



## Scriptural Truth, Ecclesial Authority and the Challenge of Lay Reception

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**Abstract.** This article examines the pastoral phenomenon among the faithful, who firmly believe in the truth and infallibility of the Scriptures without feeling the need to interpret or explain the texts themselves. Based on limited interviews conducted, this study finds that this phenomenon does not arise from a lack of faith but rather from the Church's teaching that emphasizes the authority of the Scriptures without allowing space for personal interpretation. The results of these interviews are combined with patristic sources and modern theological discussions to delve deeper into the integration of the truth of the Scriptures into the daily practice of the faithful. A tendency toward clerical interpretation has been found to hinder the *sensus fidei*, or the communal sense of faith, leading to an exaggerated fear of possibly misinterpreting the Scriptures. Therefore, an inclusive pastoral approach is needed, including through digital and catechetical media, to encourage the faithful to engage with the Scriptures within the bounds of ecclesiastical unity. This aims to ensure that the faith of the faithful is not only a matter of belief but is also practiced with true and comprehensive understanding.

**Keywords:** Clerical Interpretation; Ecclesiastical Unity; Infallibility of Scriptures; Pastoral Phenomenon; *Sensus Fidei*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The veracity of Sacred Scripture is one of the main fundamental concerns in Christian theology. From the earliest ages of the Church, believers have acknowledged that Scripture is not only a human testimony to religious experience but the inspired Word of God, conveyed via human authors under divine direction (Drummond, 2023). This belief has been expressed through concepts of inspiration, infallibility, canon, and tradition, all of which declare that Scripture is accurate because God himself is its ultimate author (Fowl, 2021; Aquinas, 1274). While this theological stance remains formally preserved within the Church, current pastoral observations indicate an increasing tension between the assertion of textual reality and personal engagement with Scripture among the faithful.

This study is based on a specific finding in pastoral and theological settings: many believers are certain that the Bible is accurate and without error, yet they are hesitant or even refuse to interpret or explain even short portions from it. People respect the Bible, but they also keep their distance from it (Brugger, 2021). Truth is acknowledged, however comprehension is postponed. This trend prompts urgent theological and pastoral inquiries regarding the reception, appropriation, and embodiment of the Church's concept of truth by the faithful. It is not only biblical literacy that is at issue, but also the integrity of the Church's own teaching on revelation. If the Church says that Scripture is really meant to save everyone, then its truth must be both spoken and received in a way that allows for knowledge, participation, and responsible engagement (*Dei Verbum* 11). This study aims to investigate the conflict by analyzing how Christians comprehend the veracity of Scripture, the reasons for their hesitance to interpret it,

and the potential pastoral and catechetical responses of the Church that remain true to her doctrinal heritage.

The Church's idea of scriptural truth is based on the fact that God is infallible, not on personal beliefs or the agreement of the community. God is truth because he discloses things, thus everything he reveals is true (DV 11). The Bible is real because it is part of God's truth, not because people have proved it to be accurate (Flynn, 2023). This religious principle supports the Church's claim of inspiration and inerrancy, and it must be made clear at the beginning of this study.

One of the first people to articulate this concept in a clear and concise manner was Saint Augustine. *De Doctrina Christiana* is where Augustine makes the argument that the canonical writings are given authority and validity by the Church because of the Church's endorsement of them. He maintains that Christians embrace the canonical texts not via their own personal judgment but rather through Tradition and Magisterium (Green, 1995). The process of canonization is not only a historical or administrative procedure (David, 2024). It is a proof of Tradition and Magisterium at work, ensuring that the Word of God transmitted faithfully to us and future generations. Therefore, any individualistic and relativistic interpretations of scriptural reality are both rejected. There is no influence of human belief or personal experience on the truthfulness of the Bible. Faith is a reaction to a reality that already exists, and it is the Church's eternal Tradition that provides sustenance for it (Levering, 2021). Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium are all interconnected, and none of them can exist independently, which provides substantial support for this approach.

The Church does not stand above the Word of God; rather, it serves it by faithfully maintaining, interpreting, and proclaiming it (Green, 2023). One important thing that needs to be said clearly, even though it is often assumed but not said clearly enough, is that the truth of Scripture comes before and roots the believer's conviction. Faith does not create truth; it is a part of it (Gaillardetz, 2022). This distinction is essential for examining the empirical results of this study, which indicate significant concordance with biblical facts yet only limited personal engagement with the Bible itself.

The present study is driven by a perceived discrepancy between formal doctrinal affirmation and the theological certitude encountered in everyday life. Even while the Church's teaching on scriptural truth is still very clear, a lot of its members know about it without really understanding it (Grillo, 2023). This event isn't completely out of the usual. Augustine cautioned against a faith predicated simply on authority without the pursuit of understanding, asserting that believing inherently engenders a desire to comprehend what one holds to be true

(Hill, 1990). Recent theological research has shown that modern believers often hold conflicting views regarding the Bible (Healy, 2021; Hütter, 2022). They agree that the Bible has authority, but they don't think it's important to understand it exactly. People don't stay away from things because they don't care about them rather they respect and fear everything they come across (Massingale, 2022). One example of this is the fear of being misunderstood, making a mistake, or going against what the Church says (Rush, 2021). In traditions that put a lot of emphasis on following the rules and the authority of the magisterium, this kind of anxiety makes a lot of sense. If it is not dealt with, though, it could lead to "passive orthodoxy," which is a type of theological consensus among Christians who can't figure out what theology is on their own.

This is exactly what the interviews for this study show. Most of the people interviewed said that the Bible is true and without error, but when asked if they could explain a brief chapter from the Bible, most of them said they didn't want to or didn't feel comfortable doing so. Most people thought that priests or catechists were the best people to explain Scripture. They didn't think they were qualified to do it themselves. This pattern shows a big but frequently ignored problem in the church: people believe the Scripture is true but don't think they can understand it. Scripture is seen as truthful, although functionally ambiguous (Stayne, 2025). This stance threatens to compromise the fundamental objective of revelation, which is not solely to elicit agreement but to engage believers in salvific comprehension.

These findings pose an important theological question about the connection between church authority and lay interpretation. The Church has always said no to the idea of unrestrained individual interpretation that is not based on church teachings (Rausch, 2024). Moreover, she has asserted that God provides the Bible to each and every one of his people, and that every single believer, in their own unique way, receives and transmits the truth that God contains (Hinze, 2021). Here we need to discuss the so-called *sensus fidei fidelium*. It is the supernatural capacity of the faithful to discern the principles of the faith (ITC, 2014). The sense is contingent upon their communion with the Church, participation in the sacramental life, and sensitivity to the teachings of the Magisterium. By assuming that the laity are not merely passive recipients of truth but rather active participants in the process of truth assimilation, this doctrine makes the assumption (O'Malley, 2022). In order to clarify that the risk of misinterpretation, albeit being significant, is not conclusive, it is vital to make this point clear. A great number of individuals who have faith in this research are concerned that reading the Bible is always a really negative experience. As Ratzinger notes, interpretation in the

Church is never the solitary endeavor of an individual (Ratzinger, 2004). It should transpire within a dynamic tradition that both facilitates and rectifies comprehension.

Augustine provides another useful point of view. He firmly upholds episcopal authority, yet contends that Scripture is inherently available to believers who engage with it in charity and obedience to the rule of faith. Error does not stem from interaction with Scripture *per se*, but from interpretations devoid of love, humility, and ecclesial communion (Green, 1995). Any genuine theological study of how people accept scripture truth must take into account the cultural and technical background of the present day (Parker, 2021). People who believe in God read the Bible in a way that is very different from how it was read in the past. Digital and social medias' content controlled by algorithms change not only how long people pay attention to things, but also how they see competence and authority (Sonderegger, 2023). Technology offers unparalleled opportunities for catechesis and theological education. Because there are now so much resources online to access. Conversely, this setting cultivates what several scholars refer to as the "death of expertise," wherein authoritative instruction is reduced to a singular opinion amid numerous perspectives (Nichols, 2017). Overindulgence in fragmented content might undermine enduring learning and exacerbate uncertainty instead of fostering confidence.

This study thus positions its investigation at the confluence of doctrinal truth, lay formation, and digital culture. It inquires not just about the reasons believers are reluctant to interpret Scripture, but also how the Church may effectively catechize in a context where authority is both heightened and challenged. Taking these things into account, this study is based on the following main research question: "How can Christians who acknowledge the truth and inerrancy of Scripture comprehend their ability to engage with and interpret it, and what pastoral and catechetical practices can harmonize doctrinal truth with assured lay reception?" The goal of this study is not to question the Church's teaching on the truth of the Bible. Rather, it assumes its validity and aims to investigate how that teaching is experienced in lived faith. This study seeks to enhance existing discussions about revelation, authority, and catechesis in the present Church by integrating qualitative data with theological interpretation.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research primarily employs interviews with active lay people in the church who we deem are, at least, familiar and close enough with the Scripture. Our primary task in the interview is to locate the reason behind the fear of misinterpreting, even from those who read and maybe try to practice the Scripture on a daily basis. The phenomenon examined in this

study is robust affirmation of scriptural truth alongside hesitance towards interpretation, which cannot be sufficiently elucidated through empirical observation alone. It necessitates a theologically normative framework that elucidates the Church's definition of "truth," the means of its preservation, and the intended reception by the faithful. Consequently, this literature review serves not only as a survey of scholarly opinions but also as a grounding that validates our assumptions.

The fundamental belief in Christian doctrine regarding Scripture is that it is true because God is the prime author. Thomas Aquinas claims that Sacred Scripture imparts truth "without error," as it articulates God's purposes for salvation (Aquinas, 1274). This position asserts that truth is intrinsic to Scripture. *Dei Verbum* says this again: "Scripture teaches solidly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation" (*Dei Verbum* 11). The Council does not redefine truth as mere existential meaning; it maintains its objective theological character. The literature continually emphasizes that the authenticity of Scripture is maintained by ecclesiastical authority, particularly through canonization and Tradition. Augustine's contribution is essential here. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, he asserts that the authority of Scripture is dependent on its adoption by the Catholic Church, especially by those churches with apostolic foundations (Green, 1995). Augustine stated that he would not embrace the Gospel but on the Church's authority does not make Scripture less important. Yves Congar further elaborates on this concept by asserting that Tradition constitutes the live conveyance of truth, wherein Scripture is accurately comprehended and preserved (Congar, 1966). Tradition does not contribute to the truth of Scripture, it makes sure that it is passed down correctly over time. The concern is not the validity of belief, but the profundity of reception.

Modern theology has emphasized that revelation is not merely the communication of concepts but rather God's self-reveal. Karl Rahner's theology of revelation posits that truth is conveyed within a relational context that demands both response and understanding (Rahner, 1978). Rahner does not equate doctrinal content with experience. He asserts that understanding evolves within the established framework of faith. This comprehension is crucial for the analysis of empirical data. The respondents' belief in the truth of scripture shows that they truly received revelation, but their reluctance to interpret shows that they are not fully accepting it. Christian theology has always examined the relationship between belief and understanding. Faith that does not seek comprehension may become stagnant. On the other hand, comprehension without faith devolves into independent speculation (Vanhoozer, 2022). Recent academic work has shown that catechesis often ends with the establishment of belief, but does

not build confidence in how to interpret things (Schüssler, 2022; Stayne, 2025). This creates a situation in which believers recognize the truth of Scripture but are unable to interact with that truth.

Several studies suggest that modern catechesis often emphasizes moral instruction and doctrinal explanations, thereby neglecting extended interaction with Scripture. This leads to a situation in which believers support doctrine but do not know how to read the Bible (Watson, 2022; Wood, 2021). This is significantly worse in the digital world. Technology makes it simpler to find the Bible, but it also makes “old ways” of running things less interesting. Nichols' analysis of the "death of expertise" highlights how digital culture erodes trust in authoritative guidance while simultaneously overwhelming individuals with information. This means that the Church has to begin building its own legitimate media in the digital world.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There is a lot of evidence that the Church is careful about private interpretation. The Pontifical Biblical Commission asserts that Scripture should be interpreted within the dynamic Tradition of the Church and cautions against interpretations that are isolated from ecclesial context (PBC, 1993). Ratzinger stresses that interpretation is always done in a group (Ratzinger, 2008). This is why many people naturally give priests the job of interpreting the Bible. Nonetheless, many scholars assert that such focus on authority can inadvertently lead to clericalization (Gaillardetz, 2003). When interpretation is regarded as the province of experts, the laity may develop a sense of inadequacy. Here we can say then that the reluctance to interpret Scripture frequently stems not from laziness or disinterest, but from insufficient knowledge influenced by a kind of normalization, albeit resulting in pastoral imbalance.

The doctrine of the *sensus fidei fidelium* signifies a pivotal theological advancement in acknowledging the interpretive ability of the faithful. The International Theological Commission elucidates that the faithful, through baptism and ecclesial formation, possess an authentic ability to discern truth in matters of faith (ITC, 2014). This doctrine directly contests the presumption that lay interpretation is intrinsically perilous. The literature underscores that the faithful do not engage with Scripture as *tabulae rasae*, despite the fact that not all interpretations hold equal validity. Liturgy, doctrine, and catechesis have already shaped them. Consequently, the apprehension of misinterpretation must be contextualized. Augustine himself recognizes interpretive plurality while asserting that interpretations consistent with charity and the rule of faith are valid (Green, 1995). Contemporary theologians support this view, contending that theological robustness today substantially mitigates the risk of

fundamental doctrinal deviation among practicing believers (Healy, 2021). This literature substantiates the study's assertion that interpretive risk is negligible within ecclesial formation, and that undue fear may indeed obstruct the development of mature faith.

This chapter's goal is not just to repeat what has been found in the real world, but to interpret them theologically in light of the Church's teachings on revelation, authority, and reception. Our interviews show a clear pattern: people are sure that Sacred Scripture is true and without error, but they are not confident enough to interpret or explain biblical texts in front of an audience. We analyze under the premise that doctrine remains valid despite imperfect reception. Congar insists that the Church needs to pay close attention to how truth is lived and shared, not just how it is defined (Congar, 1966). The empirical findings are interpreted as indicators of theological formation, encompassing both its advantages and its constraints.

The primary finding of this study is that belief in the inerrancy and truth of Scripture is assumed rather than personally scrutinized. Respondents from various active people in several parishes in Makassar consistently affirmed that Scripture is true, inspired, and authoritative; however, few could articulate their reasoning beyond references to ecclesial teaching or tradition. From a theological standpoint, this is not unexpected. Augustine explicitly states that faith in Scripture typically commences through authority rather than comprehension. Parents, teachers, and the Church help people believe before they do it themselves. In this context, the respondents' belief exemplifies a normative ecclesial epistemology, rather than a deficiency. The peril resides not in the belief itself but in its arrested development. When belief stays outside of itself and never moves toward understanding, it could become inactive. Anselm's famous assertion that belief seeks understanding serves as a caution against stagnation.

The data importantly show that the people who answered the questions do not think of truth as something that can be changed or is subjective. People believe that the Bible is true, even if they don't understand it. This is very similar to what the Church teaches: that the truth of the scriptures is based on God's infallibility and protected by canon and Tradition. From a theological point of view, this is a good thing. It shows that modern skepticism hasn't changed the Church's basic teachings for these people. So, the problem isn't that the doctrine is weakening, but that the pastoral work isn't done.

The second major finding is that most of the people who answered the survey said that parents, catechists, and priests are the main sources of their belief in the truth of Scripture. This demonstrates a profound ecclesiastical comprehension of authority, aligning with Augustine's claim that the Church facilitates access to Scripture. Instead of seeing this dependence as a problem, we should first accept it as theologically sound. The Church has always taught that it

is her job to take care of the Bible and interpret it correctly within her community. So, trusting authority is not a sign of being immature; it is a sign of being part of the church. But the data also show a big problem: people trust authority, but authority is not clear about how it teaches. Respondents think they know what the Church teaches, but they don't often get help understanding how the Church interprets Scripture or how interpretation works within Tradition.

This makes things strange: authority is confirmed, but it also makes people less likely to get involved. Gaillardetz characterizes this phenomenon as the “clericalization of competence,” wherein theological responsibility is centralized among ordained ministers, leading the laity to internalize a perception of inadequacy. The evidence strongly backs up this diagnosis. Respondents do not reject authority; instead, they retreat behind it.

A significant theological inquiry emerges: does this reluctance signify humility or indicate insufficient formation? Augustine gives a complicated answer. He praises humility in interpretation but warns against false humility that refuses to get involved at all (Stohtert, 1994). Real humility means recognizing that you need the Church while still reading the Bible with love and logic. The data indicate that respondents have accepted the first aspect but not the second. Respondents also consistently characterized priests as distinctly qualified to interpret Scripture. This shows respect for clerical formation, but it also shows a narrow understanding of interpretive legitimacy.

The Church does not teach that only priests can understand the Bible. On the other hand, *Dei Verbum* clearly tells all believers to read and study Scripture with the right help. The data from our interviews thus indicate a discrepancy between formal instruction and experiential understanding. This perception has real effects. When clergy have all the power to interpret, the meaning of the bible becomes functionally inaccessible. People who believe in God may hear the Bible read, but they don't learn how to live in it. Some theologians say that this dynamic goes against the Church's own teaching on revelation, which assumes that everyone in the People of God will accept it (Grillo, 2023). The data corroborate that this is not a theoretical issue but an actual phenomenon.

The significant finding here is that belief persists despite interpretative uncertainty. Our respondents do not question the veracity of Scripture due to their inability to interpret it. This contradicts contemporary notions that belief necessitates intellectual proficiency. This finding is consistent with classical Christian epistemology from a theological perspective. Faith does not rely on complete comprehension, but belief can exist without understanding, and it shouldn't stay that way forever. The data show that there is a conflict between reception and



participation. People believe that the Bible is true, but they don't feel like they are part of its meaning-making process.

The doctrine of the *sensus fidei* aims to resolve this tension. The faithful are not passive recipients of truth but active participants in its reception, as long as they stay in communion with the church. Our research shows that people are hesitant, which suggests that this doctrine has not been properly communicated or lived out by pastors. One of the main theological points that comes out of this analysis is that there is very little chance that formed believers will misunderstand what they read. Respondents are already working within a theological framework that is shaped by liturgy, catechesis, and magisterial teaching. Ratzinger asserts that interpretation within the Church is inherently a communal endeavor, occurring within a “living subject.” The faithful do not create meanings *ex nihilo*; they receive and express meanings that have already been shaped by Tradition. The data indicate that apprehension regarding misinterpretation has become excessive relative to the actual risk (Drummond, 2023). This fear does not come from a realistic view of theology, but from a lack of faith in the Church's ability to shape people's lives. This study thus regards interpretive hesitation not as a virtue to be maintained but as a pastoral issue to be confronted.

The data collected from interviews show a clear trend: respondents strongly believe that Sacred Scripture is true and without error, but they are hesitant or unable to interpret or explain biblical texts. Instead of viewing this pattern as a lack of belief or knowledge, this chapter contends that it signifies a unique ecclesial stance towards truth, influenced by reverence, authority, and catechetical education. Our analysis operates under the premise that doctrine remains valid despite imperfect reception. Congar insists that the Church needs to pay close attention to how truth is lived and shared, not just how it is defined. The empirical findings are interpreted as indicators of theological formation encompassing both its advantages and its constraints.

### **Pastoral Suggestions**

The empirical and theological analyses of this study converge on a decisive pastoral insight: the faithful possess a strong conviction regarding the truth of Scripture, yet lack confidence in engaging that truth personally. This situation is not a coincidence. It shows a pastoral ecosystem where doctrinal orthodoxy is maintained, but interpretive participation is not fully developed. The Church has long known that revelation is not just given, but also received. The Second Vatican Council says, “Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture make up one sacred deposit of the word of God, which the Church has been given” (DV 10). This deposit is not inactive; it necessitates acceptance by the entire People of God. When the faithful believe

but do not participate, truth may become abstract instead of transformative. The following suggestions are meant to close the gap between doctrinal truth and lived appropriation without hurting the authority of the church or encouraging people to interpret things in their own way.

The first pastoral priority is to make it clear again that the truth of Scripture does not come from personal insight but from God. Benedict XVI makes this clear by saying, “The Word of God comes before and goes beyond the Bible” (Benedict XVI, 2010). The truth of Scripture derives from the truth of God, not from the reader's complete comprehension. This must be said clearly in catechesis. When believers are uncertain about the foundation of truth, they either absolutize individual interpretation or lapse into passivity. Both outcomes are harmful to the church. St. Augustine is still important here. He writes, “I have learned to give this respect and honor only to the canonical books of Scripture: I most firmly believe that the authors of these books were completely free from error” (Parsons, 1951). This conviction precedes interpretation; it is not a consequence of it. Catechesis must also make it clear what canonization and Tradition are. The Catechism makes it very clear that “It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books.” This statement should not be left unsaid. Many lay believers assume that the Bible is true, but they don't know why the Church trusts these texts. Teaching the process of canonization does not weaken faith; rather, it fortifies it by placing Scripture within the Church's living memory.

A significant pastoral responsibility arising from this study is to validate the legitimacy of lay engagement with Scripture. The Church does not limit understanding to the ordained. *Dei Verbum* clearly says that “all Christians should have easy access to Sacred Scripture” (DV 22). St. John Paul II says this again: “The lay faithful must never give up their role in the ‘intelligence of faith.’” (*Christifideles Laici* 64). In pastoral instruction, this phrase should be quoted word for word. A lot of the respondents' hesitations aren't because they're lazy; they're because they think they're not allowed to do something.

Pastoral leaders also must directly address the exaggerated fear of misunderstanding. The International Theological Commission says, “The faithful are not passive recipients of doctrine. This statement has a pastoral meaning. Ratzinger makes it clear: “The faith of the Church is not a private system of interpretation.” Interpretation transpires within a collective horizon. So, the chance that formed believers will deviate is very low. This is not because they are experts, but because they are part of the church. The *sensus fidei* needs to be activated in a pastoral way. Pope Francis says, “The Spirit's power to make holy is at work in all the baptized, from the first to the last.” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 119). This is not a question; it is a doctrine. So,

pastoral programs should go beyond just giving people information and move toward "guided interpretive practice," which includes lectio divina groups, parish scripture circles, and digital reflections that are led by someone else.

The analysis of the data shows that catechesis must move into digital spaces. But being in there has to be on purpose. The Church should use short videos, guided commentary podcasts, and moderated discussion boards to add to homilies, not to replace them. Digital catechesis must also avoid making authority less important. Tom Nichols says, "The death of expertise is not a rejection of knowledge, but a rejection of knowing." This diagnosis is pertinent. So, the Church needs to make sure that both accessibility and clarity about competence are present. Newman said, "Ten thousand problems do not make one doubt." Digital media should not mix up hard with relative.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This study aimed to investigate a seemingly contradictory phenomenon among modern believers: a robust and unequivocal conviction concerning the truth and inerrancy of Sacred Scripture, coupled with a continual reluctance or incapacity to engage in interpretive analysis of Scripture, even at a fundamental level. This research, through a theologically informed analysis of qualitative data interpreted in dialogue with the Church's doctrine of revelation, tradition, and reception, has shown that the phenomenon is not a crisis of belief but a crisis of appropriation.

This study contends that such fear is excessive in relation to the actual theological risk. The current faithful are already shaped by liturgy, catechesis, and magisterial instruction. Their interpretive framework is not neutral or independent; it is shaped by ecclesial influences. As a result, the risk of widespread doctrinal deviation due to lay engagement with Scripture is negligible. The normalization of disengagement poses a significant pastoral threat, potentially diminishing Scripture to a mere text that is proclaimed yet not embodied. This research has suggested a pastoral reorientation instead of a doctrinal amendment. The Church's doctrine regarding the veracity of Scripture requires not revision, but pedagogical translation. Catechesis must clearly link the objective basis of scriptural truth in God, canon, and Tradition with the believer's rightful pursuit of understanding. Lay interpretation should be recognized not as an independent authority, but as a collaborative engagement within the Church. Furthermore, this research has underscored the imperative of formulating specific pastoral models tailored to a digital and media-rich environment. When guided by church authority and clear theology, digital catechesis gives us a chance to make confident, active believers like

never before. At the same time, these efforts must be careful not to let expertise become less important and authoritative teaching become less important, which is what happens in a lot of today's digital culture.

In summary, this study enhances theological scholarship by reconceptualizing a prevalent pastoral observation, not as a deterioration of faith, but as a disparity between conviction and understanding. The study illustrates the significance of theological interpretation of lived belief by analyzing empirical data through doctrinal frameworks such as authority, tradition, and *sensus fidei*. Subsequent research may broaden this investigation to encompass diverse cultural contexts, age demographics, or ecclesiastical environments; however, the fundamental insight persists: the veracity of Scripture, already firmly held, must be pastorally facilitated to manifest in intellectual and spiritual practice.

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