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3Ibid., 277-279.
Kohut observed his counselees were not neurotics working through Oedipal stage conflicts supported by the strong punitive guilt-ridden social grid of Freudian culture. They suffered the effects of latently present fathers and over close mothers; they took no pride in the sense of omnipotence experienced in relation to the mother. This type of counselee could not successfully negotiate the transition of their narcissistic affect toward their father nor could they learn to manage successful negotiation of relations external to the primary familial triad without the anxious sense of maternal betrayal. These symptoms were culturally diagnosed as the effects of war and the subsequent market economy it created. Fathers were pulled away from their sons at critical times of intrapsychic development as these sons needed consistent paternal empathy to stabilize the self. The theoretical assertion is that sons develop fragmented tolerance of narcissistic anxiety without the empathic support of the father.

As previously stated, the self psychology of Kohut has a cultural dimension. He understood the intrapsychic impact of a close mother and an absent father, and the cultural affect of this relatedness schema. His psychology of the self was a means for explaining the impact of this and other cultural changes upon personality formation. Kohut's theorized impact helped this Black male pastoral counselor to assert that the cultural root of his narcissistic personality formulation was related to three major European and

\[4\] Ibid.
Asian conflicts: World War I, World War II and the Korean War. Therefore, developments in the psychology and methods of treatment are in response to different intrapsychic compensatory structures. Theoretically, these structures were devised and maintained in mastery over shifts in individual and familial emotional and social environments. The counselee's ability to strengthen existing intrapsychic structures determined psychological success or failure. Indeed, this process represented psychological survival or death. Kohut seemed to ponder the length of time it took for cultural shifts to effect intrapsychic changes. His work implied that it occurs over several generations and represented society's ability to create emotional adaptation structures in persons that enabled them to psychologically survive relational challenges and cultural shifts.

**Theoretical Considerations**

Self psychology, like every major psychological derivation, has its roots in Freudian psychoanalysis. Its distinction from psychoanalytic thought is drawn to distinguish it from object relations theory via the work of Margaret Mahler. Mahler was selected as the contrasting object relations theorist because the literature indicated a close association between the respective theories of Kohut and Mahler. Additionally, this Black male pastoral counselor found her discussion of separation-individuation helpful in understanding the narcissistic self-experiences of African-American men moving toward their achievement of life goals and dreams.
Freud and Kohut

Developments in Kohut's view involved more than drive. He explained that drives emerged as a survival mechanism when the fragile self is not responded to and begins to fragment or lose cohesion. The need for food or the child's interest in the fecal gift is not primary as described in traditional Freudian psychoanalysis. The child's primary need is for a self-object who gives food and receives the fecal gift. The mother does not respond to a child's drives, but to a self that is forming and seeking confirmation through giving and receiving from the mirroring self-object. The child experiences the mother's pride or rejection as acceptance or rejection of him or her not the acceptance or rejection of a drive.

In contrast to self psychology, Freudian-based drive psychology is an id-oriented psychology. Its scientific method of observation via abstinence within the context of the relationship is dependent upon the cunselee 'having sufficient ego strength to manage the drive toward object impulses of the id. Objects exist chiefly for the purpose of gratification, the unreserved move toward pleasure, and removal of tension. Object support or failure of the id, as well as, the further structuring of the id resulting from drive development form the additional psychic structures of ego and superego. Further structuring results in the displacement of instinctual energy in body zones, recognized as anal, oral, and genital. In a
summation, Freudian-based psychoanalysis sought to explain childhood intrapsychic development by exploring the conflicts between id-impulses and ego-constraints. It gave special attention to the unfinished business of unconscious Oedipal conflicts that support the neurotic personality and continually emerge during adulthood.

Significantly, Kohut moved drives from the primacy of personality formation and placed them within a coinciding process with narcissistic development. Essentially, drives are considered as derivations of archaic experiences of primary narcissism. Development in the personality does not occur because of tension release or conflict resolution in the configuration of the id, ego, and superego. Personality, formation and strengthening of the self is resultant of internalized energy in self-object relations. Kohut did not completely reject classical psychoanalytic theory he favored its use when working with persons that suffered under neurotic conflicts.

MAHLER AND KOHUT

These two authors seem to have most significantly influenced US-American psychology's distinctions of Freudian drive psychology; current, post, and classical era of object relations; and self-development theories. Their methodologies significantly differed from each other. Mahler based her theorizing of self-formation on systematic observation and careful documentation

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of psychologically relevant behavior of infants and toddlers while interacting with parents. She considered normal development toward healthy object constancy to be grounded in the first three years of the infant's life. In comparison, Kohut derived his theory exclusively from the psychoanalytic situation. His observations were based upon introspection and empathic immersion in the inner life of his counselees. He reconstructed the self from empathic experiences with them.

The material research for Mahler and Kohut was based on a different use of the psychoanalytic relationship as a means for gaining insight into the inner world of the counselee. Significant use of Mahler's work in this dissertation is her theorization around self construction. She postulated it as a critical psychological move from symbiotic relations with the mother to active phasal separation-individuation. Her use of the psychoanalytic relationship helped the counselee resolve residues of earlier states of fusion and unfinished crises of separation-individuation. Kohut's subjective self-construction helped him to postulate critical psychological moves along the line of narcissistic development as the advancing needs for and use of self-objects relations. He theorized the critical use of the psychoanalytic relationship as the resolution of mirroring, twinning, and idealization needs resultant of failed experiences of optimal frustration. Mirroring, twinning, idealization and optimal frustration will be defined later in this chapter.
Both Mahler and Kohut stressed the significant contribution of the infant-caretaker unit in the earliest period of the life. Mahler's normal autistic phase described the initial state of the infant as a system. The infant was self-sufficient in his hallucinatory wish fulfillment and interested in maintaining his homeostatic balance through feeding; diaper changing, sleeping and touching. Gradually the infant became aware of need satisfaction stemming from outside the self. Differentiation in intrapsychic structuring occurred as the infant moved from symbiotic dependency upon the mother. The physiological need gradually became a psychological wish and there is movement to grasp objects, which taught the infant extensive abilities of its body. Subsequently, the infant began the process of internally addressing inner feelings and establishment of identity.

Mahler's major contribution to psychoanalytic developmental theory was her study of separation-individuation. Mahler indicated this phase as never complete, but primarily occurred between four months to thirty-six months of age. Separation was an intrapsychic achievement and not to be confused with physical separation. It referred to an emergence from symbiotic fusion with the caregiver. This pastoral counselor interpreted Mahler's discussion of individuation as the child's assumption of his or her own individual characteristics in continuing formation of the self. The processes of separation and individuation may be intertwined. There can be a lag or forwardness in one or the other due to the mother's interference or support of the infant's usual development.
Similar to Mahler, Kohut's earlier articulation of self psychology postulated a primitive self-object bond wherein the nuclear self experienced the other as part of itself. There is a self and one other. However, from the subjective perspective of the forming self, there is only the self with the other present to enhance it. Eventually, Kohut did not speculate on the presence of an archaic self, but postulated only a virtual self-- the self of the infant that is envisioned in the mind of the parent. This self is formed relative to the responses of the parent(s) interaction with the infant as though it has full cohesion.  

NARCISSISM

Narcissists present personality configurations that represent exaggerated self-object dependence upon the therapist because this personality type cannot tolerate the abstinence of the therapist. Self-objects are external to the infant/adult and serve as the regulator of homeostasis. Because of the self-object’s perfect attunement to the infant/adult, self-object relations are established within the phantasy of absolute control over the self-object. In practice there was the need for the therapist, the self-object of the counselee, to constantly attend to and foster within the counselee a positive sense of self. The counselee emotionally captured the therapist to meet their self-object mirroring, twinning, and idealizing needs in the pastoral therapeutic relationship.

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Kohut argued for a narcissistic line of development that was separate from but coinciding with Freud’s conception of libidinal development. Freud understood libido development from autoeroticism via narcissism to object love. Kohut’s independent line of development proceeded from autoeroticism via narcissism to higher forms and transformations of narcissism. This fundamentally changed Freud’s notion of narcissism by viewing it in degrees of maturity.

Adults have normalized narcissistic needs for continued mirroring of the self by self-objects throughout life. Self-object non-responsiveness to efforts as an indifferent other brings about feelings of helplessness and emptiness. Failed mirroring experiences precipitate lower self-esteem and feelings of narcissistic rage. Adult love and responsiveness to efforts are here conceptualized as self-objects that participate in mutual mirroring and idealization. Both enhance the self-esteem of the other involved in the relationship. Narcissistic needs continue throughout life, being transformed into various forms of vocation, education, marriage, business ownership, etc. Healthy narcissism is manifested in adulthood in such forms as creativity, humor, and empathy. It is the interplay of the narcissistic self, grandiose and exhibitionistic, with relationship experiences in family and community that put forth ideals for internalization that determine the characteristic flavor of a person’s personality.

Kohut remained close to a counselee’s subjective experience when explaining the experience of narcissism. The narcissist’s perception of reality
involved an omniscient, perfect self-object and an archaic self that has unlimited grandiosity, knowledge, and power over their self-object. This is possible in the narcissist world because everyone and everything is an extension of the self or exists to serve the self. If there is any setback or disturbance in the phantasy of control, it is experienced as flaws in this perfect world and an injury to the self. Narcissistic injury aroused insatiable rage and conjunctive shame, neither of which helped the narcissist to recognize the offender as separate. This offender is experienced as a recalcitrant part of the extended self over which the narcissistic person does not have full control. Self-esteem, their very self, is dependent upon the unconditional availability of the mirroring and/or an idealized self-object and their permitted merger.

In the therapeutic relationship, the changing needs of the archaic self may be reconstructed with great clarity on the basis of manifest self-object transference. It is under the empathic scrutiny of the reactivated and reconstructed relations of the childhood self and it's self-objects that reveal disorders of the self. In many cases, the seemingly closeness of the child to the parent essentially obscured the child's depression and loneliness. It obscured the fact that neither the child's proud exhibitionism nor enthusiastically expressed idealizing needs were phase-appropriately met. Such a child's self is psychologically impoverished and its cohesion is weak.

An intrapsychic response for management of undernourishment in the self was the child's construction of compensatory structures. They represented the
absence of maternal empathy for the healthy grandiosity and the healthy exhibitionism of this forming independent self. The result was the formation of a depleted, depressed sector of the self in which the independent center of its initiative remained non-responded to by the mother and later not sufficiently responded to by the father. Inadequate responses of idealization toward the father are lost opportunities for later de-idealization and subsequent integration of the ideals with other constituent elements of the self and the rest of the personality. This resulted in the inability of the non-responded-to self to transform its archaic grandiosity and wishes to merge with an omnipotent self-object and form a reliable sense of self-esteem, realistic ambitions, and attainable ideals.

Narcissistic Personality Disorders

Narcissistic personality disorders, a group of pathologies in the self are resultant of unsatisfactory mirroring and idealizing resolutions. This group of pathologies (which will be expounded upon later) includes the under-stimulated self; the fragmented self; the over-stimulated self; the overburdened self; the mirror-hungry self; the ideal-hungry self; and the alter-ego-hungry. These are malfunctions because the structures of the self are defective. One sector has managed to survive by shifting its psychological point of gravity in compensation for empathic failure in relation with significant self-objects. The child shifted his narcissistic energy toward maintaining an unrealistic sense of his abilities and unreliable sense of ambitions in lieu of a frustrating self-object.
Under-stimulation: This condition of the self results from the parents' prolonged lack of responsiveness toward their child. These individuals lack vitality and experience themselves as boring and apathetic. They express themselves in this way to others.

Fragmented: These persons are extremely vulnerable to setbacks or reversals, responding with sharp decrease in self-esteem, disorganization, and an anxious loss of a sense of contiguity of the self in time and space.

Over-stimulated: This condition of the self results from being flooded by unrealistic fantasies of greatness that produce tension and anxiety. They avoid situations in which they might become the center of attention.

Overburdened: This condition involves perceptions of the external world as hostile and reactions to insignificant stimuli as attacks or frustrations. They live with an attitude of irritability and suspicion that flares up in response to specific slights, that disappears quickly when the offense has passed.\(^7\)

The above disorders do not have associated transferences. The following disorders of the self have specific transferences associated with them because they represent specific empathy failures:

Mirror-hungry is a person who is famished for admiration and appreciation. They feel an inner sense of worthlessness that derives from parental frustration of the need to be admired and appreciated.

Ideal-hungry is a person in search of persons with whom they admire for their prestige, power, beauty, intelligence, moral stature, etc.

Alter-ego-hungry persons experience a sense of self only when people slavishly conform to their opinions, values and dispositions.\(^8\)

The essence of the narcissistic self-disorder is a defect in the structure of the self. The counselee is not fully aware of his or her pathology because it is


\(^8\) Ibid.
the result of incomplete integration of the grandiose self and the idealized object into reality structuring for the self. Initially, the counselee presents only vague feelings of emptiness or feelings of not being fully alive. This structuring sometimes manifested as infantile demands or expressions of rage that disrupt the mature functioning and impoverishes the adult personality. Their self-esteem is clustered around the energy of the personality that remain invested in non-integrated archaic self-objects. Under the scrutiny of the empathic observer, the depth of the wound for the narcissist is understood rather than considered a seemingly minor irritant.

**Narcissistic Transference**

As stated earlier, counselees with narcissistic personality disturbances present ill-defined symptoms. They make vague complaints of problems at work, perverse sexual phantasies or a lack of interest in sex. Other presenting symptoms might include problems in forming relationships, hypochondriac complaints, and tendencies toward attacks of rage. However, the narcissistic transference affirms the diagnosis of narcissistic self-disorder. Selfobject transferences of mirroring, idealizing or twinning and their respective disorders of the self, mirror-hungriness, ideal-hungriness, or alter-ego hungriness are crucial to the therapeutic revival of key disruptive developments during the early phases of childhood.

The mirroring transference that mobilized the grandiose self may manifest itself in a variety of ways. The counselee resuscitated the early developmental
stage in which [he] tried to hold on to a part of primary narcissism by concentrating perfection on a grandiose self and assigning all imperfections to the outside. In a current more primitive manifestation, this type of self-experience for the counselee included the therapist. The merger between the two was as though the therapist does not have a separate existence. A less severe form of the mirroring transference was twinning; whereby, the counselee assumed the therapist was like the counselee. The therapist served to fulfill the counselee’s need for approval and confirmation of grandiosity and exhibitionism.9

The idealizing transference mobilized the idealized parent image and can be more archaic or mature, dependent upon the level of developmental fixation. The counselee revived the early phase in which he tried to hold onto global narcissistic perfection by assigning it to the idealized parent image. This was done in an effort to maintain merger with this object. To be separated from the perfect object was to experience the self as powerless and empty. The more mature idealizing transference by the counselee included the idealized therapist in a way that helped the counselee feel more powerful, capable, and good. By more healthfully including the therapist, the counselee was able to go on and achieve his healthy life objectives. All disturbances that robbed the counselee of the idealized therapist do not lessen the counselee’s self-esteem.10

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10Ibid., 163-164.
EMPATHY

Kohut edited by Arnold Goldberg in the posthumously published monograph, *How Does Analysis Cure?* defined empathy as "vicarious introspection...the capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person." Conceptually, introspective immersion as a type of attunement enabled healthful interpersonal interpretation of inner self-experience. The praxis of empathy indicated that is only through immersion in the counselee's experience was the pastoral counselor able to gather relevant, in-depth psychological data as a true basis for clinical understanding, theory building, and transformation. The critical emphasis was placed upon the pastoral counseling relationship's use of empathy in treatment of NPD. The counselee internalized and used the pastoral counseling relationship for their forward movement in life. Empathy was transformative as stipulated by its response to different demands of the personality for interaction with the therapist. Introspective immersion provided the therapist with insights into the counselee's process of childhood internalization. Healthful empathy responsiveness seemed to facilitate transformed social conduct for the counselee.

Empathic Resonance, Empathic Echo and Cohesion of the Self

Empathic resonance, the experience of empathic responsiveness from the pastoral counselor toward the counselee, will be a crucial aspect of empathy

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provision when later framing the good-enough mentoring model of this
dissertation. Empathic resonance is the optimal experience of intrapsychic need
satisfaction with the self-object. This was learned particularly during childhood.
These experiences became the pillars for the child’s mental health throughout its
life. In reverse, if self-objects of childhood fail in these actions, resulting
psychological deficits or distortions became burdensome and are carried
throughout life.

Effectiveness of empathic resonance in the pastoral counseling
relationship was dependent upon empathic echoes of past empathy experiences
with significant self-objects. Primarily, these echoes are the emotional
remembrances of or cues from positive or negative empathy experiences in the
parent-child dyad under which the fledgling self of the child was formed. They
also served as types of self-cohesion cues for strengthening the self in the
pastoral counseling relationship. Therapeutic interpretations are accepted or
rejected based upon empathic echoes when counselees realized they are
understood. The pastoral counselor was able to impart the sense of their
empathy toward the counselee. If the interpretation of the managed tension
occurred too quickly before empathy is clearly experienced by the counselee, the
counselee became enraged. Narcissistic rage occurred because a genetically
important traumatic situation has been reinitiated. It is the re-experience of a faulty and non-empathic self-object.¹²

Transmuting Internalization and Optimal Frustration

Transmuting internalization is the child's work of organizing its psychic structures for dealing with heightened anxiety and frustration. The child builds new structures by gathering its anxiety in a manner that structures their self-soothing responses. These new structures functioned to complete those functions previously performed by the selfobject.

Optimal frustration is the internal energy sufficient for intrapsychic structure building that makes transmuting internalization work. Theoretically, the infant was born into an empathically responsive human environment of selfobjects. This environment treated the infant as though it has a fully functioning self. In-turn, the infant expected the environment to be in tune with their every psychological need and wish. When the emotional environment failed, the infant's needs threatened disintegration. It became tense and the mother responded in a manner that restored the infant’s homeostatic balance. The mother's response allowed the merger of the child in her more mature psychic organization. The infant learned to take on this tension-reducing capability for itself as the frequency of repeated optimal frustration increased.

Both transmuting internalization and optimal frustration are psychical energy sources for psychic configuration of the grandiose self and the idealized parental image. Although antithetical to each other, they coexist from their beginnings as mechanisms to preserve the primary narcissistic experience. The grandiose self represented the stage in development wherein everything was pleasant, good, and regarded as part of the infant. All badness and imperfection was external to the infant. The child attempted to maintain the original perfection, bliss, and omnipotence by assigning to the adult absolute power and perfection.13

Gradually, in normal conditions, the exhibitionism and grandiosity of the grandiose self are tamed and once integrated into the structure of the personality, fill the emotional “tank” with resultant good feelings about the self. The child is enabled to enjoy its own ambitions and activities. The idealized parental image has been integrated into the child’s personality as the idealized self-object, where it serves as a structure to regulate tension and provide idealism.14

PSYCHOLOGY OF THE SELF

In summary, based upon the counselees of his practice and therapeutic response to them, Kohut framed a psychology of the self that prepared the field


14Ibid., 159-161.
of analytical psychotherapy to respond to the counselee that intrapsychically represented significant cultural shifts that impact the formation of the self. His development in psychoanalytic theory was the softening of both psychoanalysis and object relations theory in order to treat the narcissistic counselee. This development was prompted by his awareness of countertransference resistance of narcissistic persons in therapy.

Psychology of the self is a psychology of the individual that understands the self as the center of the psychological universe: the self is understood as the content of the mental apparatus. The self, according to Kohut is "...a psychological sector in which ambitions, skills, and ideals form an unbroken continuum that permits joyful creative activity". It was framed by the child's environment of selfobjects reacting to its utterances as if it already had a self, or a self-experience of its own initiative, integrity, and continuity. The empathic care of the mother successfully contributed to cohesion when she noticed the infant's requirements and achievements, e.g. the sucking reflex, thrashing, etc., and spoke to the child as an integrated whole.

The acquisition of a more rudimentary self occurs as the earliest expressions of narcissistic rage. This was the emotional expression of disappointment with failed empathic immersion of selfobjects. This emotional

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16Ibid., 63.
experience accounted for an active striving toward mastery, but possessed a
dimly perceived exterior of the self-object. Accompanying this perception was a
manifestation of anxiety about disintegration and fragmentation of the self. This
anxiety about disintegration and fragmentation of the self represented the core
condition of the self that undergirded the diagnosis of NPD. The counselee
matured with increasing anxiety and built compensatory structures for protecting
himself against the experiences of disintegration and fragmentation. He formed
relationships that served as further protectant from these experiences of the self.

Persons experience themselves as cohesive and harmonious units in
space and time when connected with the past and directed towards a creative
and productive future. These are pleasurable experiences only if there are
healthy representatives of family and community to enthusiastically react to them.
These enthusiasts are available as sources of idealized strength. They are calm
and nurturing, essentially able to understand the inner life. These enthusiasts
are in-tune with the needs and comprehend their inner life in a way that move
them to provide the needed support for maturation. By this yardstick, fragmented
selves are almost all that Kohut and this Black male pastoral counselor see in
'modern' psychological practice. Additionally, Kohut and this Black male pastoral
counselor lament the disintegration of traditional ideals and values that support
the well-being of persons in self and community. A crucial assumption is that
there is a link between this loss and the profuseness of NPD within the general
culture and among African-American men. Sectors most affected by shifts in the
culture demonstrate the more adverse emotional affect. The concern is for endangered cultural structures that carefully respond to the selfobject needs of persons. This endangerment seems to be especially critical for the well-being of African-American men. However, the field of pastoral counseling is expected to wholesomely perform this type of function.

Formation of the Self

Kohut implied two phases in the formations of the self. Both phases employ attributes previously ascribed to phantasy, narcissism, empathy, transmuting internalization, and optimal frustration. The first phase involved the formation of a rudimentary self by the processes of inclusion and exclusion of psychological structures of the mature self-object, mother, and later, father. The nuclear or core self experienced some archaic mental contents as belonging to the self, and other contents or experiences assigned to the non-self and excluded. The next phase involved strengthening and ensuring the boundaries of the self. Failure on the part of the self-object to mirror the growing self and to foster idealization can lead to the fragmentation of the self or the loss of vitality by the immature self.

The primary factors contributing to the emergence of the self are the inborn potentials of the child and the empathic relationship between parent and child. The infant started with a virtual self filled with innate potential, the hopes and projections of the parents. The parents or self-objects responded to the child's mirroring and idealizing needs. Non-traumatic failures in parental
empathic responsiveness gave a push to the emergence of the nuclear self. The nuclear self emerged through a process of transmuting internalization, by which the self-objects and their functions are replaced by a self with independent functioning. The self increased in its cohesiveness and integration, and gradually the risk of fragmentation receded. If childhood traumas and deprivations prevented striving for fulfillment of archaic needs, the cohesive narcissistic self integrating into a healthy personality, then the grandiose self in relation to the idealized self-object continued in an unaltered form. The relationship between the grandiose self and the idealized self-object remained isolated from the rest of the maturing psyche and disturbed by its archaic needs.

MENTAL HEALTH AND CURING

Mental health is constituted in the self, "...as freedom not only from the neurotic symptoms and inhibitions that interfere with the functions of a mental apparatus involved in loving and working, but also with the capacity of the firm self to avail itself of the talents and skills at an individual’s disposal, enabling him [or her] to love and work successfully".\(^\text{17}\)

Curing of conditions of the self must be evaluated in terms of achieving cohesion in the self. There must be particular restitution of the self with the aid of re-established empathic closeness to responsive self-objects. The condition of the self influences functioning and well-being throughout the course of life.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^\text{17}\)Ibid., 284.

\(^\text{18}\)Ibid., 281.
In cases of those suffering from analyzable pathology of the self, the principle indicators that cure has been established will be the disappearance or amelioration of the counselee's hypochondria, lack of initiative, empty depression, lethargy, and undertaking self-stimulation through sexual activities. The counselee experienced comparative freedom and the joy of his or her existence. Even in the absence of pleasure, the counselee is creative, and considers life worthwhile, or at least productive.

Children in Culture: The Impact of Culture Self-Objects

Kohut alluded to the impact of culture upon psychical development in the epilogue of the text, *The Restoration of the Self*. He lamented the loss of significant bonds of time spent together between parents and children. Changes in cultural representation of family relations allowed less opportunity for children to observe their parents during leisure time than work.

This Black male pastoral counselor recognized that Kohut does not specifically speak of mentoring in his work. However, this Black male pastoral counselor interpreted this descriptive lament as beneficial for understanding the current plight of African-American children and the specific need for mentoring of African American boys and men in this US-American culture. Further discussion of mentoring in this dissertation is oriented in Kohut's conceptualization of Freud's relationship with his teacher Fleiss as he described the depth of
relatedness between these two as an idealizing transference of creativity.\textsuperscript{19} In the text \textit{Search for the Self-Vol. 1}, Paul H. Ornstein recounted that Kohut considered the need for temporary relationships that help creativity. When the work is completed, the relationship may remain, but it is not as intense. The creative challenge has passed and the usefulness of the self-object waned.

This discussion of idealizing transference of creativity is this Black male pastoral counselor's point of departure. This type of transference was fundamental to mentoring when reconstructing empathic failure(s) in the pastoral counseling relationship. This type of interaction is instinctively necessary in practice with African-American men, particularly in the employment of good-enough mentoring.

The discussion of African-American male self-development in this dissertation asserts that the impact of culture is the third phase of empathic responsiveness in support of self-formation. This inference was more readily apparent in observed development and practice with young African-American males in this Black male pastoral counselor's practice. Empathy received from parents and the community was first and second phases, respectively. This project in specialized care with African-American men represented an opportunity for this Black male pastoral counselor to empathically experience the impact of culture upon African-American male psychological development. Moreover, he

had the opportunity to consider his and other's countertransference reaction when working with this specific group of counselees. These are critical considerations to the formation of the model, theory expansion and treatment of NPD. The countertransference experience helped the Black male pastoral counselor to recognize that the US-American culture assigned value to the inner and outer life experiences of African-American men and boys. This culture seemed to determine how it will promote their achievement of life goals and dreams.

In light of the theorized affect of a culture of narcissism, transmuting internalization and optimal frustration are critical cultural operatives. The idealizing transference of creativity encompassed the narcissist address of the affects of culture-influenced self-objects. It can be postulated that these operatives help the self to form its cultural sense and facilitate connection as cultural self-objects. These, per se, are not a concept in Kohutian self-psychology. He speaks of group self-objects. The meanings of the two concepts for this discussion are essentially the same. Group self-objects are culture-oriented systems that facilitate the maturation of the self beyond the relationships of family into the larger community. They are such entities as systems of education, marriage, spiritual support, business opportunities, government, communications, etc. These systems have the accountability for transmitting the values that maintain a particular culture. The theoretical inference was that self-object relations are not only formed with the people that support self-cohesion in
a socio-cultural system that supports self-cohesion, but also with the systems. These integrating self-object relations affect the cohesion of the self in the individual.

The process of cultural transmuted internalization and its associated optimal frustration in group relations and mentoring is a parallel process to normal self-object use when strengthening individual self-cohesion. The process used a space in development of the self in which the self gradually shifted the self from relying upon archaic modes of contact in the family to larger self-objects in culture. These public systems framed interpersonal development. Contact with these systems offered opportunities for merger that also represented mirroring, idealization, and twinning transferences. The value of the self in adult life was further enhanced or detracted by the empathic resonance of these public relationship supports.

The significance of this discussion concerning African-American children and culture at this juncture is the impact of cultural self-objects inflicting injury upon the forming self of the African-American male child. He seemed to be deprived of opportunities for “...limited, optimal, non-traumatic parental empathic failures that provide fuel for transmuting internalization.”20 Changes in family

dynamics and change in patterns of familial relationships seemed to prompt negative experience to shifts in the currently normative narcissistic culture.

African-American children are experiencing the loss of their parents due to addictions, disease, imprisonment, etc. This occurrence bears an increase in the number of grandparents assuming infant and older child caring and parenting responsibilities. Numbers of social agencies are increasingly emphasizing their response to the health and care for African-American children in governmental family and children service programs. There also are increasing numbers of homeless children. Additionally, increasing percentage of African-American teenagers are not completing high school; thus the increased expectation of public assistance programs. In-turn, these cultural exigencies are increasing the opportunities for African-American boys to mature into men without healthful mirroring, twinning, and idealization relationships with other African-American men. The consequence is more African-American men failing their life goals and dreams due to the lack of relationships that foster their creativity.

Conclusion

This chapter has given a summary of Kohut’s self-psychology via the definition of significant concepts in the psychology. The author has indicated the use of self-psychology in the building of a model of Black pastoral counseling for the Black male pastoral counselor working with African-American men. The noted absence of Black descriptors for addressing the narcissistic development of Black men will be adjusted later in the chapter for pastoral theological
reflection upon the model, the cases and disciplinary resources. The task ahead is building the model and bringing the discussion treating internalized White supremacy in African-American men.
CHAPTER III

A SUMMARY OF THE BLACK THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION:

JAMES CONE

This chapter introduces the theological aspect of pastoral theological reflection, which utilizes systematic theology to shed light on the problem of need for good-enough mentoring. The selected systematized theology was Black Theology of Liberation, particularly the writings of James Cone as supporting envisaging Good-Enough Mentoring as a larger process of political, social, cultural and economic liberation. The concern was to explore what liberation theology has to say to the practice of good-enough mentoring as this author deemed it impossible to examine the multiplicity of needs in of Black men in pastoral counseling without exploring the contribution of liberation theology.

James Cone conceptualizes corporate liberation as the primary objective of Black Liberation Theology. However, Gayraud Wilmore, “Pastoral Ministry in the Origin and Development of Black Theology” in Black Theology: A Documentary History Volume Two: 1980-1992 responded to criticism that Cone does not do explicit pastoral theological reflection in his Black Theology of Liberation. Wilmore indicated that Cone “…does not define what he does explicitly as pastoral theology, but he consistently recognizes the coherence between spirituality in the sanctuary and the struggle in the streets.”

Wilmore asserts that “Black theology, as a pastoral theology seeks to read the signs of the times to discover what God is doing with individuals trapped in the misery of personal sins, and communities trapped in worldly structures that oppose ethnic self-determination and encourage cultural suicide.” At best, Black theology is pastoral theology that leads persons into healing conflicts generated by false power and illegitimate authority in their lives.

Concepts in Black Theology

The following are significant symbols in Black theology:

**Black:** Black is a physiological trait of groups related through skin pigmentation. It also relates to a particular attitude, response, and action toward the liberation of oppressed persons of African descent from white racism. As a composite conception of identity, Black represents all persons who participate in the liberation of people from oppression. Ultimately, Blackness is the existential characteristic of persons who do the work of God.

**Eschatology:** Traditional Christian theology in U.S.-American culture usually references eschatology as a sense of God’s non-involvement in the suffering of

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2 Ibid.

3 James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation: Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 135-142. Eschatology in Black Theology “Future hope is connected to present action. Future hope is the means for transforming an oppressed community into a liberated—and liberating—community. [sic]The future of God cannot be separated from the oppressed conditions of God’s people. When Christians really believe in the resurrection of Christ and take seriously the promise revealed through him, they cannot be satisfied with the present world as it is. [sic] Christian eschatology is bound in the resurrection of Christ. He is the eschatological hope. He is the future of God
Black people. This is not the eschatological reference of God in Black theology, as God is understood presently involved in the suffering of Black people. They are not being prepared for another world, as slave religion often seem to articulate in response to experienced atrocities. Eschatology in Black theology is earth-oriented in its concern with the political and economic power differentials for salvific living in the present. In liberation theology, the work of God is expressed by the liberation of the poor against the benefits of the wealthy.

**Eschatological emphasis:** Black theology challenged the other-worldliness emphases in traditional Christian theology within Black church instruction. Other world emphasis was used to subdue the slave's desire for freedom in this life. This was probably the most significant tool of theological oppression used against the African in this U.S.-American cultural context. The interpersonal consequences continue as immeasurable. The slave's eschatological view shifted with the slave experience. Initially, eschatological emphasis was a return to their homeland. There was an eventual shift to a new homeland of heaven, as remembrance of their earthly homeland grew less eminent. Black Liberation who stands in judgment upon the world and forces us to give an account of the present. [sic] We now believe that something can be done about this world and we have resolved to die rather than deny the reality expressed in black self-determination."

4H. Wayne House "An Investigation of Black Liberation Theology," *Bibliothea Sacra*, vol 139, no. 554* (April 82): available from [www.hwhouse.com/aninvestigation.html](http://www.hwhouse.com/aninvestigation.html); Internet; accessed 05 October 2000, 3. As a special note, poor and wealthy have larger meanings than economics. It is inclusive of states of mind and statuses of being.
theology constructed a third eschatological shift toward emphatic support for self-determinism. This construct necessitated individual and corporate Black participation in all aspects of personal and corporate life, inclusive of the opportunity for enjoyment of that life. This emphasis was probably the most significant tool of theological liberation for the African and his descendants in this U.S.-American culture.

Liberation: This refers to the process wherein the oppressed define the structure and scope of reality for themselves; they do not take their cues from oppressors. The goal of Black theology is liberation, the destruction of everything white so that Black people are freed from alien gods. Liberation is not an afterthought, but the essence of the divine activity of God. Liberation does not occur because God feels sorry or takes pity on the oppressed. Liberation theology maintains that pity is the condescending attitude of racists who need to assuage their guilt for feasting on the starvation of the oppressed. God's election of Israel and the U.S.-American African identification with this electoral liberation as a differential biblical example, shifted black theological education for oppressed Black people. Furthermore, accepting the incarnation of Jesus as the Black Christ of God revealed the liberation of the oppressed as a part of the innermost nature of God.⁵

Liberation emphasis: Liberation is the manifested work of God among people of African descent because they are oppressed and enslaved against their will by alien forces in attempts to take them away from relationship with God. Emphasis is upon the fight against oppressive moves of people in the African Diaspora away from active relationship with God. This relationship helps those in the Diaspora to secure their willingness to pay the cost of freedom. The cost may include death. This liberative claim was not that whites or other non-whites are not enslaved, but in need of liberation. They were enslaved and dehumanized by their own will to power, as they claimed sole authority to declare what is real and right; and set about shaping the world accordingly. The precise claim of liberation theology is that if black and white people are to be liberated, Black people must do it. This occurs when the black people affirm their freedom by refusing to behave according to the white masters’ rules. The culpability of this action is that they not only liberate themselves from oppression, but the oppressor is also liberated from enslavement to their illusions.6

Oppression: Oppression is the life experience of limitation imposed on the self and others due to economic, political, cultural, and emotional constraints. Black theology focuses upon the black experience of oppression, God’s revelation in Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Scripture as address of this oppression. Emancipation from oppression guides Black theology as it interprets every aspect of Black life. Any attempt to downplay this theme is rejected. Any

6Ibid. 103.
philosophical view of God, as well as, God's involvement with humanity other than as the reliever of oppressive suffering and pain for the poor is rejected.7

Black Prophet-Theologian: The prophet-theologian in Black theology calls the community back to the source of its life, which is the experience of salvation. They reject any conception of God as a God of all people: Specifically, a God imaged like the oppressed. Conception of God other than in image representative of the oppressed stifles self-determinism in the oppressed. Certainly, it stifles self-determinism in black people. The black prophet-theologian does the work of God and becomes Black with God. He/She sees salvation and liberation as synonymous. This becoming is not something we accomplish; it is a gift.

To be the Black prophet-theologian is to receive this gift and live God's revelation.8 Transformation occurs within the black prophet-theologian occurs in his/her receipt of the gift that utterly re-orient one's existence toward the liberation of Black people. Existentially, this is the Black experience of freedom. The call is to become what we are to be in God, or we will no longer be. Salvation experience for the chosen people of God is living the truth of their liberation. They become who God created them to be. To be is to know that


one's being is grounded in God's liberating activity. To be a self is to live prophetically. This brings freedom to be in relations with self and the community of the oppressed. Authentic liberation of the self is attainable only in the context of the oppressed community's participation in the struggle for freedom. This is becoming the embodiment of God's freedom for humanity, the divine liberation of the oppressed from bondage. Human freedom is manifest in actions toward our sisters and brothers in response to God's gracious act of liberation.⁹

White: White also is a group designation applied to people with less pigmentation. At a more fundamental level, it too, is an attitude and action of various groups of Europeans toward themselves and persons of African descent. As a comprehensive group, Europeans are distinct from those who are dissimilar to them due to the less pigmentation in Europeans. From the perspective of white racism, it represents all people who participate in the oppression of persons.

Key Images in Cone's Black Theology of Liberation

The following are significant images in Black Theology of Liberation:

God: The reality of God is presupposed in Black theology. It is a theological attempt to analyze the nature of that reality by asking what can we say about the nature of God, in line with God's self-disclosure in biblical history and the oppression of people of African descent. Black theology recognizes that Black

people speaking of God and God's participation in their liberation are risky ventures in this society. Speaking of God's liberation of the oppressed in any society is a risky business however, the task of authentic theological speech is particularly risky and difficult when the society is racially oriented and uses God-language as an instrument to further cause human degradation. In response to civil religion, political attitude supported by biblical interpretation and spiritual faith, and true prophetic gospel of God's liberation of the poor is dangerous. The true prophet must become both anti-Christian and unpatriotic. The task of authentic theological speech, then, is challenging and difficult for the populace because the religion practitioners in the society claim to be for God, and by extension, for all humankind.\(^{10}\)

God calls the Black prophet, a political, cultural and religious designation, to be a rebel with the cause of oppressed African Americans and all oppressed persons everywhere. This cause has been given to the prophet as he/she represents the cause of God that is demonstrated in God's choice of Black people as God's own people. God has chosen them not for redemptive suffering, but for freedom. African Americans are elected because they are oppressed against their will and the will of God. Therefore, God has determined to make Black liberation God's own undertaking. Black people are liberated people because God called them into being for this purpose. They break the chains of

oppression, and as such, the Black theologian assumes the dangerous responsibility of articulating the revolutionary mood of the community. This means that their speech about God, in the authentic prophetic tradition, will always move them to the brink of treason and heresy in the oppressive society.11

There are two hermeneutical principles operating in the Black theological analysis of the doctrine of God:

1) The Christian understanding of God arises from the biblical view of revelation; a revelation of God that takes place in the liberation of oppressed Israel and is completed in the incarnation in Jesus Christ. This means that whatever is said about God and God's being-in-the-world must be based on the biblical account of God's revelatory activity.

2) The doctrine of God in [Black Theology presents a] God who is participating in the liberation of the oppressed of the land. This principle [is raised from] the first. Because God has been revealed in the history of oppressed Israel and decisively in the oppressed One, Jesus Christ, it is impossible to say anything about God without seeing God as being involved in the contemporary liberation of all oppressed peoples. The God in [Black Theology] is the God of and for the oppressed, and the God who comes into view in their liberation.12

11Ibid., 56.

12Ibid., 60-61.
**Blackness of God:** The Blackness of God is the heart of the doctrine of God in Black theology. This Blackness is also the essence of biblical revelation that is God's identification with the oppressed. Blackness of God, and everything this idiomatic reference implies is key to having knowledge of God in a racist society. There is no place for a colorless god in a society where human beings suffer precisely because of the pigmentation of their skin. William R. Jones, *Is God a White Racist?: A Preamble to Black Theology*, pushes his reader to consider their conceptions of God in relationship to racism. The summary of his assertion is either, God identifies with the oppressed and their oppression; or God is a God of racism.13

**God's Love:** In Black theology, God's love is not emphasized at the expense of God's righteousness; to do so is to make God's love a mere suggestion of some sentimentality. God's love is conceptually and actively related to God's righteousness. Black theology does not ask whether love is an essential element of Christian interpretation of God. It does ask whether the love of God can be properly understood without focusing equally on the biblical view of God's righteousness. Is it possible to understand what God's love means for the oppressed without wrath being an essential ingredient of the love of God? God's love in society refers to the righteous condemnation of everything racist. God's wrath represents God's commitment to the liberation of God's people. It is

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against those who would take God's people away from their relationship with God.\textsuperscript{14} For Cone, a God without wrath does not plan to do much about liberation. The wrath of God does not negate the love of God: the two are inseparable.

**God's Revelation:** God's divine self-disclosure occurs in the context of liberation. To know God is to know God's work of liberation. God comes to those who are oppressed and declares total identification with their situation and discloses to them the rightness of their emancipation on their own terms.\textsuperscript{15} God's revelation is incarnate in Jesus, the Christ that demonstrates God's commitment to Black liberation. Black people are accepting of God's love as God's righteousness in Jesus because incarnation precisely references God's commitment to the liberation of Black people and all that are oppressed. God demonstrates God's commitment in the self-giving Christ. The revelation in the presence of a self-giving Christ sets a new standard of righteousness in God's relationship with humanity. Jesus is consumed in Christ for the destruction of everything oppressive for the sake of justice. The righteousness of Jesus is his commitment to the liberation of the oppressed as God is committed to this work. Furthermore, Jesus' response to God embodies a radical standard and measure of commitment to the liberation by which all righteousness is determined.\textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 46.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 121-123
Jesus Christ: Ron Rhodes, “Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience” in *Reasoning from the Scripture Ministries*, says that Cone stands in the Chalcedonian creedal tradition of A.D. 451. This is a belief that Jesus Christ is “truly God and truly man.” He agrees with this, and he adds that the role of Jesus is God-Incarnate who liberates the oppressed. Jesus Christ is God entering the deepest places of human existence for the sole purpose of destroying the chains of slavery. This action frees oppressed people from ungodly principalities and powers that hinder their relationship with God. Black theology agreed that the gospels are not biographies of Jesus. As gospels, they are good news about God’s work in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus’ assumption into Christ means that he still lives. Resurrection of Jesus represents God's defeat of death and oppression. This is the message of liberation in Jesus to Black people. As the resurrected Christ, he transforms Black human oppression into the promise of Black human freedom.

Jesus is Black, precisely because of his embodiment of the Old Testament prophecy, Isaiah 53 and New Testament instruction Matthew 25:45 counting him as *the least of these* when distinguishes the Messiah as the One numbered among the oppressed. This passage refers to the Messiah being numbered

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17Ron Rhodes, “Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience” *Reasoning from the scriptures Ministries*, available from [www.home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Black Theology.html](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Black Theology.html); Internet; accessed 05 October 2000, 6.

among the oppressed nation of Israel. He is Black because he is numbered with the oppressed in order to fulfill the promise of freedom and hope made to them by God.¹⁹ He suffers with oppressed people because he was a poor Jew in a Roman dominated world. Christ’s interposition in history as Jesus is the expression of God in history whereby persons are able to know God’s concern for them as they are numbered as the rejected in society. Jesus in Black theology is envisioned as Christ in Black history. He is the One who stands on the side of Black people over against the oppressor. He is the example for revolt against the oppressive status quo.

The life of Jesus discloses the freedom of one that joins in the prophetic work of God as the liberator of oppressed persons. It discloses the freedom that is loosed in suffering. It is impossible to be for Jesus and not realize that one has chosen a life of suffering. “The very character of human existence as defined in his life is enough to show that one cannot be for [him] and for the societal humiliation of human beings. To be for Jesus means that one is for the oppressed, and supports their self-determination. The kingdom of God is for the poor and the unwanted because they represent the meaning of oppression and the certainty of liberation.”²⁰


Jesus, the Black Christ: Jesus is politically perceived as the Black Christ whose deliverance work has comprehensive socio-political ramifications. His life and work of emancipating the poor and rejected of society is the black work of Black liberation. Jesus becomes black in his identification with the poor and the oppressed. For Cone, the understanding of his becoming is grounded in his message of Luke 4:18-19: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”

Jesus is pictured as elder brother, fellow sufferer, and the Christ who still lives and renders help in relieving suffering.

The psycho-cultural significance of a Black Christ is paramount in order to comfort black people in revolution. A Black Christ who looks like black people, (the poor and impoverished of white society) cannot be seen to them as White, otherwise it continues the psychological oppression that blocks their relationship with God. The Black Christ awakens the psychic and spiritual consciousness of black people to the call of God, as well as, the commitment to their liberation in

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Christ. Christ is God's declaration of black people's *somebody-ness* (liberation) when white people insist upon their *nobody-ness*, (enslavement).23

To speak of the presence of Christ today means focusing on the forces of liberation in the black community. The value perspectives of the community must be reframed in terms of what aids the self-determination of black persons. The Black Christ means that he completely represents opposite values of white oppressive culture. Cone describes Christ as being at the center of a total Copernican revolution. This means that he extols as good what whites have ignored or regarded as evil. The Black Christ leads the warfare against the white assault on blackness by striking at white oppressive values and religion. The Black Christ embodies what the black community knows it must become. "Because he has become Black as we are, we now know what Black empowerment is. It is Blacks determining the way they are going to behave in the world."24

**Jesus' Reign dorm and Resurrection:** Cone advocated the necessity of translating first-century titles into symbols that are relevant today via an emphasis upon the concreteness of Jesus' continued presence today. To be a disciple of Christ today is to become Black with him. For men, this is a relevant discussion because for them to be disciples of Christ they must become partners

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with him in his liberating relationship with women and children. Jesus participates in his relationship with them in a manner that represents their respective liberation in society. This accomplishment is made in the face of the society that continues to seek to oppress them and reserve them at both second and non-class status.

"The Kingdom is what happens to persons when their being is confronted with the reality of God's historical liberation of the oppressed. Persons are placed in positions of acceptance or rejection to the liberation struggle.

... The kingdom is not an attainment of material security, nor is it a mystical communion with the divine. It has to do with the quality of one's existence in which a person realizes that persons are more important than property.

... For Jesus, repentance is a precondition for entrance into the kingdom. But it should be pointed out that repentance has nothing to do with morality or religious piety....

The kingdom is what God does and repentance arises solely as a response to God's liberation.

... To enter the kingdom is to enter the state of salvation, the condition of blessedness.\textsuperscript{25}

Therefore to participate in God's salvation is to further Jesus' Kingdom. This is cooperation with him, the Black Christ, as he liberated his people from

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 124-126.
bondage. Jesus' kingdom is remedy for the earthly reality wherein injustice is inflicted upon those who are helpless and poor. The Kingdom is salvation for the helpless and impoverished. It is seeing black people rise up against their oppressors, and the injustice inflicted against them. It is a demand that the righteousness of God and political justice become a reality today not tomorrow.

The resurrection of the Black Jesus as the righteousness of God is a real event. Although resurrection symbolizes universal freedom for all that are in bondage, in Black theology, it is not about future-oriented hope as heavenly compensation for present woes. Resurrection is current freedom from oppression, the full manifestation of Jesus' Kingdom in the present. Future-oriented resurrection anchors the 'white lie' of traditional white theology that distracts black fight for liberation in current life conditions. The distraction is held in place by concentration on otherworldliness. Rather, future hope is dependent upon present liberation, the prevention of intolerable inequities that keep black people from the full experience of their lives.

Human being: Black theology begins with the black condition as the fundamental datum of human experience. Because of this starting point, theological discussion cannot gloss over the significance of concrete human oppression in the world in which Blacks are condemned to live. In it's determining concreteness, Black theology resembled existentialism in its conviction "...that existence precedes essence. This means that the concrete
human being must be the point of departure of any phenomenological analysis of human existence."26

Human being is fully separated from everything that is evil and hinders identification with those that are enslaved. Quite literally, it means becoming oppressed with the oppressed, and making their cause one's own cause by involving oneself in the liberation struggle. It is to do the work of God, as God did not become a universal human, but an oppressed Jew. This action discloses to those who would do the work of God that both human and divine natures are inseparable from oppression and liberation. When knowing and appreciating human being, there is a focus on the Oppressed One and what he does for an oppressed community as it liberates itself from slavery. Jesus is not a human being for all persons; he is a human being for oppressed persons whose identity is made known in and through liberation. Therefore, our definition of the human being must be limited to what it means to be liberated from human oppression.27

Cone indicated his use of Sartre and Camus in supportive argument for human freedom, the experience of the absurd, as the means for reconciliation of the omnipotence of God with the immensity of human suffering. He affirmed that the sole purpose of God in Black theology is to illuminate the black condition so that black people can see their liberation as God's activity. "God in Jesus meets us in the situation of our oppressed condition and tells us not only who God is

26Ibid., 84.
27Ibid., 85-88.
and what God is doing about our liberation, but also who we are and what we must do about white racism. If blacks can take Christology seriously, then it follows that the meaning of our anthropology is also found in and through our oppressed condition.28

The human person is endowed with freedom. Cone outlined five facets of this freedom: 1) Freedom as liberation, 2) Freedom and the image of God, 3) Freedom as identification with the oppressed community, 4) Freedom and suffering, and 5) Freedom and blackness. These facets are described as the following:

1) Freedom deals with human existence in a world of societal enslavement. Freedom is the existential reality of human confrontation of any and every system that enslaves or sets limits on the being of persons. It is the participation of the whole person in the struggle for freedom.

2) Human beings are created in such a way until they cannot obey oppressive laws and continue to be human. To be human is to be in the image of God—that is, to be creative: revolting against everything that is opposed to humanity.

3) Truly free adults throw their lot in with the oppressed and accept whatever is necessary for them to be identified with the oppressed.

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28 Ibid., 85.
This is not done because of pity, but in awareness, they realize their existence is limited by another’s slavery.

4) Because being free is associated with an oppressed community, this association inevitably brings on suffering. Assertion of one’s freedom necessitates an encounter [of] the economic and social structure of oppression within a society. This type of freedom calls one to join in the work of God, the deliverance of the oppressed.

5) Because blackness is at once the symbol of oppression and the certainty of liberation, freedom means affirmation of blackness. To be free is to be identified with the victims of humiliation in human society and a participation in the liberation of the oppressed. 29

These descriptors facilitate consideration that freedom enables rebellion against every form of slavery, the suppression of everything creative. Therefore, humanity in this paradox of freedom, only knows itself through the oppressed being made free. Humanness is to be fully separated from everything that is evil, those things that limit humanness.

Sin and Salvation: Cone used a Tillichian dialectic to describe sin. “Human fallenness is expressed in the Bible as sin. Sin is the theological concept that describes separation from the source of being. Instead of affirming their identity in the source of being, sinners reject it and attempt to be what they are not. Sin

29Ibid., 87-103.
is thus a definition of being in relation to nonbeing; it is a condition of estrangement from the source of meaning and purpose in the universe.\textsuperscript{30}

Sin is anything that is contrary to liberation in the oppressed community, anything that keeps persons oppressed. Sin is a human condition in which the essence of the work of God, the liberation of the oppressed in Jesus Christ is denied. It is accepting slavery as the human condition of existence, which in essence, denies the freedom grounded in the work of God. It is a way of life, in which we cease to be fully human; this is failure is to be in full relationship with God. Sin makes us alienable from the source of our humanity in the world. This alienation results in human oppression and misery. As Cone determined, we make decisions (exercise choice for this author) about our self and others according to our private interests. We align ourselves with powers that take us away from relationship with God.

For Cone, sin is individual, but the weight of sin is corporate. Salvation and liberation are corporate constructs for establishing and maintaining community. Community, sin, and salvation form a frame for understanding our particular relation to God. By description, community, sin, and salvation are framed around a central event of God’s creative action. For Israel, this was the Exodus; and the covenant of Mt. Sinai is such a precipitating event. All subsequent activity is named in relation to this event. All other ways of living in the world are described and termed violations according to this event. Sin in the

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid. 103-104.
community of Israel is framed as a refusal to acknowledge the significance of the exodus and the covenant of God's liberating activity. Sin is failure to destroy the powers that seek to enforce alien laws on the community because these laws take the people of God away from relationship with God.

Therefore, it is incumbent on all members of the community to define existence according to the community's essence. Again, for Israel this is the exodus and the covenant because every member of community is related through the exodus and the covenant. Every member of the community must then defend self and the community against that which would destroy it by taking it away from its essence. For others in relation to the community as particularly ascribed to Israel's belief that Yahweh is the Lord of all history, "those who fail to define their existence accordingly are separated from God. To fail to recognize God's activity as defined by the community of Israel is to exist in sin."31

Sin is inseparable from salvation, which is an event that takes place in the moment of liberation from oppression. In essence, it is the restoration of human being. There can be no knowledge of the sinful condition except in the moment of an oppressed community claiming its freedom, which is the experience of salvation. Salvation is always represented in the concreteness of reality.

**Sin in relation to Black and White Communities:** Sin is a concept that is meaningful only for an oppressed community as it reflects upon its liberation. The true nature of sin can only be perceived in the intersecting moments of

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31Ibid., 105.
oppression and liberation. This means that the community knows what sin is because they have experienced the source of their being and is now able to analyze their own existence in relation to the creative action of God and the world at large. The community knows what non-being is because it has experienced being. The community is in position to say what the world ought to be in relation to what it is.

Sin in community, as particularly noted in black and white communities, is to speak of the other as if the oppressed and the non-oppressed are one community. This is the ultimate of insult to the oppressed and attempts at intimidating liberation and minimizing the experiences of oppression. The oppressor is so committed to his own way of life, which is built on the oppression of others; he/she is completely unaware of the impact of their oppressive activity and the assumptions about life that guide his or her existence. Liberation and salvation come in the moments of recognition and claim of ownership participation in the oppression of another and opening oneself to the ramification of owned oppression in relationship with the oppressed.

Sin in community for Black people is the "...loss of identity. It is saying yes to the white absurdity—accepting the world as it is by letting whites define black existence. To be in sin is to be content with white solutions for the black problem and not rebel against every infringement of white being on black being."32

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Black theology teaches deliverance from incorporation in a national community with an identity defined by economic prowess. The lesson brings persons into their identity in the Reigndom of God. The Reigndom is freedom with a nature of not doing what I will, but becoming what I should. Being like Jesus, the Oppressed One, is the essence of this gospel message in Black theology. He revealed to us what God envisioned us to be in Christ, the Oppressed Christian community. As such, we are redeemed creatures that God consumed into the work of liberation. By God's action, we become the community of hope and liberation. As Cone stated: "A man is free when he sees clearly the fulfillment of his being and is thus capable of making the envisioned self a reality."33

**Black Theology of Liberation**

Cone's contention was that all theology began at a point of a people's existential experience. They interpreted and understood the revelation of God specifically, God's relationship with them in the context of their experience. There is no such thing as theological objectivity. There are no abstract revelations, which are independent of human experiences. God meets us in the human situation, not as an idea or concept that is self-evidently true. God meets us as the liberator of the poor and weak, giving them authority to fight for freedom because they were made to be free. These assertions challenged

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Western Christianity's strict relationship with revelation as restricted to scripture as its only source. Cone saw this relationship as too confining and inadequate for movements in theology that addressed indigenous experience.

Theology is a human act of reflection, taken as a second step, in response to the first action of God, which is the liberation of the poor. Black theology was not developed simply as the rational study of the being of God in the world in light of the existential situation of the oppressed community. It seeks to give direction for communal participation in the work of God. It represents the community's participating in the liberation of the oppressed. Black theology represented actions of black people who work with God in helping black people to deepen the sense of their respective commitment to freedom. It was the comprehensive representation of Black people leaving oppressive conditions and thrusting toward their freedom.

Cone's Black Theology of Liberation is as much a theology of salvation that presents Christ, the revelation of God in this context of individual redemption, as a theology of culture that presents Christ, the revelation of God in political liberation of black people. Cone's Black Theology of Liberation with its roots in his discrimination experiences of Bearden, Arkansas and at Union Theological Seminary crystallized his observation of youth freedom fighters. He explained the experiences and the observations as urgings toward ascertaining theological truth. His theological arguments were inseparable from his experience and everything he observed going on around him.
For this reason, this dissertation included specific consideration of the cultural and emotional deterrents in conjunction with political hindrances as contributors to oppression experiences for African-American men. Wilmore referred to this dialectic of concrete spirituality as pragmatic spirituality.\textsuperscript{34} Such gave limited credence to individual liberation, which cannot occur without the corroborating experience of corporate liberation.

Black Theology is a theology of liberation because it believes the liberation of the black community \textit{is} God’s liberation. By that belief it used the experiences of oppressed black people in America as interpretive credence of the gospel of Jesus in light of comprehensive black experience. In addition, it theologized around the intrapsychic impact of these conditions. It analyzed Black church experience as emotionally sustaining and psychically maintaining black people in the midst of horrid oppressive conditions. This connection enabled the black theologian to articulate the gospel of Jesus, the Black Christ, as inseparable from the humiliated condition of black people. This realization bestowed upon black men and women the necessary power to break the chains of their oppression.

White people and the white church identifying with black people and the black church is not simply social activism. It is challenging the body of Christ to fulfill its vocation in the world. Dwight Hopkins, \textit{Introducing: Black Theology of Liberation} indicated Black Theology, serves as a critical reminder of conscience

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{34}Gayraud Wilmore, “Pastoral Ministry in the Origin and Development of Black Theology” in \textit{Black Theology A Documentary History, 2nd ed 1980-1992} (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 120.}
for the church's vocation. It is to liberate the poor in their journey with God to full humanity. Black Theology carried out this function by offering a witness of "...belief and faith that requires the ongoing critical questioning about whether ... that belief and witness are in line with the God of liberation of the oppressed." 35

Context of Black Theology

Black Theology, although abused by some traditional and mainline Black congregations, was the religious coincident to secular Black power. It arose due to the need of black people to define the scope and meaning of the black existence in a white racist society. Caught in the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement of the 1950's and 1960's, US citizens of African descent sought their past and present identification as distinguished and determined by physical and mental slavery. The secular search for identity by Black people in Africa and the US was counter to the one given to them in European colonialism. This search yielded an identity conception that could not divorce their religious practice from their slavery, segregation and integration experiences. Questioning and affirming God's comprehensive presence in each of these arenas was the lifeblood of these new black philosophers and theologians.

The Black Church

The black church was a creation of a black people whose daily existence was brutalized by overwhelming encounters with the reality of white power. As a

center of belief and practice for people situated in the midst of American racism and called by God to be full human beings, the black church continues to grapple with the question, "What does it mean to be black and Christian?" Additionally, black men continue to grapple with the question, "What does it mean to be a black man and Christian?"

The black church was often the sole source of identity and sense of community for the slave and his/her descendants. Often, it was the only sphere of the black experience that was free of white power. For this reason, the black church became the center for emphasis on freedom and equality for black people. This was specifically the case for many black men. Church provided them a sense of personal, familial and communal autonomy that was not experienced any place else in the larger society. Through the message of Jesus, black men and the black church more than determined its means of sustenance. It provided the method for socialization and spiritual instruction that moved them into an alien society. This method also moved the community of the faithful forward into the work of God, the liberation of the community of believers.

The Black Power Movement

Beginning in 1966, the Black Power Movement was the political resource for Black Theology. The Black clergy involved in its development were primarily educated and middle class. They recognized the need for a new starting point in theology. Black congregations and academic theologians, as well as, caucuses formed in large urban Catholic, Presbyterian, and Episcopal congregations
insisted that people at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder define the new starting point in theology. Therefore, black theologians began to re-read the Bible through the eyes of their slave grandparents and started to speak of God's solidarity with the oppressed of the earth. As such, early emphasis upon combating racism and framing racial identity were the main stages of Black theological thought. Secular political challenges pushed Black theology to formalize its tenets in response to challenges from white political authority and white theological influences upon black religion.

Cone emphasized the close relationship between Black power and Black theology as a measure for bringing theological sanction to the push for political difference in the treatment and eventual citizenship of Black Americans. Black power was the reference that represented both Black freedom and Black self-determination. Black people no longer view themselves without human dignity, but as human beings with the ability to carve out their own destiny. Grounded in political shifts, Black Theology of Liberation was the progenitor of other liberation theologies, such as African, Latin American, Asian, Feminist, and Womanist. As a liberation theology, it comprehensively expressed concern with the liberation of all oppressed people, whatever the form or directive.

Black theology functioned as the faith initiative for the Black Power Movement. It provided the premise upon which Black power has been at work from days of slavery. Black theology continues to provide the academic framework for instruction, development, and practical application in the praxis of
liberation among black people. Therefore, in praxis Black power and Christianity are not antithetical. Nor, is Black theology a heretical idea to be tolerated with painful consideration. Rather, Black theology and Black power is Christ's central message to twenty-first century America and abroad. Black Power is Black Theology of Liberation in Christian praxis.

**Full Civil Rights Movement in King and Malcolm**

Martin L. King, Jr. did Black theology from the perspective that freedom is apparent only when poor black folk, led by the black church, live out their freedom because God helps them in their daily struggle against the personal pain of their lives and the collective pain of oppression. Malcolm X did Black theology from the perspective that a liberation movement needed to free black minds from self-hate and subordination to white power.36

**Method in Black Theology**

Method in Black theology facilitated the response of the people of God to organize for justice in an effort to find out where they need to be in the work of God. The method was existential liberation and the affirmation of it. It begins with the encouragement of Black people to dip into "...the wellspring of indigenous black working class culture and examine issues of cosmology, sacredness of land, respect for community, and the alienation wrought by

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36 Ibid., 5.
materialism and consumerism from the standpoint of indigenous peoples..."  37

All methods in developing black theologies of liberation begin with black consciousness. This argues for the right of colonized Black people to develop their own methodologies of liberation.

Cone and Tillich

The theology of Paul Tillich helped Cone to form strong contentions that ratify a relationship between Black theology and Black power. Cone grounded cultural criticism as integral to the province of theology. Black Theology of Liberation was his instrument of cultural criticism because it challenged the poor and the oppressed to critique their faith in light of concrete experiences of oppression. It awakened consciousness to the impact of agency development in persons by society and the cultural mores that framed perceptions of personal and corporate relatedness to God.

Cone's Black Theology of Liberation was a theology of culture, via his Tillichian use of symbol as integral to his method for critiquing culture. The focus is upon the symbolic representation of ontological being via slavery, segregation and integration experiences, and visible reality of each of these as normative representatives of comprehensive theological interpretation and meaning. Tillichian influenced interpretation of concretely lived and religious experience framed blackness as the primary ontological symbol. It stood for

victims of oppression who realized that the survival of their humanity was bound
to their liberation from whiteness. Furthermore, it stood for all that is human and holy and those who joined oppressed black people in their determined struggle for this liberation.

**Cone and Barth**

Cone acknowledged that because he wrote his doctoral dissertation on Barthian anthropology, he naturally turned to him and his dialectic to express his deepest feelings regarding the black struggle for freedom. At the time, Barth and others like him, were the only resources at his command to express the theological meaning of the black struggle. However, Cone’s expression of the truth of his liberation claims in *A Black Theology of Liberation* did not arise from white neo-orthodox theologians. His truth came from his experiences of the Black Church, which was the most dominant influence for understanding his theological perspective.  

As before stated, his method for articulating oppression, as the starting point for theological reflection, was dependent upon Barthian dialectic for ascertaining truth about God: Christ not the Bible was/is the revelation of God. He retained this tension by setting Christ in the anthropocentric relationship with black people and fully experiencing their oppression. Scripture is the resource for understanding the method of Christ as the revelation of God’s liberation work of black people. God’s existential commitment to the liberation of black people

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was/is the Black Christ. God’s commitment to Black people in the midst of oppressive conditions gave black people the authority to demand their liberation.

**Sources and Norms in Black Theology**

The Black theology project had four basic sources for methodologically responding to the liberation needs of black people. These four basic sources are 1) the historical context of slavery, 2) the perspective from reading and experiencing the Bible, 3) Black protest and affirmation of black pride and resistance against white racism during the Black Power Movement, as well as, the movements of M. L. King, Jr. and Malcolm X, and 4) the Black church in its continuing wrestling with the mission of God as expressed in Jesus of Nazareth.

These sources were the keys for understanding and doing theology from the perspective of oppression and the liberation of the black poor. In general, these sources located the meeting between divine revelation and black humanity. They helped the black theologian to distinguish between the sinful spirits of oppression and the divine spirit of liberation.

The sources for Cone’s Black Theology are 1) Black experience, 2) Black history, 3) Black culture, 4) Revelation, 5) Scripture, and 6) Tradition. These sources were used to create a theology that was in harmony with the black condition and biblical revelation. His use of these sources responded to the task of setting a new norm for God-talk, which sought to be black-talk. The norm was not private for him, a particular theologian. It was raised out of the black community. This meant that he took seriously the reality of the world and what it
meant to be black in a white racist society. Jesus of Nazareth was/is the Black Christ who provided the necessary soul for Black liberation. The very existence of Black theology was dependent upon its ability to relate to the uniquely human situation of oppressed people in general and black people in particular.

Currently, Dwight Hopkins indicated the germane importance of at least six sources in Black Theology of Liberation. These sources are 1) The Bible, 2) The Black Church, 3) Faith tradition of struggle for liberation, 4) African American women's experience 5) Culture, and 6) Radical politics. These sources are of constructive use for the continuing development of the Black theology project. These sources also represent the direction of maturation for the project because they begin to consider the specific category experiences of oppression within the various groupings of black people. Again, these sources seek to set a norm of unity between the pain of oppression and promise of liberation found in the Bible and the similar existence experienced by the African American poor today.

"Therefore, to be black and Christian together is to accept a specific calling – that is, to struggle against forces that would block being black in the world and against the obstacles preventing African Americans from achieving their full individual and group humanity, which God has created them to reach. At the same time, and even more importantly, it means having faith in a movement for individual and systemic liberation, a liberation that is the final work
that God and the oppressed people will carry out to bring about a full humanity.\textsuperscript{39}

It is the recognition that God, through Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit, continuously works with the poor as they learn to love themselves. The response of the poor to the work of God is their love for themselves. They practice their total freedom by creating their full humanity.

**Criticism of Black Theology**

Black theology philosophically challenged the traditional Western Christian theology's underpinning of individualism which, sanctioned stripping persons of their identity and incorporating them in a new national identity. Black theology challenged individual salvation in favor of the corporate salvation because individualistic notions tend to separate men from women and soul from body. Philosophically, this was done so those individuals represented the norm of the society that maintained the prescribed social order.

**Traditional White Christian Theology**

Major criticism of Cone and *Black Theology of Liberation* came from two camps. First, traditional White theology questioned whether Black experience was a sufficient enough moral frame or hermeneutic for the theological task of gathering insight into scripture. Is it enough to speak of the continuing revelation of God among people in general and black people, specifically? Is black experience a sufficient enough moral criteria to be used as the starting point of

theology? Ron Rhodes, “Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience” *Reasonings from the Scriptures Ministries*, is representative of white theological criticism of Cone’s use of black experience as a normative hermeneutic for his Black Theology. Rhodes’ sentiments opposes any experience other than Scripture as the starting point for revelation. He considers feminist, Womanist, gay, and all other perspectives as attempting to rob scripture of its intrinsic authority and distorting its intended meaning. Rhodes, like other white Christian theological traditionalist, essentially considers Cone committing the same theological atrocities as white racists during slavery, but in reverse.40

Rhodes criticizes in favor of a biblical liberation theology wherein scripture, not the *black experience*, is the supreme authority in matters of faith and practice. He suggests that following a Biblical line of development, a strong biblical case can be constructed against racism. He perceives that this is something that should be at the heart of liberation theology. He argues this based upon a stated belief in the unity of the human race, which he sees consistent with scriptural emphasis. He reasons that because of the unity of humanity, there is no place for racial discrimination and all are equal in God’s sight. His assertions are masculine oriented, as well as, being consistent with white theology’s tendency to argue in the abstract. He represents the failure of white theology.

40Ron Rhodes, “Black Theology, Black Power and the Black Experience.” *Reasonings from the Scripture Ministries* available from
Patrick Bascio, *The Failure of White Theology: A Black Theological Perspective*,\(^{41}\) gives clear indication of misinterpretation of the religious life of the enslaved African by what of traditional White theology. He indicates an appreciation that slave acceptance of Christianity does not mean submission and commitment to the oppressive regime of colonialism. Black freedom remained thematically central to black religion, as it is a religion of protest against black suffering. Black theology has its roots in Black religion; therefore, it is a theology of protest. Bascio insists that White theology does not seriously consider the effects of oppression upon black people, the specific pain of lynching, murder, castration and daily humiliation.

**Black Theology and Gender**

Womanist theologians question whether there is inclusiveness of Black women’s experience in a theology that is overwhelmingly written and interpreted from the African-American male perspective. Similar to traditional white theology, Womanist critiques questioned the basic authority of black men to write and discuss liberation when the basic ground for theological reflection is black male self-experience.

\(^{41}\) Patrick Bascio, *The Failure of White Theology: A Black Theological Perspective* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).
Womanist scholars, Jacquelyn Grant\(^{42}\) and Katie G. Cannon\(^{43}\) raise similar criticism, relative to patriarchal values in Black theology and its interpretive use of Jesus. Radical womanism and feminism critiqued Black theology as a traditional Christian theology. Specifically, they critique the identification of the Christ of faith as male or masculine. This gender identification is alien to women. The component of the male Jesus’ historical identity raised questions of his identification with women for this group of Womanist and feminist theologians.

Womanist concern was the gender-inclusiveness of Black theology. As earlier stated, the Cone-ian method primarily began with existential experience of men when exploring God-talk and formulating communal God-conversation. As such, Black theology has an overwhelming emphasis on the black man. The Womanist questioned the authority by which Black reality in the Black theology assumed the presence of black women’s experience when theological authority was established through male discussion of liberation issues from the perspective of black male experiences. This author concedes the primacy of African-American male perspectives on liberation theology and the effects of this primacy upon his interpretive of Black Theology of Liberation. However, this author assumed neither a Womanist nor a black feminist perspective in his theological critique.


This dissertation assumed Womanist and feminist critique of patriarchal cultural values as influential upon theological interpretation to be true and offensive. It is an insult of women to generalize an assumption of their Christ experience from a male mindset or masculine perspective. This is a similar insult experienced by black people with white people as black people interpret Black-Christ experiences within the mindset of white people. In adherence to the basic assumptions of all liberation theologies, this black male pastoral theologian expects black women to relevantly respond in the authority of their liberation from the oppression.

**Black Theology and Culture**

Further criticism of Cone, the hermeneutic of Black experience from Rhodes, was that Black theology had not expressed an ability to transcend culture. He purports that Jesus does transcend culture by acknowledging "...cultural distinctions, but disallowed them when they interfered in any way with truth about God. A principle we can derive from this: Culture must always take a back seat to the truth of God as revealed in Scripture." 44 In response to this criticism, this author purport it important conceptually and realistically affirm the continuing expressed cultural concreteness of Jesus. The affirmation is that he was Jewish and there is evidence for his description as a Black Jew. The certainty is this: He is the Black Messiah.

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"Ron Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power and the Black Experience." *Reasonings from the Scripture Ministries* available from
Shifts in Cone-ian Thought

The prefaces of his re-release of A Black Theology of Liberation speak to Cone's consideration of the impact of his work for a larger dissection of persons interested in the merits and benefits of A Black Theology of Liberation. He seemed to be pleased, but surprised at the impact of the work of the man from Bearden, Arkansas. Although we are not privy to complete dialogues, his texts, My Soul Looks Back\(^{45}\) and For My People,\(^{46}\) gave early indication of a deepened sojourn.

In the re-release, Cone examined the relevance of his work to the widening struggle of African Americans via an exploration of the roots of his faith and ideology from grounding in early childhood and the challenges of academia. Articles and lectures around the world concretized for him the impact of his inversion of cultural symbols, blackness and whiteness for an ontological liberative end. Blackness became the symbol of liberation and whiteness became the symbol of oppression. He continues to seek different strata of liberation concerns from around the globe. Black women all over the world hear his clarion call within the frame of the gospel's denouncement of oppression and liberate themselves from the oppression they experience at the hands of others.

\(^{45}\)James Cone, My Soul Looks Back (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1982).

Group oppression experiences and re-interpreted biblical texts are utilized in the face of social injustice and economic disenfranchisement.

Cone acknowledged limitations and significant shifts in his theological perspective from the initial publication of *A Black Theology of Liberation*. For example, if he were publishing it today, he would not use a theological structuring that begins with a methodology based on divine revelation, and then proceeding to explicate the doctrines of God, humanity, Christ, church, world, and eschatology. He would adjust his methodology in light of four themes: sexism, the exploitation of the Third World, classicism, and less dependence upon the neo-orthodoxy of Karl Barth and other European theologians.47

He acknowledged that Barth and others like him were the major sources available to him at the time. Essentially, he was attempting to force the existential experience of black people in the theological model of the oppressor. He used the format of those who historically did not validate the faith and religious experience of black people to validate his experience of the revelation of God in the liberation of black people. The oppressors’ religious faith cannot explain the religious experience of the oppressed. He seemed elated with the current availability of a wider variety of ethno-centric theological criticisms. He helped to bring that availability to fruition.

He described in very vivid and personal terms the impact of his acculturation as an African-American male scholar, with the sense of displacement in both the academics of his profession and with those whom he was supposed to identify. This was good instruction for a fledgling male African American pastoral theologian, as well as, good individual pastoral therapeutic insight from one who had done in-depth self-reflection. A significant achievement in this regard was Cone coming to grips with the training he received and his balance of it against the reality being an African American male theologian in the West.\textsuperscript{48}

If he were publishing \textit{A Black Theology of Liberation} today, the critical theme of liberation, as the central organizing motif for doing theology would remain. It would be further grounded in African-American history and its prevailing connection to the larger US-American culture. The primary sources for beginning and doing a Black Theology of Liberation would remain the Bible and the black struggle for freedom. He would maintain his method that is a direct challenge to European theological methodology that does oversight of individual experience by claiming a normative experience for all.

Cone's basic belief is that neither whites, nor any other group holding power, will voluntarily empower those who are powerless. Freedom is not a gift, but must be taken. Essentially, African Americans are needed for public reflection upon the ever expansiveness of oppressive systems. Black theologians are

\textsuperscript{48}ibid., xv.
needed for black theological responses that represent an appreciation for global connectedness of the condition of the African in US-America to the larger world.

Conclusion

The work of this chapter is to provide an overview of James Cone's Black Liberation. This author referred to general sources of criticism in Cone's thought, as well as, his critiques of himself. The particular benefit of Black theology to this project is that it facilitated pastoral theological reflection on the model of Good-Enough Mentoring.

Cone helped to broaden an understanding of Good-Enough Mentoring to include cultural, social, and political dimensions of racism and oppression. While Good-Enough Mentoring addressed the internalized racism existing in society, Cone helped this pastoral theologian to envision liberation from internalized racism as part of a much larger process related to economic, cultural, and political aspects of liberation. For the purpose of this dissertation, Good-Enough Mentoring was a micro-process within a much larger macro-process.
CHAPTER IV

CULTURAL ASSESSMENT: CORNEL WEST

The purpose of this chapter is to present the concept of nihilism espoused in the work of Cornel West. Nihilism was described as the corporate depression of African Americans due to racism in the cultural context of U.S.-Americanism. Establishment of an interrelationship between nihilism, racism, and American ideals provided culture-critical distinctions necessary for the Black pastoral counseling model and practice of Good-Enough Mentoring. Additionally, the racial-conscious definitions in the work of Charles W. Mills was used to complete the analysis of Black concerns presented in the therapeutic relationships.

This chapter continues the development of good-enough mentoring as the norm for pastoral counseling between African-American men in this dissertation. Methodologically, the model offered empathic responsiveness as an interpretive norm that countered the wider culture’s failure to deliver this type of responsiveness to African-American men. Support praxis for this dissertation connected failed empathic responsiveness in the individual to corporate nihilism. Both supported examination of racism and white supremacy affects in order for African-American men to therapeutically experience a different sense of self-cohesion. This sense was not otherwise experienced until the interrelatedness between racism, nihilism, white supremacy and African American male
intrapsychic well-being was established in treatment. Specific discussion of Cornel West's concept of nihilism and the curative cultural critique he provided oriented the development in treatment presented in this dissertation. Treatment of nihilism in the individual is possible via curative cultural critique that is indigenous to the specific pastoral counseling relationship. This interrelatedness was used to frame Good-Enough Mentoring.

It was observed that African-American men wrestled daily with the unofficial policies of businesses and public institutions that were rooted in negative and racial stereotypical images. Good-Enough Mentoring does not eliminated these stereotypes. However, in the context of the pastoral counseling relationship with a Black male pastoral counselor, African-American men are enabled to work through these stereotypes. It helped these male counselees to make appropriate and healthy responses to those stereotypes that promoted and supported by cultural empathic failures. Appropriate self-healthful responses for African-American men were their reconnection with the sense of their own intrinsic value.

This author made two culturally relevant assumptions which necessitated inclusion of particular criticism reflected in this dissertation. The first was the presence of positive cultural identification between the males, pastoral counselor and counselee. This practical address of certain U.S.-American cultural expectation of this implausibility, particularly via Good-Enough Mentoring made
the relationship more effective. The cultural expectations were related to male achievement of life goals and dreams. These same goals and dreams for African-American male counselees were impacted by specific cultural challenges related to racism and nihilism. Good-Enough Mentoring was designed to meet these challenges and aided most of the African-American men in this black male pastoral counselor's practice in their achievement. It provided them the kind of support that enabled them to counter the effects of racism and nihilism.

The second assumption was related to the first, the benefit of positive male identification would occur in the process of the pastoral counseling relationship. The field of pastoral counseling required theoretical, theological, and socio-cultural foundations for theory development and model building that support the benefit of positive male identification. However necessary are these categories toward praxis improvement, the directive to prove via the indicated categories contained a benign racial dimension that countered this different response to African American intrapsychic health proposal. Consequently, Good-Enough Mentoring had to address cultural challenges of racism and nihilism within the field, as well as, help African-American men resolve their need for culturally supportive relationships that countered the effects of these two cultural forces.
White Supremacy-Racism

White supremacy has over five hundred years of historical and philosophical underpinnings of racism in this U.S.-American culture. These underpinnings are not expected to soon dissipate. They represent the gradual consolidation of global white identity which continues to impact every facet of the indigenous and transplanted cultures that experiences European colonialism. This sense of supremacy has impacted all social change, economic shift, and political regime formation since post-Enlightenment. Whatever disagreement on religion, economics, politics, and communal relations, every major philosopher since John Locke and Immanuel Kant have tacitly supported the empirical establishment of new norms that agreed whites are human and non-whites are subhuman.¹

This Black male pastoral counselor observed the impact of comprehensive racialization upon the African-American men in his practice. They exhibited stunting in their social, emotional, and/or spiritual maturation, as well as, inarticulate of their frustration. Cornel West² and Charles W. Mills,³ cultural philosopher and cultural critic respectively, named the cultural legacy of


European colonialism manifest as white supremacy to be the most devastating cultural force in modern history. Specifically, when discussed in the U.S.-American context relative to African-American men, images of the KKK and neo-Nazi movements abound. These groups are understandable as popular white cultural extremist actions advocating White Power. They support white supremacy\(^4\) as both a reality and a worldview wherein white identity and the non-constraint of it are dominant social-cultural norms. African-American men internalized this identity. Subsequently, it constrained their achievement of life goals and dreams and impacted every interpersonal relationship.

**CORNEL WEST**

Three volumes of West's work, *Prophecy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity*, *Race Matters*, and *The Cornel West Reader*, delineates the connection between the communal sense of disenfranchisement and cultural environment that impacts the well-being of African Americans. The connection is internalized white supremacy. These volumes helped to make interpretations about how continuing cultural-political stereotypes\(^5\) promoted

\(^4\)Mills explored racism and global white supremacy as one in the same entity, "...a political system, a particular power structure of formal or informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for the different distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits, burdens, rights and duties." 3.

\(^5\)A typical social-cultural stereotyping is the racial profiling of African Americans. Males are expected to have an inability to do social management of their anger. There are expectations of violence and failed respect for property and the law.
internalization of white supremacy among African-American men. Typical social-cultural stereotyping is the racial profiling of African Americans. Males are expected to be involved in illegal activity, violence, failed respect for property and/or the law. There is the generalized inability to do social management of their anger.

West's advocacy for communal response to social-cultural conditions does not overlook the responsive capability of the individual. For him, not only have individual African Americans struggled within the larger framework of racism, but also they suffer the corporate condition of nihilism. This mindset continually depletes the *self-energy* needed in mobilization for the achievement of dreams.

West's sense of critical pessimism, central to racial reasoning, is a characteristic that seems to be uniquely African American and male. This pessimism orients his philosophical ideas and cultural criticisms, but he is grounded within a Christian faith tradition that pushes for pragmatic critique of African American communal concerns. West's perspective on race matters is self-ascribed as *democratic pragmatism*. All persons contribute to the well-being of others and need to participate in their own self-determination. In West's democratic pragmatism, nihilism is the number one problem facing African Americans.⁶ For this burgeoning Black male pastoral counselor-theologian, it is

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⁶Cornel West *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999), xv.
exciting to see and hear a Black man participating in this type of public dialogue of cultural criticism.

**West-ian Worldview**

West, indicates in the preface to *The Cornel West Reader*, that he stands in the "...skeptical Christian traditions of Montaigne, Pascal and Kierkegaard—figures in touch with (and often tortured by) an inescapable demon of doubt...."  

However, he remains committed to the Christian faith because of the concrete example of love and compassion Jesus rendered in the biblical world.

His Christian caring has deep democratic commitments. His obsession is the confrontation of the pervasive evil of unjustified suffering and unnecessary social misery in the world. He is determined to explore the intellectual sources and existential resources that feed the human courage to be, courage to love, and the courage to fight for democracy.  

His faithful skepticism, philosophy, and cultural criticism are grounded in a radical—not rational—choice of the courage to love, which has been existentially enacted by a particular Palestinian Jew named Jesus.

To be modern is having the courage to use one's critical intelligence to question and challenge prevailing authorities, powers, and hierarchies. This does not mean that the modern gives up or declares there is no norm. However,

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7 Ibid., xvi.

8 Ibid., xv.
everything has value and every point is equally valid. It means that the modern pursues dialogue at all cost, even at the risk of discovering his or her own fallibility. It is a terrific quest for meaning at the risk of discovering that meaning is in the quest itself. The modern cherishes the dialogical and democratic process through which we pursue risk-laden conversation and troublesome intimacy.⁹

Basic to the African American struggle for identity in this U.S.-American cultural context is the merger of two distinct heritages, African and American. Philosophical debates have questioned whether victims of the African Holocaust and their descendants should plant the primary distinction of their identity, in Africa or America. Is it possible to lay African identity over against American or vice versa? Is health prescribed as an integration of the two?

To be African in U.S.-American culture is an identity resolved in the varied experiences of persons living on and transplanted from the continent of Africa. African identity is formed and supported by a culture of languages, histories, customs, traditions, and slavery. To be African is to wrestle with the contiguous nature of relationship with Africans that live on the continent. A continual questioning of whether there is enough of our corporate identity remaining to recognize and support self-identification between the transplant and the indigenous.

⁹Ibid., xvii.
To be American is to be a part of a dialogical and democratic operation that grapples with the challenge of being human in an open-ended and experimental manner. Although America is a romantic project in which a paradise, a land of dreams is fanned and fueled with a religion of cast possibility, it is, more fundamentally, a fragile experiment—precious yet precarious—of dialogical and democratic human endeavor that yields forms of modern self-making and self-creating unprecedented in human history. ¹⁰

Furthermore, as culturalist and/or purist we observe many willing and unwilling immigrants, refugees, and prisoners arriving on these shores expecting all the possibilities held out by America. For those that are willing to start anew and recast themselves for the purpose of deliverance and betterment, America holds the idealistic opportunity for self-transformation and self-reliance. Achievement requires only restless energy and boldness which causes individuals to push the limits of their endurance in a way that makes new opportunities and possibilities credible and worth the effort.

Expansion on West's worldview

To be an American is to be a practitioner of a civil religion that combines political opportunity, economic gain, and biblical sanction to form an ethic that

¹⁰Ibid., xviii.
affirms the individual's ability to transcend any past discretion and thereby arrive at a new identity. Many have come to this land functioning as though they were a new incarnation as the chosen people of God. The systemic US national expansion project, grounded in the propositions of manifest destiny, attempted to eliminate the indigenous population, and transplant colonized people while creating rapid growth that has been unprecedented in modern recorded history.

The voracity of the American cultural values is its orientation toward the future. However, such a futuristic orientation often degenerates into sentimental happy endings, while dreams of betterment downplay the dark realities of suffering in our midst. Blindness to dark realities flourishes because of conservative political rhetoric which appeals to the dominant social fears of whites. This type of blindness is a means for overlooking the atrocities of violence, subjugation, or slavery in our past or present. "To be American is to downplay history in the name of hope, and to ignore memory in the cause of possibility. To be American is to, in many ways, be ignorant to the all-too-human forms of mendacity and hypocrisy pervasive in American life."\textsuperscript{11}

**Black Nationalist Response to Racism**

The Black Nationalism Movement and the Civil Rights Movement comprised the most comprehensive African-American response to racism in this country. This statement does not give due consideration to all of the non-violent

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., xix.
protests of families and the continuing liberation traditions of the black church. However, it was the secular armies of the African-American communities and the sermonic traditions of black churches and mosques that pushed forward the black liberation agenda as a political entity that encouraged different designs for black participation in this United States of North America. The intent of the work was the dismantling of the politics of race as a final overthrow of colonialism, which instilled a different identity in black people.

Black Nationalism reached for the opportunity to experience mutual social empathy with relative success in its outcome. A degree of heightened consciousness was reached in the minimization of agrarian-based models for capitalism. However, technology and its varied representations quickly moved us into an era of information-based capitalism in which the digital-divide widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots. The benefit of being an American is to receive narcissistic support toward the achievement of one's life goal and dream. Black people continue to receive limited narcissistic support from the same American sources. Black Nationalism countered this cultural conditioning, scattered and nurtured seeds of liberation around the globe in accordance with its nature. For example, there were no independent African nations at the beginning of Martin Luther King, Jr's ministry. By the time of his death, this condition was changed, the descendants of transplanted Africans in this U.S.-American culture borrowed from the struggle of the indigenous on the continent.
Currently, there are a number of independent states and their economic and political thriving range from bare subsistence to affluence.

**Fragile Black self**

Black conservatism, as often expressed in Black Nationalism, gained impetus because of escalated sentiments that America's will to have racial justice was weak; therefore, Black people needed to close ranks for its survival in a hostile country. This worldview represented the fragility of the Black self because African Americans doubted the positive responsiveness of the dominant culture to their comprehensive support needs. The fragility of the Black self remains connected to the pain that has not been processed as the result of the continuing onslaught of racism and internalized white supremacy. African Americans often perpetuate acts of violence against self and others that are hallmarks of white supremacist stereotyping. African-American men deny their own blackness with its constituent personal and corporate experiences in service to a patriarchal chauvinism. This Black male worldview seems often used to regulate his environment and preserve a black social order under circumstances of literal and symbolic socio-political brutality. West named this self-assault as nihilism and described it as the corporate condition of the African-American male self.

**Nihilism**

Nihilism is a disease of the African-American soul. It represents a collapse of the meaning of life and the eclipse of hope. There is absence of love
of self and others. As a cultural phenomenon, it is represented in the breakdown of family, and communal bonds, and spiritual communities that have traditionally helped African Americans to face despair, disease, and death. It destroys attributes of interdependent communal life. The distinction leads to the emotional fracturing of children because of the breakdown of communal infrastructures. The loss of social-competent structures is devastating because they promote a sense of self-cohesion and narcissistic well-being.

Nihilism is a threat to the African-American community. It is not just a matter of relative economic deprivation or political powerlessness. The threat of nihilism to the African-American community is more ominous now because market forces with its particular morality shape black leadership. The effect of which creates a crisis in black leadership. Many African Americans under these conditions are often bereft of resources in confronting the crises of their lives brought about by the workings of US capitalist society. This threat contributes to criminal behavior, feeds on poverty, shatters cultural institutions, and thrives on weakened communal well-being.

Nihilism cannot be cured. However, there is the possibility of conversion that emerges in the individual and corporate struggle against internalized white supremacy and European-America dominance. As West framed it, there must be a conversion experience, a collective response by Black leadership to the threat of nihilism. He placed a politics based on an ethic of love at the center of
Supporting arguments for the politics of conversion does not rest on analysis of how racism, sexism, or class subordination is accomplished alone. The politics of conversion requires love and care. This type of politics is a turning of the soul through one's affirmation of one's worth and is fueled by concern for others. "The politics of conversion proceeds on the local level—in those institutions in civil society still vital enough to promote self-worth and self-affirmation. It surfaces on the state and national levels when grass-roots democratic organizations put forward a collective leadership."12

Collaboration: Corporate Address of Communal Ills

West highlights the need for prophetic reasoning for undergirding the transformation expressed in political conversion. He described prophetic reasoning as moral reasoning fueled by mature black identity, coalition strategy, and Black cultural democracy. Such a prophetic view was mature Black self-love and self-respect that was grounded in the moral quality of Black responses to all forms of undeniable racist degradation in the American past and present.13 West operationalized his ethical structure of collaboration via an ethic of love that worked through a politics of conversion. Democratic pragmatism is a worldview which is grounded in the value of persons and their contributions to the black liberation agenda.

13Ibid., 38
Prophetic Function of the Black male pastoral counselor

Case analysis of the African-American men in this Black male pastoral counselor’s practice supported the necessary cultural analysis of nihilism and racism. They expressed the phenomenology of European colonialism, white supremacy. Nihilism is the emotional impact of comprehensive racialization of culture. Racism, the social facilitator for internalizing white supremacy thwarted narcissistic need satisfaction for these African-American men.

Nihilism and racism disrupted the wider culture’s support for healthful self-identification in the African-American men of this black male pastoral counselor’s practice. This disruption led to a form of corporate depression, anger turned inward. This condition presents itself in the lives of these men via family breakdown and communal disconnectedness. In short, the colonial history of the United States of America and its socio-political legacy of white supremacy mastered in the lives of these men a sense of meaninglessness and loss of purpose.

The proposed counter development to this disruption was good-enough mentoring. Exploration of its address of nihilism and racism will be later demonstrated in the chapter on the model. Its design seemed to allow the African-American male counselee the opportunity to articulate with the Black male pastoral counselor his concerns with loss of self-identification as the comprehensive impacts of the wider culture.
Good-Enough Mentoring is cogently concerned with racism and nihilism. Racism is the external enforcement of white supremacy and nihilism is internalized racism that effectively dislocates the African American personality, both socially and spiritually. Good-Enough Mentoring was expected to provide an opportunity for responding to the expansive impact of racist nihilistic threats upon the lives of African American males. Effective pastoral counseling with African-American men required critical appreciation for racism. It was having one's eyes opened to critical appreciation for the worldview(s) that orient culture and civil theology that support US-American politics. There was necessity for a model of pastoral counseling that facilitated African-American male self-management in response to pervasive prejudice that continues to be mystifying.

This particular practice of pastoral counseling is prophetic\textsuperscript{14} work in the African-American community because it is counter-cultural and challenges political and social powers, as well as, destructive personal authority. The prophet practitioner of this work in the African-American community comes against any power or authority that takes the people away from relationship with God. Prophetic pastoral counseling assumed the charge of helping persons to (re)discover their relationship with God. This is accomplished by helping them to

\textsuperscript{14}Prophetically understood as counter-cultural and challenging to cultural, political, social powers. The prophet comes against any power or authority that takes the people away from relationship with God. Prophetic refers to the affective work of an person given and assuming a charge to point persons or people back to full relationship with God and pursuit of liberty.

Consequently, prophetic practice attends to the concerns of African American parents getting their teen sons to the age of 25 without death. Black male pastoral counselors as cultural prophets speak to other African-American men for strengthening their respective relationships and building a family that maintains a sense of stability for him and with others.

How is it possible for a male Black pastoral counselor to accomplish this cultural task in the individual pastoral therapeutic relationship with male African-American counselees? Collaboration was a response to racism in the material discipline of West’s work. This dissertation constructed a model that principally used this type of ethical relatedness to counter the comprehensive effects of the race-oriented environment upon the psyche of African-American men. This model made prophetic use of the requisite activity that stipulated internalization of white supremacy among African-American men. It examined their angst regarding the articulation of feelings while providing a relationship that enabled exploration and expression.

The pastoral therapeutic relationship process provided a safe place for African-American men to explore their vulnerabilities and helped them to learn healthy ways to negotiate relational challenges related to their nihilistic self-experience. This author discovered similar empathic-responsive work in
mentoring studies similar to the one conducted by Winston Gooden\textsuperscript{15} with poor African-American men. The studies and his practice indicated the benefit of supportive relationships for men when making beneficial life changes. No studies were found that connected mentoring as counter to racism; however, practical collaboration encouraged this black male pastoral counselor to explore indicated relationship benefits as counters to nihilistic threats in the lives of the African-American men in his practice.

The answer to this question is discussed further in the chapter dedicated to the development of the model of pastoral counseling referred to as Good-Enough Mentoring between African-American men. This model addressed the specific concerns of racism and the threat of nihilism. Although pastoral counseling was not referred to in West's work, it is deemed to be an integral social institution in civil society. Relationships developed in this context were vital to the well-being of African-American men; especially when they approximated and promoted healthful self-worth and positive self-affirmation. Good-Enough Mentoring relations addressed the concerns that limited healthful empathic responsiveness. Simply stated, Good-enough mentoring helped to address internalized racism and nihilistic self-experience.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a summary of Cornel West's concept of nihilism as corporate depression of African Americans. West critiques racism and internalized white supremacy in light of nihilistic threats to the well-being of African Americans. Specifically, this chapter sets the cultural-critical groundwork for later discussion of good-enough mentoring. The use of relationship aided therapeutic cultural assessment for the effects of nihilism upon African American male self-consciousness, their pursuit of life goals and dreams.
Significant aid in developing this model for transformation and Good-Enough Mentoring was the work of Na’im Akbar. His research was selected and used because his work addressed the needs of black men. As an Afro-centric psychologist, Akbar devised a model of Afro-centric psychology supported by an African cosmology. His purpose for development was to help African Americans to get in touch with the roots of their African spirituality, as well as, with modes of educational and communal relatedness. He developed a Natural Psychology that observed the natural patterns and values in creation as a means for establishing wholeness in the self. His system of psychological education was designed to help African Americans to traverse the intrapsychic boundaries of their respective lives. His focal intent was the resurrection of skills and competence at living provided for in African-based knowledge of self, family, community and the Ultimate.

This chapter presents a summary of Akbar’s work via the concentration on several aspects of his work: Namely, his Natural Psychology, the psychological legacy of slavery, and dimension of cultural re-education of African Americans. Several of these aspects of his work are used later to form a model of good-enough mentoring and a method of cultural re-education for African-American men.
**Na'ım Akbar and Cultural Re-education**

Akbar built a model of cultural re-education for African Americans upon the work of ethno-social theorist, Carter G. Woodson, and his book *Mis-education of the Negro*. Woodson described mis-education as the consequence of an entire group of people being systematically deprived of the knowledge about themselves, their history and skills of life. Woodson observed the self-demeaning relationships between second and third-generations of African descendants of slaves that were educationally programmed to comprehensively negate themselves. He interpreted this behavior as both the personal and collective consequences of people who have lost their self-awareness because of a process of deliberate "mis-education."¹

Akbar used Woodson’s premise of mis-education to devise a system of cultural re-education. The system addresses every aspect of self as the seat of education. Akbar uses traditional understanding of African spirituality to bridge the gap between psychology, education, and spirituality. The comprehensive nature of the self as indicated in traditional African spirituality was opposite to the dichotomized perspective of traditional Western spirituality. This base provided Akbar the creative language for moving between the disciplines of psychology, theology and cultural criticism. He does not use Western culture's psychological resources to validate his psychological assertions.

Akbar contends that Western psychology's understanding of the nature of the self is too narrow. This is especially the case when considering the self as larger than an observable entity. Previously, the soul was considered a spark of God housed in human form and the self made in the image and likeness of God. Such an exalted self-understanding allowed for theological and spiritual interpretation and application rather than psychological ones. "Human beings were considered to follow the order of nature, but they were also capable of rising above the limitations of the physical or material world. [N]ature was used as a source of allegories or metaphors to describe the growth or evolution of [humanity] rather than a way to give direct images of [humanity]."²

Akbar's language for transformation is characterized theological and spiritual rather than scientific. This type of language transcends grafted knowledge to Natural Psychology. "Grafted knowledge is a set of ideas which has taken what is natural and put them together with something that is either unreal or inappropriately combined, and represents a deviant form of reality."³ It is knowledge that is not based upon an appreciation for the basic order of nature.


³Ibid., 2-3.
Natural Psychology

Natural Psychology is knowledge that attends to the reality of the natural order of things. Akbar uses Freudian psychoanalysis and theological truths of the Qu’ran to devise a paradigm for transformation in his Natural Psychology. It is based upon the ordering of the soul as framing transformation not only of the self, but the society as a whole. The stages of transformation are the following dimensions of the maturing soul: 1) the hungering soul, 2) the self-accusing soul, and 3) the completed self.

The hungering soul is the initial stage of growth. It transforms physical desire into curiosity, ambition, aspiration, and transcendence. This stage is concerned with satisfying needs that support the body and forging rudiments of natural survival as characterized later in life.

The self-accusing soul is one’s rational capacity for reflection and evaluation while simultaneously enhancing one’s ability for critical self-evaluation. This stage is characterized by conscience and consciousness, which helps the self with its ability to exercise the moral voice of the soul, as well as, operate with rational knowledge. Not consumed with success or failure in life, the self-accusing soul is stimulated by the pursuit of truth. The experiences of life are

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4 Ibid., 33-36.

5 Ibid., 10.
understood within the elevated context of seeing one's self in a pursuit of higher goals of truth, understanding and self-mastery.\(^6\)

The soul that is at rest understands the death process. It comes to know that the soul does not die, but like all energy, is transformed in the process of creation. The soul in this degree of transformation is able to read the messages of creation on all levels, as it submits to the God-force within it. “This is what human freedom is all about: We are influenced by the creation and events of the physical world, but we are not subject to those influences because our capacity for choice permits us to rise above their influence; however, they do not control us because we have the capacity to rise above those influences through the power of the will.”\(^7\)

The ordering of the soul in his Natural Psychology anchors his later directives for the cultural re-education. Akbar's Afro-centrism posits, with the support of African cosmology, that ordering of the soul in relation to the Creator and natural creation refines the quality of life. The life of human beings is out of balance when he is out of balance with either of these two. The human soul is awry and life is out of balance when the human being fails to pursue freedom in the will of the Creator. Human beings and their society are intricately related for Akbar. The mutuality of relating enhances the growth of persons and society,

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\(^6\) Ibid., 11.

\(^7\) Ibid., 16.
higher human potential stifles the soul and transformation of society by responding to persons as mere physical entities.\footnote{Ibid., 34.}

**Critique of Akbar**

Akbar made a valiant attempt at distinguishing himself and his presentation of transformation for African Americans from the racial-social society of the US-America. However, he is trained in Western psychology and transcendent colonial theology influences your interpretative processes. His work was beneficial in helping this Black male pastoral counselor to frame the mentoring pedagogy of liberation for Good-Enough Mentoring. Helping African-American men to rise above their situation or transcend their plight is not a theological emphasis supported in this dissertation. Rather, the theological interpretation of the self of African-American men is grounded in the immanence of God, immersed in human experience as represented by God's incarnation in the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. Wholeness of mind, body, and spirit is possible because of this incarnation.

Akbar beneficently provided a pedagogy that helped individual African-American men address the systemic impact of the culture upon their lives and their response to these conditions. Good-Enough Mentoring model development for Black pastoral counseling, in similitude with Akbar availed Woodson's premise of mis-education for African-American men. They have been deprived
of certain knowledge about themselves, which has been contributive to self-
demeaning activity among themselves and toward their black communities. African American male demeanor and behavior maintain internalized stereotypical nuances of failure for them. This basic premise has been applied to this particular practice of individual pastoral counseling because of its intent for raising the ethno-centric consciousness of African-American men. Akbar provided a creative African-spiritual frame of the self when done in cooperation with Kohut, Cone, and West.

**Psychological Legacy of Slavery**

Akbar provided a model of cultural re-education that is linked to the psychological legacy of slavery. Akbar along with Michael Eric Dykson⁹, Stokely Carmichael, Charles V. Hamilton¹⁰ and Joel Williamson¹¹ collectively emphasize African American corporate self-understanding, and being understood by other ethnic groups and cultures, begins with the indigenous experience of enslavement of the African in this country. The experiences of the African Holocaust shaped the mindset and altered consciousness of Africans as they were affected by the brutality of its economics and politics.


Holocaust shaped the mindset and altered consciousness of Africans as they were affected by the brutality of its economics and politics.

By highlighting the burden of slavery, racism, and the internalization of white supremacy, this pastoral counselor is calling specific attention to the impact of educational culture upon African-American men. The legacy of slavery mis-educated the African and their descendants for participation in every relationship, as well as, their self-understanding. This causative effect distinguished African-American men in their psychological functioning from African-American women and whites.

Akbar comprehensively described the effect as advancing educational brutality upon the psyche of African men as it sought to continually destroy the collective mind of African people. White supremacist chattel slavery involved physical and psychological abuse perpetrated upon the African over a period of 300 years. Common sociological assessment of the type of slavery experienced by the African in West and particularly in the US-America is that it had not been experienced by any enslaved people prior to that time. The psychological functioning of these Africans and their descendants were continually affected as they were not considered persons. Therefore, they were not afforded rights of protection usually accorded to one being a member and part of a society.

It has been over 100 years since the Emancipation Proclamation. However, the experiences of the African Holocaust continue to affect the worldview, mindset, and self-conception of the descendants of those African
slaves. In many ways, these descendants continue to repeat the painful experiences of their ancestors although the chattel environment of the past no longer exists. The pain of those times continues to manifest the genetic memories of those whose ancestors who survived the test of slavery.\textsuperscript{12}

The atrocity of this white supremacist chattel slavery was that it captured the mind, motivation, perception, aspiration, and identity in a web of anti-self images. The impact of this type of imprisonment of the self generates personal and collective self-destruction that is so prevalent and pervasive in the lives of the enslaved until they are unaware of its persistent presence. The challenge was finding respect for theoretical postulates that noted the collective influence of culture as impacting individual and corporate personality formation. It is even more difficult when this postulate refers to events in the past, particularly slave culture, that are external to the life experiences of the person and/or people who determine their behavior to be respondent to these past experiences. Slavery experiences fed on the mind, invaded the soul, and destroyed loyalties to the self by establishing allegiance to forces that destroy the self. The worst effect of this type of psychological destruction has been the permitted illusion of freedom, liberation, and self-determination while tenaciously holding the mind in subjugation.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12}Na'\textsc{im} Akbar, \textit{Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery} (Tallahassee: Mind Productions and Associates, 1999), v.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., v-vi.
Slavery and Adjusted Attitudes

Internalized white supremacy has received more attention in African American studies as a specific behavioral determinant related to chattel slavery. Low self-esteem has specifically received attention in popular psychology as representative behavior modification in African Americans due to this comprehensive black experience in Western culture. Other studies in family systems theory concerning family legacies come closest to a discussion of adjusted attitudes as represented in this dissertation.

Akbar identified some of the more blatant and destructive African American attitudes, which clearly have their origins in the African Holocaust, but more specifically their origin in slavery. These are African American attitudes toward work, property ownership, leadership respect, clownering self-preservation, personal inferiority, community division, family, and color discrimination. This dissertation lifts his discussion of work, personal inferiority, and family as major considerations. These were selected because the men in this Black male pastoral counselor's practice concentrated their concerns in these areas.

Family: The destruction of the self-care of the African came in the destruction of the African family. This was accomplished via the elimination of marriage for the African; which subsequently, eliminated faithful conception of fatherhood and motherhood. Children were taken from mothers as a means of eliminating attachment and by default determining a different corporate and individual self-worth.
This destruction of family affected both women and men; however, for this discussion attention was given to that affect upon men. African manhood in slavery was defined by his ability to endure strenuous tasks and produce children. His ability to accomplish these tasks meant wealth for the slave master and some modicum of privilege for the slave. The virtues of protecting, supporting, and providing for one's offspring, which is the cornerstone of fatherhood, was not considered the marks of manhood for the slave. Should he try to exert these rights, and dependent upon the degree of perceived infraction, he would be punished and/or killed. Punishment often included the loss of children and wife.  

Overall, African-American male deleterious response to fatherhood and the responsibilities of manhood as represented in this area is often characterized as a racial trait. This type of reasoning further exacerbated the intrapsychic and cultural conditioning of African-American men by white supremacist stereotypes. Such conclusions failed to identify the origins of these characteristics. African-American men adapted a corporate sense of inferiority because expressions of self meant certain destruction of the individual and punishment for their community. They devised a manner of unarticulated silence that represented their repression of feelings as a measure of self-preservation, as well as, that of their community. Dismissive fatherhood does not occur among African people

\[14\text{Ibid.}, 20.\]
who have not endured the ravages of chattel slavery and/or capitalist expansionism. African men who were able to preserve a semblance of family in the midst of the destruction maintained a healthy valuation of family. However at times, stereotypical images continue to sabotage efforts at true manhood and/or fatherhood.

**Personal Inferiority:** As previously stated, this aspect of African American behavior has received attention in popular psychological literature. Self-hatred and low self-esteem have been used to explain many of the detrimental actions of African Americans. Although personal inferiority has received this type of attention, it still bears consideration for Akbar.

This cultural task of creating inferiority was undertaken in order to establish and maintain control over the African and their descendants. This was accomplished via exposure in the public square through dehumanizing sexuality; acts of beatings; parading of them on slave blocks unclothed; inspecting them as though they were animals; and forbidding them to communicate with other slaves which would have been the basis for maintaining self-respect. The sense of inferiority is the cumulative effect of such practices.

The presence of cleanliness, personal effectiveness, and opportunities to affect both of these are essential to maintaining self-respect. Compounding the absence of cleanliness and personal effectiveness was the loss of cultural traditions, rituals, family life, religion, and names. The inferiority of the African
cemented and maintained the superiority of the European. This superiority was built on the utter dehumanization of the African.

**Work:** This sector of human endeavor builds and maintains the social activity of community. Individual work represents one's readiness for full participation in society, and allows for the full expression of persons while gaining supplies for their needs. It is distinguished from play and leisure.

In slavery, work was equated with slavery and subsequently related to punishment. The physical brutality of slavery over time changed the physicality of the enslaved. This included their physical appearance, as well as, damage to their bodies up to and including loss of limbs and life. Freedom for the enslaved then became the avoidance of work. The sign of prominence was the one who looked wealthy and possessed a sense of freedom without the encumbrance of labor. African-American men instituted a no work policy because there was no benefit for them in their labor. These negative experiences associated with work continue to function as unconscious influences on African-American men. These influences often cause them to act in ways that are contrary to their best interest and intention.15

**Establishing Black Male Competence**

Akbar guided this practitioner in challenging the psychological effects of racism through affirming Black male competence. First, he encouraged African

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15Ibid., 4-6.
Americans to look to the strengths of the past and begin to make plans for life based upon those strengths. In ascertaining the strengths that can be developed based upon the experiences of the past, his work helped this practitioner to critique Afro-centrism and traditional Black Liberation Theology as probable reverse racism. The development was the particular method of re-education that is later discussed and demonstrated in Chapter VI, Pastoral Theological Reflection.

The two major attributes of black male competence and contribute to countering the psychological effects of racism and the internalization of white supremacy are: 1) the encouragement for African Americans to build and maintain strong, clean, safe communities and 2) have an influence upon their comprehensive environment. This refers to all aspects of life that have impact upon the self. The objective is to free the blind mind and change the consciousness of black men. He indicates five components to this process. They are: 1) Knowledge of self, 2) Celebration of Self, 3) The Wilderness Experience, 4) Unity, and 5) Faith.

Knowledge of Self: This sphere represents the constant instruction of self and the community on black accomplishments and achievements.

Celebrate Self: This sphere represents singing praises of black accomplishments for the healing of damaged self-esteem. Celebration is the work of culture that succeeds and causes its constituents to achieve.
Wilderness Experience: This sphere refers to the lonely experience of thinking new thoughts, and feeling new feelings toward achievement. In this experience, one overcomes the temptation to relapse when constantly confronting the newly freed mind. There is often not companionship in this experience. The participant at this level gains strength by being related to others who are also in the process.

Unity: This sphere refers to the strength that comes with solidarity with others who are seeking to break the chains of psychological slavery. The encouragement is to stand together with them despite the definitions of division that have been given under slave consciousness. This sphere supports the notion that unity does not mean conformity. However, it does mean standing together based upon a basic common identity and forming coalitions around that basic identity.

Faith: This sphere represents belief that freedom is possible even though the signs are not indicative and there are no paths for its achievement. Faith provides shield against fears and it is acquired from within. An individual task draws upon the example and inspiration of those who have faith. Through their example, we are able to explore our inner self to discover the power of our faith and our purpose.

Re-education: Comprehensive Cure in Personal Liberation

Re-education, cornerstone for good-enough mentoring model for Black pastoral counseling, was developed as a means for countering the effects of adjusted attitudes and redacted competence in African-American men. These
characteristics were the means for socio-culturally mis-educating African men and their descendants via associated cultural stereotypical images. The psychological curative effort of re-education is working through the conflict by establishing an orientation toward understood relatedness between self and God. This type of cure challenges those negative images and the convulsiveness that retard achievement. Re-education is the systemic repair of the damaged God-image via a process that challenges African American men to articulate their adjusted attitudes and redacted competence as selves in constant conflict with white supremacist stereotypical images. This repair intends to break the genetic effects of slavery and internalized white supremacist conditioning in all African-American male relational participation.16

Re-education in this type of ethno-centric spirituality frames a widened understanding of the self in support of the connection between the self and the larger system of communally healthful values. These values are distinct from the ones inflicted by white supremacist stereotypes. Western conception of the self separates physicality from spirituality. The effects of this separation are an

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16 Akbar's *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery* supports the conception of this dissertation's starting point for understanding the African-American male psyche and the way relations are established between male descendants of enslaved Africans in this US-American culture. The starting point for understanding the pathology in this relationship is slavery and its legacy of internalized inferiority for African Americans. In treating the psyche there is the necessity for recognizing the brutality and social shock to the minds of the Africans brought o this country and the residual impact of it upon the psyche of those six and seven generations away from the pure experience.
establishment and maintenance of political control and economic prowess over those nonwhites brought into the system. Separation maintains white supremacist domination. It is often posited in the self-conception of individual citizens in a community as one being incapable organization of thought processes and/or dysfunction of the personality.

Ultimately, men are re-educated to understand themselves as whole rather dissected. This is a significant cultural distinction from usual Western culturalization of men through separation and isolation because maturation occurs in communal relatedness. Akbar's integrative paradigm helped this practitioner to frame communal relatedness and ultimate health between men in terms of concentricity between soul, body, mind, and ancestor.¹⁷

Soul: This is the core of the black male self. It is the combination of his spirit and intelligence, the center of his energy and the breath of life that comes from the Creator. Re-education, in a sense of relatedness with God, as well as, the work of God requires the soul to address the spiritual and moral essence of being human and related to other humans in a liberating manner.

Physical (Body): The container of the soul and the vehicle by which the activity of liberation takes place. The physical health of the body also represents the spiritual health of the soul and its degree of self-relatedness to community and

God. The body also represents basic measure for making distinctions in identity, particularly, ethnic and gender.

**Personal (Mind):** This dimension represents that layer of individual personal experiences that occur in the black man's lifetime. He is able to speak the lessons he has learned from the pains, joys, and habits he has developed during the course of his personal journey. These experiences become the content of the personal self that is shared with other men.

Good-Enough Mentoring does not necessarily provide specific instructions about these unique experiences, but intrapsychic explorations are facilitative for better understanding of them. The counselee learns to employ the tool of introspection for processing political, religious, educational, and social influences from sharing these experiences with the mentor. Experiences with the mentor serve as paradigmatic reminders for the counselee as he assesses the pains and joys of his life and develops the habits of his personal journey.

**Social (Relational):** This sector of the self represents a germane sense of relatedness to every other human being. The black male is a social entity. A portion of his self-respect and dignity is acquired through the input of ideas from his emotional environment. There is necessity for black men to be exposed to images that mirror them and set for them an internal baseline of dignity and respect.

Re-education helps African-American to men work on concerns for respect and character. An essential element of mentoring for males was
observing themselves in a respectable and dignified manner. Strong messages of self-love and affirmation ran throughout the re-education relationship. It was significant that the male incorporate these messages with another black man. The nature of this endeavor strengthens cohesion in the self due to the confirmation of love and respect in a healthful social environment.

Tribal (Ancestral): This dimension of the self is transpersonal. Every black man participating in communal experiences shares this level of consciousness. Symbolically, the Tribe identifies the collective historical and shared experiences of black men that shape a particular mindset and self-understanding. Within him is a representation of those black men that preceded him.

Black male history and the remembrance of it was crucial awareness-raising components for strengthening the black male self in the pastoral counseling process. The empathy of the relationship was strengthened via this activity. Black men were able to assess relationships with self, family, and community in light of history. By this, they were expected to gain some insight into their experiences within these several relationship as they reflected upon them in light of the socio-cultural conditions that shaped the relationships and the people in them.

The activity of remembering helps men to get in touch with their tribal experiences, as well as, being brought into a new tribe, community with a history of liberation for all African American men. The absence of history and memory
characterizes personal self-destruction that is decimation of relations with black men and the larger black community.

Conclusion

These insights of Akbar based on Natural Psychology and spirituality lead him to a model of re-education. He connected spirituality, communal participation, and historical legacy for understanding the plight of African-American men. These ideas helped this Black male pastoral counselor to shape relationship experiences of good-enough mentoring with African-American male counselees within his practice. This was done as an address of internalized white supremacy manifest in the lives of these particular men. The pastoral counseling relationship framed a re-education process that indicated impact upon their self-understanding and achievement of life goals and dreams.
CHAPTER VI

GOOD-ENOUGH MENTORING: THE MODELAND PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

An on-going significant concern for many African-American men in the US-American culture is they are African-American men in the US-American culture. Nancy Boyd-Franklin and Anderson J. Franklin, African American parents and psychologists, cited racism, prejudice, and discrimination as more critical challenges facing African American parents. Their text, *Boys Into Men: Raising Our African American Teenage Sons*, described not only the challenges, but recommended maintenance of healthful African American family values as critically responsive for successful rearing of teenage sons into manhood in US-American culture. The values of cultural and spiritual strengths instilled positive racial identity, healthy problem-solving skills, and improved interpersonal communication. This author appreciated the praxiological wisdom of the Franklins’ work. It has continued usefulness in his development of the pastoral therapeutic remedy of Good-Enough Mentoring.

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“How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?” in *Speak My Name: Black Men on Masculinity and the American Dream*, Trey Ellis used W.E.B. Dubois’ question, “How does it feel to be a problem?” to raise similar criticism as Dubois regarding US-American negative cultural stereotyping of African-American men. This type of stereotyping precipitated African American belief of negative press. He concluded in the article, “...curiously, some of the stereotypes that make us seem the least human—and the most animalistic—also make us seem the most male. We are famous around the world for our physical and sexual potency. And what is more at the essence of stereotypical machismo than bulging muscles and big dangling balls?”

This chapter will present the model of Good-Enough mentoring for Black pastoral counseling. The model sought a comprehensive address of the white supremacist stereotypes; equally important, it established a norm for countering the comprehensive effect of failed experiences of interpersonal and cultural empathy. Parenthetical notes of pastoral therapeutic conversations will be interfaced with psychological, theological, and cultural inferences as a means of presenting the case. The reader should be able to get an understanding of the direction of the therapy, as well as, the resolution undertaken and completed by the African-American male counselee.

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3Ibid., 11.
Toward a Resolution to the Problem

African-American men are stereotyped, but do not culturally benefit from them, as do their European-American male counterparts. It was observed that every facet of the public media cleaned up the lives of European-American men. It established for them a norm of upper-middle-class, educated, and moderate. Popular culture generally assumed that young white men would attend college, own a home, and marry the mother of their child. They are defined by the richest, most attractive, smartest, and kindest among them. In contrast, Black male life was generally depicted as poor, ignorant, and angry. Black males are stereotyped as major participants in the criminal element, although, approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of them never encountered the criminal justice system. African-American men believing the negative press compound this insult. Those who do attended college, own their own home, and marry the mother of their child are looked upon by the larger culture and themselves as anomalies, freaks of nature, or worse, thugs-in-waiting. An irony in normative popular US-American culture is that the villain is often perversely revered. ⁴

The immediate demonstrated need in the pastoral counseling practice of this Black male pastoral counselor was for Good-Enough mentoring. The objective for this model of Black pastoral counseling was to facilitate African-American male healthful responsiveness to nihilistic threats as similarly

⁴Ibid.
referenced in the work of Ellis and the Franklins. The cogent address in this dissertation was of those instances when African-American men are socially accepted and made honorary European-American men through them abandoning their ethnicity.

In instances when this diminutive cultural assignment is accomplished, the larger cultural community no longer experienced them as their negatively stereotyped black males of African descent. They have become integrated into the cultural mainstream because they adjusted their demeanor and dress to fit perceived and real Western European and US-American male cultural norms.

The problem with this type of abandonment was the social impoverishment of the self due to the paucity of cultural idealization for many African-American men. When they performed as European-American men, they did not easily adopt the sense of entitlement that narcissistically supported the self of many European-American men. Generally, African-American men had not found European-American men to be sufficient cultural selfobjects for encouraging healthy narcissistic development. Stereotypical cultural norms continually precipitated conflict in mutual self-identification.

Due to failed receipt of positive empathic responsiveness from European-American males, subsequent mirroring for African-American men and their attempts to do significant cultural idealization with European-American men was often deflected because of stereotypical expectations of failure. Normatively, African-American men built intrapsychic structures that preserved self-cohesion
by compensating for these non-integrated archaic cultural self-objects and aspects of the self. Some African-American men were able to make the object-relatedness shift in their adaptation and be relatively successful in their functioning in the *dominant* culture with European-American men. However, their integrative self-object relatedness skills did not demonstrate healthful self-cohesion. This disheveling self-experience was prevalent because the *dominant* culture does not provide access to the highest corridors of interpersonal and corporate power. This regulation of power was based upon the pigmentation of their skin. Even with the degree of his accomplishments, the African-American male continually encountered underlying suspicion and negative cultural stereotypes that he was a monster.\(^5\)

The incentive for this author to do the research with African-American men and write this dissertation was to develop a comprehensively designed method of treatment for the recapitulated injury of *paternal empathic mentoring deficiency*. This was the self-experience of father being too distant and mother being over close. Diagnostically, this condition was recognizable in the men of the research by their clustering concerns with achievements in family, community, and spiritual relatedness. In comparison, healthful cohesive internal structuring in the men of this practice was recognizable by qualities of normalized anxiety. They were able to experience and express empathy and sincere interest in the feelings of others. There was a genuine interest in the ideas of others, the ability to tolerate

\(^5\)Ibid., 10-11.
ambivalence in long-term relationships without giving up, and a capacity to acknowledge one's contribution to interpersonal conflicts. Incohesive internal structuring was represented in chaotic relationship maintenance. As with the generalized narcissist, incohesion was recognizable in a pattern of relationship termination when persons began to make demands on the relationship stemming from their own needs. Additionally, the relationship no longer worked for the narcissistic dispositions in terms of their ability to maintain an interdependent sense of self-esteem.6

The research and writing also made an assessment of the effect of white supremacy on the lives of all African-American men. Also included here was the self-experience of the Black male pastoral counselor. The countertransferential consideration was that if internalized white supremacy affected the Black male pastoral counselor, in turn, it affected the pastoral counseling relationship. The countertransference of the Black male pastoral counselor functioned as a facilitating resource for his empathy toward the African-American male counselee. This model was developed to aid the Black male pastoral counselor's awareness of his internalized white supremacist self-experiences as he immersed himself in the inner life of African-American male counselees. Good-Enough mentoring was framed as a type of ethno-pastoral cultural analysis, wherein; the black male pastoral counselor was supported by the disciplines of

self psychology, black liberation theology and black political philosophical criticism. The theoretical assumption for its formation was that changes in culture necessitate adjustments in the psychology and differing self-awareness in the artist of its practice.

This awareness in the Black male pastoral counselor equipped him with the skills to articulate the countertransference of unarticulated silence. This metaphorical symbol in the pastoral therapeutic conversation will be discussed later in the description of Good-Enough mentoring. "The implication [of the type of relatedness addressed in the countertransference of the] pastoral relationship between African-American men enabled these men to develop a sense of self that tapped into multiple resources of personhood. These resources enabled negotiation of negative masculinity and the identity prescribed for [African-American men]." 7

Epistemological support of Black Theology for Black pastoral counseling was the self-determined healthy participation of African-American men in society. Black Theology empowered African-American men to take negative stereotypes and transform them into prophetic cultural images of protest. This creative formation of self and community expression lead away from violence. The epistemological shift and therapeutic aims are descriptively intertwined. Theoretical goal of therapeutic relationship was cultural re-education of African-

American men; they would build a society that represented all of its participants and respect for all of their idiosyncratic contributions. Coincidentally, the goal of therapy with African-American men was transformation represented as integration of idealized archaic intrapsychic and cultural self-object images into the self. This was theorized accomplishable with the aid of the empathic responsiveness of the Black male pastoral counselor, thereby, strengthening self-cohesions. Therefore, the pastoral counseling relationship with a Black male pastoral counselor became a context for African-American men developing healthy forms of comprehensive protest.

**Good-enough Mentoring:**

**Pedagogical Model for Black Pastoral Counseling**

The empathic responsiveness of good-enough mentoring was the methodology of this type of Black pastoral counseling relationship building and maintenance between two men of African dissent. The praxis, method and practice described in this dissertation attempted to generalize research findings for emotional health solutions and applications to African-American men at large. The empathic responsiveness of this Black male pastoral counselor was the work of intrapsychic immersion while being sensitive to the need for accomplishment by African-American men. He was careful not to inflict further injury upon them by concentrating upon a utilitarian mode of treatment. As similarly stated previously, the goal of therapy was not to help them adjust to their racialized

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8Ibid.
socio-cultural environment. The pastoral counseling encounter was a process in which each male counselee answered for himself the Duboisian-Ellis question, “What is it like to be a problem?”

The model also attempted to address the comprehensive emotional needs of African-American men. The framework that grounds this work was a psychology, theology, and political criticism with cultural descriptors for African-American male mentoring. As such, this model responded to intrapsychic and cultural parallel lines of narcissistic transferences. The Black male pastoral counselor was the self-object that facilitated the African-American male counselee’s rework of failed empathy experiences in both family and the larger culture.

**Pastoral Theological Reflections I**

Pastoral theological method is a series of transitions/movements wherein specific questions are raised and answered in a process of tailored reflection. The transitions/movements within this dissertation represented Good-Enough Mentoring, as in: 1) the specific theory and method of pastoral counseling developed for practice with African-American men, 2) reflection on the common problem that emerged from specialized care for them, 3) the identification of the theological and behavioral science ideas and theories that explained the specifically addressed problem, 4) the borrowing from the theological and behavioral science theories and ideas that addressed the problem, and 5) the description of the intervention into their lives.
This chapter concentrates on the fourth transition in this descriptive definition. The key questions answered in this chapter are:

1) What are the key concepts and ideas borrowed from the disciplines of psychology and theology, with added cultural description from Black political philosophical criticism and Afro-centered cultural re-education which helped African-American men to work through the problem of internalized white supremacy?

2) What were the criteria used to borrow these key concepts and ideas from the resources, Kohut, Cone, West and Akbar in the disciplines?

The norm of good-enough mentoring determined which selected resources were used, as well as the key concepts and ideas were borrowed from these resources. Descriptions within the resources and definitions of germane concepts and ideas were well representative of the organizing concepts within the discipline. Essentially, these concepts and ideas were easily transferable to the described problem being addressed by this pastoral counselor with his specialized group. Additionally, this pastoral theologian saw each discipline working to address similar problems and accomplishing this task from the specific perspectives of the discipline.

This process established and maintained a specific type of Black pastoral counseling relationship that attended the intrapsychic and cultural empathy failures of African-American men. These failures functioned as a part of the norm of internalized white supremacy, which governed their comprehensive self-
experience. The energy of these failures was internalized in such a way until they were unable to achieve their life goals and dreams.

The resources in each of these disciplines were read with African-American men in mind. This type of intentional reading was done to help the Black male pastoral counselor more effectively respond to the needs of African-American men. It provided a measurable response, which represented concern for them and their issues brought to pastoral counseling. Namely, this helped them with their sense and ability to accomplish their life goals and dreams.

Borrowing from the sources in the varied disciplines in a process of pastoral theological reflection was accomplished and simultaneously maintained integrity with the resources. The pastoral theological assumption for this type of integrative model for treating African-American men asserted that self psychology and Black liberation theology were essentially working to treat a similar problem, the internalization of white oppression. However, these resources working within the specificity of their respective disciplines described solutions specific to their discipline and its cultural context. The accuracy of this assessment, within the case material in service to the borrowed concepts was dependent upon the closest approximation of experience to the definitions found in the resources. Examination of these respective solutions was informative and beneficial for framing a treatment that addressed internalized white supremacy in African-American men. These solutions were deemed further accurate and
considered useful when brought into conversation with the black cultural criticism and subsequently upon the included cases.

The goal of pastoral counseling that represented change in the practice of Good-Enough mentoring was the intentional address of the unarticulated silence of African-American men. This type of silence was the spaces in his relationships and self-experience in which he was generally acculturated not to speak. Specifically articulated anger or discomfort represented immanent threat and danger to self, family, and community. Statement of this problem by the men in this practice beautifully described it as the need for a soothing relationship with a supportive male that countered these effects as generally represented in the unavailability of a significant male. Internalization of this unavailability later translated into a weak self with a slow ability to achieve life goals and dreams. This self-experience was interpersonally and corporately maintained by the affects and stereotypes of internalized white supremacy.

Indicators of this type of silence representative of internalized white supremacy are:

1. The inability to achieve life goals and dreams.
2. Narcissistic personality disorder indicated by the use of self-objects as compensation for weakness in the self.
3. Self-experience that is very much attuned to the need for empathic responsiveness.
4. Self-experience that represented one operating out of internalized white oppression, and does not have a sense of engagement in the liberation of other African-American men.

5. A disposition that represented the affects of nihilism, these were general feelings of vagueness or convulsiveness. Unarticulated silence was his usual self-management in relationship; although, conversation or some other type of relatedness is going on, but he does not share this self-experience with others.

6. A self-destructing care-taking due to a failed sense of his own manhood that is grounded in a history of black male competence.

Good-enough mentoring is the norm of Black liberation for African-American men. Indicators of this receipt are:

1. Articulation of self-experience in the pastoral counseling relationship in manner that moved him toward achievement of his life and dreams.

2. Use of self-objects that helped him to experience himself as a self-object with a sense of separation and individuation.

3. Sense of self with reciprocative empathic responsiveness skills. Reciprocation included those persons with whom he has strained empathic relations.

4. Self-experience that is committed to Black liberation struggle, which is the liberation of all African-American men and others from white oppression.
5. Sense of pragmatism that manifested in several ways: awareness of his internalization of white supremacist stereotypes and derailed their manifestation in a manner that supported his achievement of life goals and dreams.

6. A sense of manhood that is grounded in history of Black male competence with the ability to articulate self-experience.

Good-enough mentoring was the establishment in a type of pastoral counseling relationship that was sufficiently soothing and confrontive of African-American men until they are encouraged to achieve their life goals and dreams. Mentoring in the relationship was such that the mentor demonstrated a commitment to the success of the mentee. The relationship was empathically tailored or responsive to the empathy needs of the specific African-American male. This response was *good-enough* because it was sufficient to the needs of the counselee at the time. Sufficiency was determined in collaboration with the counselee toward his cohesive self-experience.

**Borrowed Key Concepts**

These borrowed concepts are used in the model of Good-Enough Mentoring. They anchor the method of re-education that constituted the transformation process.

**From Self Psychology**

Addressing the psychological well being of African-American men, Self psychology was selected because it addressed the self construction needs of
African-American men. This Black male pastoral counselor appreciated its description of intrapsychic development in terms of narcissism.

**Empathy:**

This is having the ability to immerse oneself in the inner life of another. This primary skill and response of the Black male pastoral counselor during every phase of pastoral counseling used the emotional energy that existed between two men of African descent. This connectedness energized the good-enough mentoring model and facilitated the work of re-education. The provision of empathy and the internalization of the relationship enabled the African-American male counselee to rework empathy failure experiences.

Empathy also referred to the self-object experience of the African-American male counselee. He was enabled to immerse himself in his and other’s inner experiences. This ability was nurtured with positive and/or negative empathic responsiveness experiences toward the counselee from the Black male pastoral counselor.

**Empathic Responsiveness:**

This referred to the reflexivity or attunement of self objects to empathy responsiveness experiences. Specifically, empathic responsiveness was the stance of good-enough mentoring for the Black male pastoral counselor toward the African American counselee that also facilitated good-enough mentoring. The counselee experienced himself understood and heard by the counselor in the specialized willing stance that communicated intrapsychic support. This
usually represented in the degree of emotionality of the transference in the relationship. The type of narcissistic personality disorders displayed by the African-American male counselee seemed directly correlated to the degree of healthful empathic responsiveness he received from maternal and paternal self-objects and the degree of idealization allowed by these self-objects.

**Selfobject:**

In theory, this term referred the specific object used to stabilize the self. Internalized relationships with these objects compensated for injury or damage of the self due to empathic failure with significant persons. This term also referred to the specific object used in psychic organization of African-American men. These are family members of origin and creation that served to stabilize the self in compensation for injury or damage in archaic relations due to empathic failure(s) of primal significant persons.

The African-American male demonstrated empathy demands upon significant persons that served as selfobjects and these demands represented compensation needs for injured or damaged sectors in the African-American male psyche. The type of counselee used the Black male pastoral counselor as a compensational guide for accomplishing life goals and dreams. The counselee assigned the counselor the relational task of helping him and/or educating him to accomplish certain tasks. As the mentor, he possessed certain knowledge and self-containment skills beneficial to the comprehensive accomplishment of the
mentee. The mentee negotiated with the mentor the empathic response needed to mature toward self-cohesion.

**Transmuting Internalization:**

The aspect of empathic responsiveness in which the counselee learned to maintain (him) self, via the internalization of healthful selfobject relations. Specifically, the African-American counselee learned to optimally manage the emotional energy of his selfobject relations in a manner that enabled him to strengthen or build compensatory structures that maintain self-cohesion. He is enabled to healthfully process the frustration of relationships.

This aspect of the good-enough mentoring weighed the effectiveness of the re-education process. Optimal frustration is the energy of the transmuting internalization process through which the counselee learned how to appropriate the relationship training within the good-enough mentoring. The relationship with the mentor enabled the mentee to manage his narcissistic frustration with lack of or failed achievement. He learned to do accomplish this feat without calling the entire self into question. The task for the mentee was to learn how to use empathic failures in a fashion that was constructive to the well-being of the self.

**Narcissism:**

This generally represented a certain sensibility in development. Kohut postulated narcissism as an independent line of development that constituted the internalization of energy from relationships with significant persons. The self used this energy to build internal structures for maintaining self-cohesion.
Dysfunction in the self occurred as the result of ineffective use of this energy for building and maintaining internal structures. NPD was interpreted for the African-American men in this Black male pastoral counselor’s practice as representing empathic responsiveness disorder, the narcissistic offensiveness to acculturated internalized white supremacy. This extrapolation was based upon the assumption of institutions and persons that operate them were purveyors of culture and the cultural understanding of the self. Persons embodied the mores of the institutions and functioned as comprehensive sources of cultural empathy and empathic responsiveness. Therefore, the institutions became cultural self-objects and facilitated transmuting internalization in relations. Intrapsychic and cultural dimensions comprised the narcissism of interpersonal relatedness and development of the personality.

**Summary:**

These concepts in self psychology helped to establish a norm in the self and the conduct of relationship for both the counselee, as well as, the counselor in good-enough mentoring. Good-enough mentoring is a model of Black pastoral counseling that addressed narcissistic injuries in African-American men in a fashion that brought him into close proximal relationship with another Black man. This close relationship helped him to establish and mature toward differing degrees of intrapsychic relatedness to self, family, community and the larger culture.
From Black Liberation Theology

This phase of the model was theologically grounded in an appreciation for God having a commitment to the liberation of the oppressed African-American men. This corporate commitment was demonstrated in the individual African-American male experiencing a sense of his liberation in relationship with the Black male pastoral counselor.

Blackness:

This term referred to the level of commitment the black man has to the liberation of African-American men and all other oppressed people. The call was for black men to be all that God created them to be. Black represented a commitment to the destruction of white oppression in every facet of black life.

Whiteness:

This term referred to the level of commitment that maintained white dominance and oppression of African-American men. This commitment is near 700 years old with a solid commitment to soothe European anxiety in life.

Liberation:

The concept referred to the work of God that freed African-American men. This term represented God’s eternal commitment to the freedom of African-American men.

Summary:

These concepts represented the theological stance of the Black male pastoral counselor as informed by Black Theology of Liberation. These concepts
also represented the renewing community of Black men toward which the Black male pastoral counselor urged the African-American male counselee. The male counselee developed a penchant for his liberation. Thus, as he experiences his liberation he is encouraged to help others experience the same.

**From Political Philosophical Cultural Criticism**

The descriptions of this type of criticism provided the cultural milieu of the African-American male. It named and described the effect, as well as, the affect of the oppressive norm of internalized white supremacy upon African-American men. It provided the cultural antidote that was similar in description and response to the one provided by the Black liberation theology, but done from the perspective of culture.

**Democratic pragmatism:**

This concept housed an expectation of relatedness in the common struggle against white oppression between men that are descendants of enslaved Africans. This expectation was grounded in an understanding that since African-American men share this common denominator in relatedness, there is a bond between them that is older than their present circumstance of experienced oppression. This ideal was expected to constant remind and motivate the challenge to pursue the liberation of all African-American men. The expectation is that every time one African-American male achieved, he will insure that another one achieves as investment in their mutual benefit.
Collaboration:

This ethical stance represented cooperative working of black persons toward a common goal. These efforts improved society and are not based upon race or possible absence of a common historical heritage. Collaboration looked at common historical images of experience and developed as representative black experience form connections between African-American males. It was movement away from racial reasoning because it diluted the strength of Black leadership strength. Collaboration it eliminated the assumption of relatedness due to race and common historical heritage. Collaboration represented the communal pursuit of powerful Black cultural positioning by securing healthful response to the needs of all African Americans. Collaboration in this discussion particularly understood all Black male cultural experience as initiative for movement toward communal and individual reciprocal social cohesiveness.

Racial reasoning:

The assumption of connection based on a common ethnic heritage or refugee experience due to political segregation. Subsequently, included in the political structure as master or slave due to the pigmentation of the skin as, it weakened the communal description of qualities of Black leadership. It depended upon the assumption that every time one African-American male achieves, he will assure the advancement of another. This assumption has been gradient possesses limited cultural fulfillment. There is often a failed settlement upon who is the leader and unclear expectations of leadership. Ultimately, this
type of reasoning enabled oppressed people, African-American men, to fall prey to the internalized white supremacist stereotypes. Internalizing these stereotypes, they assumed far too much individual responsibility for their well-being, ultimately failing in their pursuit of powerful black leadership. The overwhelmed black community defaulted on its achievement of goals and eliminated critique of black leadership.

Nihilism:

This concept referred to the corporate experience of depression that was experienced by the African-American men of this practice. It was described as the feeling and self-experience of utter hopelessness and disconnectedness that alienated African American men from each other and them self. This was manifest as relational convulsiveness, self-destruction in destructive interpersonal relations with their family, community, the larger culture, and their God.

Summary:

These concepts represented the tools of assessing the cultural health of the African-American male counselee. These concepts also represented the counselee's and the counselor's study together of the effects of racism upon their respective personalities and self-concepts. This feature in the model assessed interpersonal skill utilization toward achievement of goals and dreams relative to the effect of internalized white supremacy.
From Cultural Re-education

This section represented the creative work that brings the disciplines of self psychology and Black liberation theology together as core descriptors of the suffering and responses to the suffering of African-American men. The added significance of culture was established and the political philosophical descriptions of nihilism and the threat of it. Re-education via empathic responsiveness was the provision of another avenue of healthful resolution to the suffering of African-American men.

Cultural re-education represented the stance of the Black male pastoral counselor. It framed the perspectives from and toward which he mentored the African-American male counselee. The relationship that was established between the pastoral counselor-mentor and counselee-mentee contained the elements that not only represented the counselee-mentee's achievement of life goals and dreams, but the relationship provided the pattern for accomplishment.

The method of re-education was the key for challenging the mis-education conditions of white oppression in African-American men and the mentoring of them toward corporate liberation of black men. Re-education addressed the intertwining nature of intrapsychic and cultural self-conception by naming the affective nature of internalized White supremacy.

Re-education critiqued Black liberation theology methodology and it's near racial reasoning with respect to the ontological symbolism of Blackness. Methodology in re-education questioned whether its symbolism sufficiently
encompassed all oppressed people, inclusive of Black people. It called for a cooperative stance between persons with difference as a common goal, but forming a common liberation objective. Its understanding of cooperation is similar to the stance of collaboration in political philosophical cultural criticism.

**Mis-education:**

This concept referred to the educational process whereby African-American men have been denied knowledge about themselves. It conceives the awareness of the need for knowledge that supported a positive and healthful sense of black self-worth. Possession of the awareness and supportive knowledge helped the men of this practice to establish their sense of self-worth.

**Black male competence:**

This description referred to having the ability to accomplish life goals and dreams in African-American men, which is the objective of the cultural re-education process. It was accomplishable via a system of educational exposure of the selves of the Black male pastoral counselor and the African-American male counselee to each other in a way that demonstrated and encouraged their respective competencies. The energy of the soothing and confrontive pastoral counseling relationship established and supported the counselee's competence. Competence is demonstrated and affirmed while encouraging him toward achievement of life goals and dreams.

Conceptually, Black male competence was comprehensively experienced in the changing degree of his articulation. Increase in competence indicated a
correlated effect in ability to articulate needs and negotiate with the community to get them met. This resulted in his changing experience of empathy toward self and others. His relational community concentrically enlarged to include institutions and persons in the larger culture.

Summary:

Re-education is the key to the model of good-enough mentoring. This process helped the African-American male counselee to gain a different sense of normalcy for his life. The counselee undertook his transformation when he began to confront his internalization of white supremacy. He internalized the empathic responsiveness of the pastoral counselor-mentor in a fashion that supported the self, as well as, helped him to address his pursuit and achievement of life goals and dreams.

Transformation and change in the counselee was an ontological one that represented his shift from an African-American male to Black man. This was also an epistemological shift in comprehensive self-cohesion. In a process of mini-transitions in the pastoral counseling process, Black men gained knowledge of what constitutes the healthful self. They became specifically conscious of what was needed for them to be conscious of who they are and their achievement. Black men looked at patterns in nature and the order of things in their lives, their relationships, and the distinctiveness of God for each of them. Black men are encouraged to be attentive to the life cycle and address associated changes in terms of appropriate adjustments to the changes in health
and the general experiences in his life. Black men frame their living in relations to a larger awareness of life, more than previously dictated by the constraints of his life.

The Black male pastoral counselor held the African-American male counselee’s healthful self-awareness in tension with regressive misalignment due to narcissistic injury. This transformational function was performed until the counselee can transmute the energy of the relationship for himself. The counselee brought subject material to the pastoral counseling context and used the Black male pastoral counselor to facilitate a grasp of the effect life situations have had upon him. He constantly reassessed the degrees of reality for his life. All material in the pastoral therapeutic conversation are considered his means of expressing something about himself and connection with a larger reality.

Conclusion

Self psychology, Black Liberation Theology, Cultural Assessment and Cultural Re-education provided key concepts that contributed to understanding good-enough mentoring as multi-faceted and interdisciplinary in nature and application. In the next chapter, these borrowed ideas are linked in a comprehensive transformation view of good-enough mentoring.

This chapter concentrated on the fourth transition in a five-transition model. The tasks accomplished in this chapter were the following: the provision of a definition for pastoral theological reflection, as well as, indication of the key concepts and ideas that were drawn from the resources in the disciplines of
psychology, theology, cultural criticism, and cultural re-education. The norm of good-enough mentoring and method of cultural re-education in this Black male pastoral counselor's relationship with African-American men were defined and described. This was done as groundwork for the fifth transition, the demonstration of good-enough mentoring in terms of a model and case study.

**Pastoral Theological Reflections II**

This section presents the fifth transition in this pastoral theological reflection process. It was concerned with presentation and implementation of the actual model of Good-Enough Mentoring. The task in this section is to demonstrate the method of re-education of African American men with the problem of internalized White supremacy. The stages of the counseling will be described, as well as, crucial pastoral counselor attitudes, skills, and knowledge for each phase will be identified.

**The focus of the model: Restatement of the problem**

African-American men are culturally stereotyped, but do not benefit from this typing, as do their European-American male counterparts. The problem discussed in this dissertation was that African-American men suffered from internalized white supremacy that occurred on intertwining psychic and cultural tracks. The suffering was due to their internal conflicts with generally negative stereotypes, which predisposed African-American men to failure in their pursuit of life goals and dreams. Additionally, the African-American male self presented as
white supremacist stereotyped anger or ambivalent feelings in every interpersonal and cultural relationship.

For example, every facet of the public media cleaned up the lives of European-American men. It established for them a norm of being upper-middle-class, educated, and interpersonally moderate. Popular culture has generally assumed that young white men attended college, own a home, and married the mother of their child. They are defined by the richest, handsomest, smartest, and kindest among them. In contrast, black male life has been generally depicted as poor, ignorant, and angry. Black males are stereotyped as major participants in the criminal element although some seventy-five percent (75%) of them never encounter the criminal justice system. African-American men believing the bad press have compounded the insult. Those who performed the same culturally normative tasks as their European-American counterparts are looked upon as anomalies, freaks of nature, or worse, thugs-in-waiting. The ironic use of stereotypes in popular US-American culture is that the villain is often perversely revered. Although Black male youth are presented as objects of fear, popular white youth culture often copies the angry styling of black music and the protest style slovenly fashioned of Black youth.

The solution: Good-enough mentoring

This Black male pastoral counselor found immediate need for Good-Enough mentoring in actual practice with African-American men. The reason for the need was that many of the men in this pastoral counselor's practice had not
recovered from the varied types of mixed cultural messages. Good-enough mentoring was a process of pastoral counseling, whereby the Black male pastoral counselor helped the African-American male counselee to work through his anxiety. Simultaneously, he was confronted with the counselor in exploration of their respective inner worlds and those empathy failures that prompt missed achievements. Ambivalence toward achievement was reactivated and heightened by multiple negative cultural stereotypes. These significantly differing experiences in relationship with the counselor became fundamental to him developing capacity to achieve his life goals and dreams.

The objective for this model of Black pastoral counseling was the psychic exploration of the inner world. Examination of the impact of culture on the African-American male self was facilitated toward his development of empathy toward self as a healthful responsiveness to internalized white supremacy. For some of the men that were socially accepted and made *honorary European-American men* when they abandoned their ethnicity and sense of freedom, they could confront the social poverty they experienced. Their specific distress within this type of self-abandonment was the emotional and social impoverishment due to stereotypical cultural norms that precipitated conflict in self-identification. Furthermore, this abandonment created a paucity of opportunities for interpersonal and cultural idealization with other African-American men.

In these instances, some of the African-American men did not easily adopt the sense of entitlement that narcissistically supported the self for many
European-American men. Subsequently, find European-American men were not usually found to be sufficient psychical self-objects for encouraging healthy narcissistic development. As African-American males, they did not often receive positive empathic responsiveness from European-American males in a way that precipitated cultural idealization. Subsequent mirroring for them and their attempted significant larger cultural idealization with European-American men was often deflected because of stereotypical expectations of failure. In both conditions of psychical and cultural self-object relatedness, the African-American men built intrapsychic structures that preserved self-cohesion by compensating for nonintegrated archaic psychical cultural aspects of the self.

Although some African-American men are enabled to make the object-relatedness shift in their adaptation and be relatively successful in their functioning in the dominant culture with European-American men, their self-object relatedness was not experienced as fully integrated. The dominant culture does not provide facilitated integration of representative access to the highest corridors of power due to the pigmentation of their skin. The essence of narcissistic white oppression and access to the corridors of power was management of the interpersonal, social, theological, and cultural environment in a manner that eased white anxiety. Even with the degree of their accomplishments, African-American men continually encountered underlying suspicion and negative cultural stereotypes that they are monsters.
The Stages of Good-enough Mentoring

Good-enough mentoring draws on Self Psychology, Black Liberation Theology, Cultural Critical Assessment and Transformation Re-education in three stages: 1) Intake and Relationship Building, 2) Transformation and Re-education, and 3) Epistemological Shift. Stages one and two have attending phases that will be outlined below along with explanations of the stages.

The task of the model was to help African-American men gain insight into their pursuit of life goals and dreams while simultaneously confronting their internalization of white supremacy. It primarily afforded the African-American male counselee the opportunity to explore his need for empathy in the pastoral therapeutic conversation with a Black male pastoral counselor.

Stage I: Intake and Relationship Building

The intake process of the relationship determined the tone of the relationship as the African-American male counselee's allowed initial access to his feelings. Later negotiations for meeting his empathy needs improved through conversation with the Black male pastoral counselor. This stage of the pastoral counseling relationship was instructive for the Black male pastoral counselor. He learned how the male counselee attended to his ambivalence and developed narcissistic sensitivity to adjustments in relationships, which was represented by the counselee's attention to the ebb and flow of the pastoral therapeutic conversation. Generally, Healthful shifts in the therapeutic conversation highlighted his movement in the re-education process, which were coincident to
the major points of his self-discovery intertwined between self and the comprehensive larger culture.

Building an operating and beneficial pastoral therapeutic relationship was necessary in order to gain a working confidence with African-American men. This affective pastoral therapeutic relationship fundamentally addressed internalized white supremacist images and his emotional responsiveness. Continually for African-American men, negative self-identification was strengthened through stereotypes of male sexuality, the conduct of interpersonal relations, family, and community interests. Concurrently, these self-experiences were further exploited by the larger culture's marketing of supposed African-American male fantasies of dead male friends, scantily clad women, mouthy children, ornamental trimmed automobiles, and caches of illegally earned money. In short, addressing the need for African-American men to experience self-affirming relatedness was significant for both the in-take process and building a working relationship.

Self-psychological assessment

Self psychology helped this Black male pastoral counselor explain and interpret the psychic activity of internalized white supremacy as psychic survival toward maintenance of the self. This was done in the midst of archaic cultural images that could not provide good-enough empathic responsiveness. Weak adopted compensatory structures, which supported self-cohesion in response to cultural non-responsiveness validated African insufficiency. Ultimately, these
structures manifested themselves as acculturated pain and anger. This self-
experience of devaluation also held little hope for change or improvement in life
conditions and situations.

The use of self psychology with African-American men in therapy asked
them to bring their pain and anger into the therapy. Their intrapsychic and
cultural self-object transferences not only indicated the inner world experience of
the counselee, but also the generations over which this pain was formed. Some
of the pain was not likely to be immediately eliminated, but as expected some of
the affects could be ameliorated. The energy of this good-enough mentoring
relationship supported a self that worked for its wellbeing in therapy. This meant
that significant or optimal frustration between the counselee and the pastoral
counselor was the barometer for assessing surfacing pain in relationship.
Optimal frustration, particularly between men regulated feeling access and
management in all relationships, as well as, future responses and effective
achievement of life goals and dreams. Good-Enough mentoring pastoral
counseling relationships affirmed male need for empathic responsiveness with
other men because such relationships provided a type of exchangeable soothing
of bewilderment as the counselee came to terms with his empathic
disappointments. This type of empathic resonance was only exchangeable
between men.
Black liberation theological assessment

Liberation theology aided the commitment of the Black male pastoral counselor toward the liberation of all African-American men from the oppression of internalized white supremacy. Although internalization was an act of psychic survival, it historically signified taking African-American men away from their relationship with God. As in the African Holocaust, threatened self-cohesion remained an indelible possibility for the descendants of transplanted Africans. The possibility was often apparent in the corporate black self-experiences of their descendants. However, liberation for black men laid in their reparatory healthful relatedness, as they worked through the intertwining sectors of the corporate black self. Utilizing the pastoral therapeutic relationship as a mentoring relationship with another black man fostered this type of relatedness. This was demonstrated in a manner that both the counselee and the pastoral counselor worked through to comprehensive self-cohesion. The undergirding expectation of this use of liberation and its comprehensive realization in the lives of African American men was every black man has the possibility of experiencing the empathic responsiveness of God; thus, enabling him to move into his life goals and dreams. Ultimately, this was his experience of maturation and God's creativity in him.

Cultural assessment

Philosophical, political, and cultural criticism described the corporate condition of nihilism. This was a pervasive self-experience of depression that
was disproportionately experienced among African Americans within the African-American community. This cogent corporate black self-experience of depression was the manifestation of unresolved pain in response to white oppression. Both nihilism and white oppression were deemed intrapsychic and cultural burdens for every African-American male.

Nihilism was the result of generations of transplanted Africans and their descendants ingesting a white supremacist ethic in order to survive colonial nationalism and multinational market economies. The physical bodies and strength of these Africans and their descendants incorporated them as slave domestic labor that stabilized the US-American economy. This incorporation consistently ignored the African and their descendants' need for positive empathy experiences. Although current labor conditions for many African Americans have changed, the corporate psychic survival experience of nihilism for this pastoral counselor's African American male counselees indicated internalized white supremacy continued to operate in the life of all African-American men.

For this dissertation, the challenge of African-American male labor and the value of it for them and the larger culture tailored some discussion of internalized white supremacy. The other challenge for the men was comprehensive participation in beneficial political, economic, religious and social partnerships. A white supremacist ethic undergirded their absence, which was represented in relational silence was narcissistically offensive to them. However, the pervasive stereotyping was toward failure. Many African-American men are generally
unaware of the depth of their inability to articulate their conflict with the cultural consensus. The resulting individual and corporate depression in response to these challenges were so evasive, the common narcissistic self-experience enabled ambivalence and vague awareness of feeling sadness. Therefore, the absence of African-American male valued labor and partnership, as well as, their failed articulation and ambivalent feelings manifested as an inability to achieve his life goals and dreams.

Critically, the effect of this nihilistic threat upon corporate African-American male life decisively weakened black leadership in the family, community and the larger corporate environ. The supportive political philosophical critique for this dissertation is critical of local black leadership in tandem with the leadership of Black Nationalism movements. Notwithstanding, black leadership in both arenas was groundbreaking and set trends that has not been replicated in current socio-cultural contexts. However, black leadership continued to ignore the savagery of racism represented in its relational and technological sophistication. Black leadership in both the local and national fronts was reactionary in its attempts to be proactive. It was not aware of the depth of African cultural destruction related to white supremacist ethical operations in the lives of African Americans. As many of the leaders were men, they were not aware of the depths of specific effects on African-American men. Furthermore, white supremacy, as exposed in the media coverage of relations between black men and women, also strategically distracts black critical thought with a conservative agenda that
responded to the economic and political fear for white survival. The effect of this distraction was the elimination or reduction of black political progress through cultural stereotyping that supported African Americans internalizing white fear as black fear for survival.

Stage II: Activating Good-enough Mentoring

Transformation

Each of these sources provides a guide for recognizing the occurrence of transformation in the lives of African-American men. Comprehensive transformation in African-American men involved the address of nihilism and stereotypes of internalized white supremacy among them and in the African American community. The process of re-education defined transformation, which was informed by the relationship between Self Psychology, Black Theology of Liberation, and Black political cultural criticism. Self psychology directed transformation as occurring when the African-American man was able to experience his life in a manner that represented his joy in his own activities. He enjoyed himself in his life even when there was a failure or disappointment in a task or relationship. Liberation theology supported that every man was to become a Black man who was committed to the work of God's liberation of all Black people. Liberation theology represented the liberation of African-American men from the oppressive social, economic, and political structures that kept them from experiencing the freedom of their life in the manner God created for them. Political and cultural critiques called for collaboration in a stance of pragmatic
democracy. Empathic responsiveness expressed in these approaches respected every Black man as worthwhile.

Usually, this pastoral theologian would stop at this point in his theological reflections and provide a conclusion that would indicate the possibilities of future work and developments in theory and theological analysis. However, the concerns of the African-American men in this Black male pastoral counselor’s practice pushed him to learn how to significantly manage his countertransference. These men caused this Black male pastoral counselor to remember that he has similar issues as his counselees. The need was summed in the consideration that black men suffered from the absence of empathically responsive, or a soothing, yet, confrontive mentoring relationship with other black men. What was needed by African-American men coming for pastoral counseling was a comprehensive relationship that addressed both the need for intrapsychic soothing and cultural confrontation in a manner that mentored them into the achievement of their life goals and dreams.

This type of relationship with its capacity for empathy would also provide a sufficient support for the Black male pastoral counselor’s management of his countertransference. Influenced by Freudian models of psychoanalysis, countertransference was often viewed as a negative aspect of the pastoral therapeutic relationship, which must be eliminated. In self psychology, and conversely, in this model of black pastoral counseling, the empathy that
accompanied the countertransferences informed the pastoral counselor of the inner experience of the counselee.

In the model of good-enough mentoring, countertransference actually instructed the Black male pastoral counselor and the African-American counselee in respecting their life goals and dream achievement. The energy of the relationship was internalized by both men mobilizing them through their respective lives to the places God would have them to be. This pastoral counseling relationship was also represented as a good-enough mentoring relationship because the Black male pastoral counselor was mentored by the relationship as he mentored his counselees.

Transformation is not a theoretical conception, but a concrete product of pastoral therapeutic relatedness in this specialized type of Black pastoral counseling. It was reciprocal as each man learned to mutually respond to the threat of nihilism by intrapsychically and culturally confronting the effects of internalized white supremacy. Good-enough mentoring was the significant demonstration of communal relationship building between black men.

The Re-education Process: Pastoral Therapeutic Relationship

The empathic responsiveness of good-enough mentoring is the methodology for building and maintaining the particular Black pastoral counseling relationship that facilitated the type of re-education for achievement under discussion in this dissertation. This relationship was between two men of African
descent. Its method and praxis was completed with expectation of emotional health implications for African-American men at large.

Good-enough mentoring was framed as a type of ethno-pastoral cultural analysis. This meant that the analysis began with the indigenous situation, condition, and history of African-American men and the problems that they present. Solutions are sought for these problems in the disciplines of psychology, theology, and political cultural criticism. These disciplines were constructively brought together to frame a model of Black pastoral counseling that helped the Black male pastoral counselor immerse himself in the inner world of the African-American male counselee.

From the discipline of self psychology, the relationship problem for African-American men was diagnosed as a narcissistic personality disorder. This diagnosis usually referred to the exploitative use of others by the African-American male counselee. In all cases, he made use of persons as self-objects, which meant that the energy he garnered from his internalized relationships was used to experience himself as capable. Although he may be relatively successful in the endeavors of his life, he does not commonly experience the joy of his life and in his work. His common experiences of the self are generally low in self-esteem.

Kohut helped this pastoral counselor to understand that the narcissistically disturbed person is developmentally arrested at a stage where he or she required specific responses from persons in their environment to maintain a cohesive self.
When these responses were not forthcoming, these individuals experienced fragmentation of the self. Kohut understood this state of affairs as the result of parental empathic failures. Specifically, the parents did not respond to the child’s phase-appropriate displays of exhibitionism with validation and admiration. They did not offer specific twinship experiences with models of worthy idealization. These failures manifested themselves in the counselee’s tendency to form negative mirroring, twinning, or idealizing transferences in subsequent relationships.

This Black male pastoral counselor also picked another sector in Kohut’s work that gave similar attention to the narcissist’s relationship with the larger culture. The narcissist developed similar dynamics of offense in relationships with societal institutions and the persons in them. The basic problem was African-American male counselees generally experienced relationships in family, community, and spiritual congregation as culturally offensive because of the empathy failures of persons and institutions.

1. Transference

The model of good-enough mentoring addressed the intrapsychic concerns of the African-American male counselee. Transformation occurred when he was able to move his empathic concerns to more mature integration. In the pastoral therapeutic relationship, he was able to move from the maternal mirror-hungry transference to the matured paternal ideal-hungry one. He could move into self-reflection upon his frustrations with his father without self-
threatening disintegration. Additionally, he was able to speak of his spirituality at a depth that represented shame rather than guilt. He experienced a more comprehensive spiritual relatedness that widened his self-experience with the Ultimate Liberator.

2. Countertransference

The significant interest of this Black male pastoral counselor in developing this model of Black pastoral counseling was the address of his countertransference. This address was done in a fashion that aided his awareness of personal internalized white supremacy as he immersed himself in the inner life of the African-American male counselee. Internalized white supremacist stereotypes affected the Black male pastoral counselor; and thus, the pastoral counseling relationship.

The countertransference of the Black male pastoral counselor was the source of his empathy toward the African-American male counselee. His empathy equipped him with the skills to articulate the silence. The practical use of this model indicated pastoral therapeutic concern for both the counselee and the pastoral counselor. "The implications [of the type of relatedness in the address of the countertransference] for pastoral relationship between African-American men as they developed a selfhood that tapped into sources of
personhood that transcended negative masculinity and the identity prescribed for [African-American men]."  

3. Transmuting Internalization

Second, the good-enough mentor addressed internal structuring of white supremacy in the self of the African-American male counselee. Intrapsychically, the good-enough mentor helped the counselee to take control of the frustration with disappointment via the process of transmuting internalization. The frustration that has been split off as part of an archaic image is brought into the psyche in a manner that does not threaten disintegration. The threat was relieved because of the soothing presence of the Black male pastoral counselor. By the pastoral counselor lending his strength for use, the counselee learned how to detoxify the frustration in a way that he strengthened himself for achievement. He learned to sit with his ambivalence.

The transmuting internalization process of the pastoral therapeutic relationship helped the counselee to recreate this process for himself and similarly undertaken in every facet of the counselee’s recovery of his life. As before stated, affective relatedness between the good-enough mentor/black male pastoral counselor and the mentee/African-American male counselee, enables the expulsion of internalized white supremacist stereotypes. In-turn, the counselee returned to day-to-day living within his family, community, and relation

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with the Ultimate. As done, the personal liberation he experienced in relationship with the good-enough mentor galvanized his commitment to the liberation of other African-American men. His commitment and its comprehensive actualization in achievement are expected to result in the affective transformation of the norms of his community’s culture. When the ghosts of internalized white supremacy haunted the possibilities of his achievements, the African-American counselee recalled and drew upon the lessons of transmuted internalization; thus, good-enough mentoring strengthened his compensatory structuring.

Third, good-enough mentoring was a life changing process, which was represented in the intrapsychic skills gained via transmuting internalization. This transmuting internalization was the process whereby the narcissistic personality learned to use the frustration of failed empathy experiences as urgings to develop new internal structures. This encouraged maintaining cohesion in the self. As such, good-enough mentoring facilitated an African-American male counselee’s internalization of failed parental and cultural empathy experiences in such a way that the development of the resilient self strengthened internal structures. These structures maintained cohesion in the self in a way that enabled the African-American male counselee’s use of the mentor relationship to excite their imagination toward achievement of his life goals and dreams.

Stage III: Epistemological Shift

Epistemological support of Black Theology for Black pastoral counseling is the self-determined healthy African-American male participation in his society.
Black Theology empowers African-American men to take negative stereotypes and to transform them into prophetic cultural images of protest. The epistemological shift for the model was creative self-formation and community expression that led him away from violence. It was having knowledge of self, which led these men away from self-absorption and guided them toward building society that represented all its participants and was respectful of their contributions.\textsuperscript{10} Thus, pastoral counseling with a Black male pastoral counselor became a context for African-American male cohesive development of healthy forms of protest. Epistemologically, transformation was internally represented by the integration of idealized archaic intrapsychic and cultural self-object images into the self. This was accomplished with the aid of the empathic responsiveness of the Black male pastoral counselor, thereby strengthening self-cohesion. This was the coincidental goal of therapy and the fulfilled goal for the African-American male counselee.

The incentive to do this research with African-American men and to write this dissertation was the prophetic address of the intrapsychic and cultural concerns of African-American men. These concerns generally clustered around their achievements in family, community, and spiritual relatedness. The research and writing were completed as a serious assessment of the effect of white supremacist stereotypes upon the lives of African-American men in each of these areas.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid.
Re-education through Pastoral Counseling Conversation

The African-American male counselee began both the relationship and the conversation with concerns for their achievement of life goals and dreams. Their concerns seemed reared out of a distorted cultural view of self. Specifically, in the relationship their concerns were demonstrated by desires to speak positively of empathic needs in relationships with family and community and toward the larger culture. The pastoral therapeutic conversation was facilitative of transformation for the African-American male counselee.

This particular type of conversation provided the African-American male counselee opportunities to examine the impact of *generations of quieted narcissistic rage*\(^{11}\) that has been culturally silenced as the affect of internalized white supremacy. Articulation constructively informed the counselee's reference to his feelings as responses to the brutality of cultural stereotyping. African American men generally found pastoral therapeutic relatedness beneficial. However, these men found the model's particularity of access to their feelings, cultural-sensitive self-images, and professional conversation geared toward their health especially curative.

\(^{11}\)The brutality of white supremacy mutates with cultural shifts and continues to manage the lives of African-American males in Black male convulsiveness expressed as violence against self, family, and community. This convulsiveness is their expression of the internalized brutality of White supremacy. These males are removed from their families in response to their expressed frustration with systemic disruption of their lives through discouragement in education, slow employment, athletic pipe dreams, and few opportunities for small business development.
Psychological Good-enough Mentoring

Black pastoral counseling worked to rectify empathic responsive support for black personhood. It was one many new cultural structures in conjunction with the cultural staples of schools, churches, social clubs, and independent businesses within the larger black cultural infrastructure organized to maintain Black psychological health. Psychological good-enough mentoring referenced an ethical commitment to the psychological liberation of African-American men. It intentionally gave attention to African-American male self-experience and the impact of culture upon designated diagnoses of personality disorders. It observed and later theorized that African American male personalities are organized around their internalization of relationship with mother, father, and all the men and women in their lives. Frequently, the psychological stresses of these internalized relationships were significant narcissistic attempts at the management of others in order to maintain fragile self-cohesion. Through psychological good-enough mentoring he realized that every instance of disruption does not discount his worth. Other individual, communal, and spiritual factors contributed to his determine self-worth. Furthermore, his successful management of these concerns will not always be rewarded by the society due to white supremacist stereotypes.

Psychological good-enough mentoring taught him to value himself as he met each challenge. Psychological cohesiveness was experienced in the provision to and receipt of empathy toward the self. Examples of other men of
African descent having met similar challenges in line with their dreams and goals, as well as, created them were sought and provided. Empathic responsiveness framed by examples enabled him to access feelings and process his anxiety away from the family and community. The relational safety of this different environment strengthened his interpersonal performance and formed a new sense of self with different and sometimes new interpersonal boundaries. Simply, he learned and experienced empathy for himself.

**Theological Good-enough Mentoring**

First, good-enough mentoring from a theological perspective required a liberated Black male pastoral counselor. This is one who is committed to the personal liberation of African-American men. He was envisaged as a participant in the work of a Black God, and in the liberation of African-American men to be *ALL* that God created both he and them to be. In practice, this pastoral counselor was identified with a Black Christ, the revelation of a Black God among black men. God identifies with the oppressed, and black men are the oppressed. As with the Jewish man Jesus, God identified with the oppressed Jews and delivered them via Jesus’ assumption into Christ. God has a similar relationship with black men and the Black male pastoral counselor. The counselor was God’s instrument of identification with African-American men in this specific context and within the larger community. The Black male pastoral counselor is assumed into Christ, therefore into the redeeming work of God. Because of this relationship, the counselee experiences redemption, which is the supreme empathy of God.
The personal liberation of the Black male pastoral counselor was symbolic to his coming into identification with every oppressed African-American man. He did the work of God among them and he and they were assumed into Christ.

Cultural Good-enough Mentoring

This type of mentoring facilitated the pedagogical aspect of the model. It educated African Americans in every facet of black cultural experience. Also, it helped them to critique the politics of their relationships, and the impact of culture upon self-expression. African-American men learn to thwart the effects of the nihilistic threat by becoming leaders within themselves, their families, communities, and faith venues. Collaboration between liberated men was optimally experienced and achievement possibilities were exercised. African-American men used the black pastoral counseling relationship as an arena for re-education. Every affective white supremacist stereotype regarding work, personal inferiority and family was countered with knowledgeable black male competence. The counselee was is educated in the benefit of self-exploration, unity with other men, and faith in God. Comprehensive re-education enabled African-American men to treasure their soul, body, mind, and social environment.

Summary

In general, good-enough mentoring is a pedagogical model of Black pastoral counseling because it educates African-American males in every facet of African American cultural experiences. For the men in this Black male pastoral counselor's practice, it aided their critique of the politics of their
relationships, and the experiences of directed oppression of themselves via the larger culture. Good-enough mentoring psychologically facilitated African-American men developing needed compensatory structures for resolution to empathic failure frustrations and associated anxiety management in relation with archaic parental, communal, and cultural self-objects.

Case Study

The previous section presented the model for Good-Enough Mentoring and Cultural Re-education. The case study will make reference summaries to the disciplines as needed for clarity in demonstration of the model. Once the summary is complete, each aspect of the model will be illustrated via case demonstrations. In this section of chapter development, the model of good-enough mentoring is presented in three stages with the delineation of associated phases. Praxis of the model will be presented in the form of a case presentation.

The Steps in Good-enough Mentoring and Cultural Re-education

Good-enough mentoring has three stages, 1) Intake and Relationship Building, 2) Transformation and Re-education, and 3) Epistemological Shift. Summaries of these stages are as follows:

Intake and Relationship Building

For the African-American men in this Black male pastoral counselor’s practice, the primary task was the establishment of a working level of trust between men of African descent. Trust was built via a demonstration of
competent listening and consistent attendance. History taking laid the groundwork for them being assured of a degree of privacy with regards to their discussion of family and cultural relations. Many African-American men expected this degree of assured privacy before articulating their betrayal, hurt, and anger experienced with persons in their family, on the job, in school, and in the larger cultural arena. When the African-American male counselee felt his concerns respected he spoke of deeper issues that represented his self-preservation against self-disintegration.

1. Assessment of self psychological functioning

This was the process of assessing the empathy capacity of the counselee and the degree of empathic responsiveness needed from the counselor. Consideration of the empathic responsiveness of the Black male pastoral counselor began in the Intake and Relationship Building stage. The Black male pastoral counselor gave attention to the stressful norms of the African-American male counselee's life. These were inclusive of work, family, education, community involvement, etc. The counselor gave attention to the counselee's interpretation of these norms in his life.

This pastoral counselor noted that these stress-filled normative aspects served as self-objects for many of the African-American men in his practice. These were sources of positive and negative empathy provisions. Any failure of this pastoral counselor to recognize this empathy service often helped the counselee to gloss over their narcissistic significance. Also, any overlooking of
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This was the process of assessing the empathy capacity of the counselee and the degree of empathic responsiveness needed from the counselor. Consideration of the empathic responsiveness of the Black male pastoral counselor began in the Intake and Relationship Building stage. The Black male pastoral counselor gave attention to the stressful norms of the African-American male counselee's life. These were inclusive of work, family, education, community involvement, etc. The counselor gave attention to the counselee's interpretation of these norms in his life.

This pastoral counselor noted that these stress-filled normative aspects served as self-objects for many of the African-American men in his practice. These were sources of positive and negative empathy provisions. Any failure of this pastoral counselor to recognize this empathy service often helped the counselee to gloss over their narcissistic significance. Also, any overlooking of
the counselee's health concerns and economic implications of his lifestyle as narcissistically significant recapitulated injury to the self. The pastoral counselor from the onset of the relationship offered the counselee different mirroring options and opportunities for idealization.

2. Assessment of theological oppression

Many of the African-American men in this Black male pastoral counselor's practice held some sense of their spirituality. The practice of it was not always some organized form represented via a church, mosque, or synagogue. The concern for them was how this spirituality informed their respective lives and pursuit of life goals and dreams. The re-educational process included helping him to be connected with a source of empowerment that was stronger than the pressure to fail. In this regard, the work helped the counselee to build self-confidence and establish self-competence to do the work necessary for pursuing life goals and dreams. This stance was in direct opposition to his life's practice under the oppressive norm of internalized white supremacist stereotypes. Often, work with these African-American men consisted of the Black male pastoral counselor helping them to be committed to their liberation. That is, to be all that God created each of them to be. All that they can be was interpreted as that which is sufficient for them experiencing their commitment to the achievement of their life goals and dreams.
3. Assessment of cultural nihilism

The African-American men in this pastoral counselor's practice were helped to address their depression and its manifestation as part of the corporate milieu of African-American male life. The pastoral therapeutic conversation included empathy failure experiences in culture. They were helped to assess how their experiences with whites affected them. Essentially, the conversation helped the African-American male counselee reared in a particular socio-cultural context and time to assess the impact of comprehensive integration upon his life, family, and community. Each of their consideration was inclusive of relations in their family of origin family of creation, education, employment, and general communal relatedness. These were starting points, but often they had other areas to add to the list. These men gave varying emotional responses and their variance was accounted to the weight that they gave to each experience. On occasion experiences were re-evaluated for their significance. The pastoral counseling relationship provided the on-going opportunity for the African-American male counselee to build personal competence by identifying with for black heroes in his life met and achieved their goals and dreams. These heroes were not popular black cultural icons representing atypical economic success, but persons that were accessible to them.

Good-Enough Mentoring Application

Transformation in Good-Enough mentoring correlated to the pursuit of life goals and dreams. This metaphor was appropriate at every stage of
development in the African-American male's life. Life goals and dreams were adjusted to the stages of life and expectation of accomplishments. They represented him as a man competent in living his life. Counsellees made use of this type of pastoral counseling relationship according to the stages of their life and the issues that arose in accordance to the stage. Transformation was the resolution of some unresolved empathic-failure around which a compensatory structure was built in accordance with the ethic of internalized white supremacy.

**Pastoral Therapeutic Relationship**

Re-education was the process of Black pastoral counseling that addressed the intrapsychic and cultural hindrances to growth. The counselee was helped to confront the empathic failures of past relationships. This was accomplished in the manner of the male pastoral counselor/mentor with the male counselee/mentee. The counselor brought a history of competence that helped the mentee build his competence. This re-education process confronted self-devaluation through empathic collaboration between the counselor and counselee. Together they devised a new order for the counselee's pursuit and achievement.

1. **Transference**

The African-American male counselee bringing to the pastoral counseling relationship every black male relatedness empathic failure he has encountered in his life as transference. It also included every male relatedness cultural empathic failure. Good-Enough mentoring specifically worked through mirroring, twinning
and idealization needs of the counselee. Critical development and use of the transference by the Black male pastoral counselor was allowance of himself to be idealized by the African-American male counselee. The specific narcissistic transferences of mirroring and twinning were gratified in the relationship. Gratification of these transferences promoted healthy grandiosity in the counselee.

2. Countertransference

Empathic responsiveness to empathy needs of the African-American male counselee was facilitated by the countertransference of the Black male pastoral counselor. It functioned as a specialized an educational tool for the Black male pastoral counselor. By immersing himself into the self-experience of the African-American male counselee, he was able to revisit personal resolution of similar concerns. More importantly, he brought to the relationship-informed insight and awareness of personal compensatory structures used in managing his narcissistic rage. The Black male pastoral counselor drew upon his experiences and used them as his interpersonal education base with African-American male counselees developing their compensatory structures.

3. Transmuting Internalization

This phase in pastoral counseling attended to the frustration of the African-American male counselee and his management of it. This phase was critical to re-education. Mostly, these men experienced themselves as victims of their narcissism and the injuries they have experienced. Incidences of job loss
and relational convulsiveness were commonly reported as a type of self-victimization. The work of the phase aided their work with personal narcissistic frustration with building the maturity they needed to achieve their life goals and dreams. This meant helping them to realistically assess their idiosyncratic responses to internalized white supremacy. The Black male pastoral counselor allowed himself to be used in a manner that managed the counselee’s frustration, but facilitated him building needed internal structures.

**Attendance to Epistemological Shift**

This stage was the most difficult to attend in the pastoral counseling relationship. This stage represented the merger of all the facets of psychology, theology, and culture in a fashion that represented ontological transformation in perception, understanding, and conviction. There were mini-experiences of epistemological shifts during the Good-Enough mentoring process. These were noted in the relationship when the counselee was able to bring together experience, the education of the mentoring relationship, and real encounters of achievement. He was able to do reflection on what made the incident a success or failure. Simply, the epistemological shift in process occurred when the African-American male began to represent himself as a maturing black man. He participated in the pastoral counseling relationship in a manner that called himself into working/collaborative relationship with the pastoral counselor. Coincidentally, the Black male pastoral counselor calls the African-American male into collaborative community, which was represented in the pastoral
counseling relationship. The pastoral counselor is perennially aware of the affects of internalized white supremacist stereotypes, therefore, his life and that of the counselee is reformatted for engagement in all protests against all forms of white oppression. The relationship facilitated articulation, so he named the pervasive effects of white oppression in his life. Epistemologically, the black man, not the African-American male, represents the full authority of knowledge and celebration of self, the value of work and unity, and the power of faith.

The Case

The following case addressed typical African-American male concerns as representative of Black pastoral counseling via the Model for Good-Enough mentoring and the method of Cultural Re-education. Both the model and method were the interdisciplinary guides in Black pastoral counseling treatment of African-American men suffering with Narcissistic Personality Disorder. This was a pervasive pattern of grandiosity in his fantasy or behavior that is expressed as a need for admiration, and the lack of empathy. This condition of the personality began to appear in early adulthood and presented in a variety of contexts, interpersonal relationships, educational situations, and employment maintenance.¹²

Case Studies: Description of Occurrences

For the male counselee, all of his relationships were compensations to manage his anxious internal security. He refined his manipulation skills in order to maintain possession of idealized mother figures and father figures to assume responsibility for him. Critical development in the pastoral counseling was his realized self-incohesion and the number of sexualized relationships that recapitulated his family distress; which was often characterized by substitutionary relationships with prostitutes. The usefulness of the countertransference for this Black male pastoral counselor was its use in holding Walker accountable for his addiction relapses and retardation of progress. The basic character of the therapy was him remaining clean in order to achieve his life goals.

Walker

Description: Walker was a 54 year-old African American, divorced, retired, Air Force officer. He was the father of four children, two (2) boys and two (2) girls. Three of the four were 28, 26, and 24 years of age. His youngest daughter was 6 years old. Aside from his children, three other significant sources inform his self-definition, family of origin, work in the military and the cultural shifts in Black male identity during periods of segregation, integration and the Black Power Movements between the 1950's through the 1970's. Walker's sense of Afro-centrism was the core to his self-concept. He approached all relationships through this medium, including pastoral counseling. He had little trouble
establishing life goals and his dream life was active; inconsistent follow-through upon them supplied his shame and personal disgust.

Walker's family of origin relational dynamics included a present but uninvolved stepfather and a temperamental mother. She was reported to have been his primary emotional stabilizer as he was for her. He was diagnosed with NPD. He maintained his addiction recovery while primarily working on self-individuation issues with the significant women in his life, and self-differentiation relative to his father.

Walker remained in relationship with this pastoral counselor. He worked on exploring himself as he responded to age-appropriate shifts in his life. He is middle-aged, twice divorced and a recovering addict. He worked at accessing many compartmentalized feelings regarding his mother, stepfather and father he did not know, ex-wives, his career, and what he saw as shifting African American cultural values in the community where he has lived for thirty years. His family resided in a middle-class community of affluence and degradation. Primary grief work laid in the area of coming to terms with being a good father to his 6 year-old daughter and offering sound advice to the adult children. With these older ones, he began conversations regarding the effects of his convulsive lifestyle on the families. According to his standards, he has failed because of his 24 year-old daughter's convulsive behavior. He managed to maintain steady, but inconsistent employment.
**Presenting Issue:** Two concerns brought him to therapy; his recovery and his relationship with his 24 year-old daughter; particularly, her waning self-support. Walker was made aware of some violence; particularly, when she was nearly arrested on gun possession charges. This type of convulsiveness was interpreted as the result of her relationship with another young woman. Walker was not fully aware of all the details of the situation, but was frustrated by feelings of helplessness to respond to the conditions due to the lack of resources. The ex-wife, (mother of the 6 year-old) was more involved in resolving the situation. Both the daughter and her stepmother are angered by his non-involvement. He suggested what looked like a lack of interest in the situation of his 24 year old daughter was his management of anger and frustration. He came to therapy looking for ways in which to make his relationship with his daughter better, including a significant emphasis upon methods for managing his frustration with an inability to get her to make *better choices*.

**Case Assessment**

**Intake and Relationship Building**

Walker came to the pastoral counseling relationship with some familiarity with the counseling process. He initiated the relationship on his terms and immediately negotiated the relationship for his benefit. Therapy was initiated as part of his recovery program. He answered questions regarding personal and family history, as well as, communal and cultural involvement.
Self Psychological Assessment

Walker reported that he would not have continued in counseling if the counseling relationship was set in a group. He appreciated the individual attention in order to get his needs met. This relationship was the place that he affords himself this opportunity.

Black liberation theological assessment

Walker did not participate in an organized form of religion. He was reared Methodist and received this training early in life. He was non-active at the time of this pastoral therapeutic relationship, but a regular participant in an Alcoholic and Narcotics Anonymous 12 Step program. He was cautious, but appreciative for the spiritual foundation of each. His sense of spirituality was not been fully explored with him in this relationship. Lessons relative to spirituality that he learned and how they continue to impact him did surface in the conversation of the counseling relationship. He possessed a commitment to the liberation of black people and African-American men from white oppression. These concerns were ramified in his addiction recovery. His perspective of liberation was political in nature; he did not orient it in a spiritual relationship. His spirituality was essentially an individual concern for him. In the address of other related concerns in his life, the conversation allowed opportunities to direct his attention to the ways in which he continued to operate under white oppressive stereotypes. The tenor of our conversation was resistance to confrontation and ambivalent moves toward personal liberation.
Cultural Assessment

Walker came to therapy with a sense of Blackness and his history due to his early involvement in the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. He possessed a sensitivity to culture that informed his worldview. These were not fundamental issues that needed to be explored with him. However, his growing edge came in discussion of black manhood images and relatedness to family. The specific help was his assessment of the Black manhood self-conception in a fashion that helped him to have the deepened relationship with his children and the significant woman in his life. Attention was also given to relationships with his ex-wives, mother, and children.

Transformation and Re-education

This Black male pastoral counselor’s work was exciting. The moment in the counseling that this counselor knew he had developed a working relationship with Walker was the session he announced that he would be continuing the counseling for himself. This occurrence resolved his participation under a non-articulated sense of duress and came as the result of an encounter with his family that was traumatic. It was a type of intervention for them with him concerning his relationship with his 28-year-old daughter and 26 year old son. The intervention helped him to see that he really did not have control over them although at a cognitive level he knew this truth. He observed in conversation that he did have the skills to do conversation about their family pains. He developed some of these skills in the pastoral counseling relationship. The reality of his
relationship with them shifted after that conversation. This was the moment that transformation was substantially begun because he began to work on himself. Previously, he considered his work was done to help them. On regular occasions, he lapsed into notions of fixing others for his satisfaction, but now he can hear himself more quickly in the moments of his lapse.

Transference

In some degree, Walker has conducted with this Black male pastoral counselor all three grades of narcissistic transferences—mirroring, twinship and idealization. This pastoral counselor named the transferences, as empathy needs when Walker reported on the condition of his interpersonal relationships. This technique of empathic responsiveness allowed Walker knowledge of the counselor's awareness of him. In effect, this awareness did not threaten the self of Walker with disintegration because of an interpretation that is too near the injury.

In response to his mirror-hungeriness, Walker acknowledged the need for the relationship and to be in individual pastoral counseling. He had the opportunity to have all of the attention of the pastoral counselor. He was allowed to be fully expressive of himself as the situation warranted. This included verbal and physical demonstration of activity in situations upon which he reported. There was a sense of general delight of the counselor at his presence.
Twin-ship-hungriness was observed in the sessions. There were times when Walker twinned with the counselor in the session. This twinning included shifts in body posture and comments on activity in the conversation.

Ideal-hungriness of Walker was responded to by giving him tools for articulating and expressing himself in his interpersonal relationship. He expected the counselor to have more knowledge than he did; he expected to share the knowledge that he possessed. As he considered himself an authority, the counselor allowed himself to be idealized as a black man of integrity and presence, Walker reported being able to respect the contribution of the pastoral counselor to his well-being. He interpreted the actions of the counselor toward him as interest in his well-being.

Countertransference

The pastoral counselor frequently employed the question, “Where did you learn that?” when learning to manage his countertransference with Walker. This question allowed the counselor to deflect his feelings. The question encouraged Walker to provide more information and gain insight into situation and speak of them in the session. This allowed the counselor time to hear specifically the orientation of Walker’s action and response in reported situations. The counselor was informed by personal experience and used this insight to be empathically responsive to Walker’s self-experience.
Transmuting Internalization

For the relationship with Walker, his process of transmuting internalization and his accompanying experience of optimal frustration was dependent upon the timing of the interpretation. The counselor’s empathic responsiveness experience with Walker was connected with appropriate timing of interpretations. If these were done too soon or late, Walker discarded them. The early warning given to the counselor was not to tell him too much. There were times when he was not sure that he could handle the interpretation(s). There were times when Walker actively sought insight on family relations that he could ignore. He ignored insight when it did not fit his perception. He was more accepting as his idealization for the counselor strengthened. The response of the counselor was that Walker was the authority in his world and willingly risked his narcissistic anger. Establishing the benefit of this type of soothing confrontation was ascertained as the counselor demonstrated his commitment to Walker’s well-being. These fundamental interactions laid the foundation for later epistemological shift, wherein the self could be reconfigured of internalized oppressive stereotypes. These planned occurrences could materialize when Walker realized that he was not abandoned in his anger and frustration. These moments of reconfiguration would be called to his attention. Additionally, these moments of interpretation presented him the opportunity of inviting the counselor into collaborative discussion with him.
Epistemological shift

Walker expressed interest in becoming aware of the effects his life choices have on others. He was particularly attuned to his children and the significant woman in his life. He wished for a relationship that was beneficial to him and considerate of them. The significant epistemological shift in this regard was him becoming attuned to his need for care and the experience of it in his relationships. The awareness liberated him to articulate what he needed rather than being dependent upon those around him to intuit them. The precipitating challenge for change was the awareness that care providers may incorrectly and/or inappropriately intuit. His usual response was rejection of them and the care they provide because of inaccurate intuition. Improving maturity taught him improved self-care.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the model of Good-Enough mentoring in Black pastoral counseling. Terms and definitions from Self Psychology, Black Theology of Liberation, Cultural Assessment and Cultural Re-education were operationalized in the model and reflection on the model. The presented case was designed to demonstrate the model, as well as, facilitate pastoral reflection on the model.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

Previous chapters presented the sources of Self Psychology, Black Theology of Liberation, Cultural Assessment and Cultural re-education. Also, the model and accompanying pastoral theological reflections that discuss the construction of the model and a case has been presented.

This chapter presents a summary of the dissertation. It will also indicate lessons learned from practical use of the model, as well as, presumed benefit for treating African-American male counselees suffering from narcissistic personality disorders. Delimitation of the model and implications of the model and future studies will also be presented.

Thesis

The thesis for this dissertation is African-American men can be encouraged to achieve their goals and dreams through a method of re-education that specifically responds to their suffering from internalized white supremacy. This confrontation occurs through good-enough mentoring, a model of Black pastoral counseling. The practice of the method was the provision of an empathically responsive relationship with a Black male pastoral counselor that is both intrapsychically soothing and culturally confrontive.
This method used Self Psychology, Black Theology of Liberation, Cultural Assessment and Cultural Re-education to assess the intrapsychic and cultural health of African-American male counselees. This assessment helped the Black male pastoral counselor to determine the empathic responsiveness need of the African-American male counselee in the pastoral counseling relationship. These sources also framed the pastoral theological reflection upon the case.

**Problem Statement**

African-American men suffer from the internalization of white supremacy. This is the internalization of an oppressive European American consciousness that is based on affirmation of its greatness and superiority in contrast to the inferiority and wretchedness of the African and any other ethnic group. This problem is intrapsychically manifest as failed achievement of life goals and dreams. This operationalizing of White supremacist stereotypes manifested in nihilistic threats and corporate depression in African American communities. White supremacy represented as stereotypes predisposed African-American male character and demeanor to certain convulsive behavior and angry emotional disposition.

**Problem Solution**

The solution to the problem is a re-education process for African-American male counselees in a pastoral counseling relationship with a Black male pastoral counselor that was intrapsychically soothing and culturally confrontive. This
relationship re-educated the African America male counselee in processing his experiences of empathy failure in relationship with significant self-objects. The process of re-education was successful for the counselee because he utilized the empathy of the relationship with the counselor to re-work past empathy failures and strengthen self-cohesion.

**Evaluation of the Model**

The model of good-enough mentoring proved a beneficial tool for working with African-American men in pastoral counseling. Significant to the method's effectiveness was its therapeutic goal of re-education for African-American men. The counselee learned to utilize this process to re-work empathy failures in a good-enough mentoring pastoral counseling relationship with a black male. The Black male pastoral counselor communicated his commitment to the well-being of the African-American male counselee. The communication also strengthened the empathy and self-cohesion in the counselee in a manner that supported the use and interpretation of the transference and countertransference in the relationship as proof of the counselor's empathy and commitment. Good-enough mentoring with its predisposition toward empathic responsiveness enabled the counselee to comprehensively address issues and concerns relative to self, family, community, culture, and faith. The African-American male counselee significantly learned via the relationship with the Black male pastoral counselor to process empathy failure experiences in a manner that was previously unavailable to him.
De-limitations

A method of borrowing of concepts from the sources in the disciplines was used to develop the method of re-education in the model of good-enough mentoring. This borrowing was done based upon the similarity in operation of concepts. This means that the concepts were interpreted as addressing the same or similar individual or cultural aspects of the problem observed in the research of this project. The operation of the concepts supported and/or enlarged the work of this pastoral counselor-theologian in his address of the problem in this dissertation.

The research of this dissertation was conducted with the African-American counselees of this pastoral counselor's practice. Therefore, the research was limited by the idiosyncrasies of this Black male pastoral counselor. Supervision and other discussions with peers facilitated this pastoral counselor's awareness of his countertransference interference in a manner that helped the countertransference to be beneficial to the counseling and reflection. The conclusive benefit of good enough was dependent upon the responsiveness of the counselees to its practice and the encouraging responses received from supervisory and peer relational colleagues.

The most significant implication of this work for the field of pastoral counseling and pastoral theology was its consideration of the impact of culture upon the formation of the personality. Culture was an imperative consideration when forming treatment plans for the narcissistic personality.
Conclusion

The significant contribution of this work is the inclusion of culture as a pastoral counseling imperative for treating African-American men. Inclusion of culture was crucial in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the counselee and the problem that prompts their seeking of pastoral counseling. The significance of this imperative was enlargeable from the treatment of African-American men to every ethnic group and women.

Endeavors for future study are in the following areas:

1. Studies in relations between men that do and do not consider the variable of ethnicity history, sociology, and culture that have not been explored in this discussion.

2. Studies in relations between men and their families and communities; how these groupings develop; and the dynamics that do and do not have an intrapsychic affect upon personality formation.

3. Studies in pastoral theology that promote liberation theology as its guiding theological underpinning for addressing individual and communal intrapsychic and cultural health.

The practical wisdom gained by this author has gained from this research and reflection was the following:
1. There are spaces in the self of counselees, which are narcissistic sensibilities that necessitate empathy experiences with a pastoral counselor of their gender and ethnic heritage. These narcissistic sensibilities must be worked through with a pastoral counselor of the same gender and ethnicity in order to de-pathologize the counselee’s narcissistic cultural adjustments. These adjustments are assessed as responses to the empathy failures of the culture.

2. The contribution of African-American men to this work and insight for future work with them was their insistence upon a sense of collaboration between them and the authority. Collaboration recognized the corporate value of African-American men and pursued support for them.

3. Narcissistic Personality Disorder was possibly the disorder of the self that represented not only African-American male response to the internalization of white supremacist stereotypes, but also the European-American male response to the internalization of European American greatness. Those in this pastoral counselor’s practice who were in conflict with the stereotyping of it in their families and communities seemed to present problems of their concerns for achievement of life goals and dreams.
Summary

This chapter summarized the work and emphasis of this dissertation. This author sought to be ethical in this presentation and work with the men represented in the case. Any similarity one may find in self and the presentation of the material is purely coincidental. The similarity speaks to the widespread nature of the problem and the scope of hope for transformation this Black male pastoral counselor-theologian has for the health, well-being, and contribution of African-American men.

This project has been a helpful avenue of development for this Black male pastoral counselor. His countertransference work and the re-work of empathy failures in his life and practice have been most rewarding for him, as well as, beneficial of a far more efficacious response toward the men of his practice. Additionally, the included practice, research, and reflection indicate expected continuance of constructive pastoral counseling work for a long time.
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