

## CHAPTER III

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reformed faith is the primary concern in this research, and *First Reformed* (2017) is the object of the study. According to the film, the community's pastor uses religion to exert influence on every stage of society. In this research, the writer would like to evaluate by using some theories which convince that religious fundamentalism arises in the film. The main religious conflict in the movie *First Reformed* (2017) revolves around the internal struggles and existential crisis of the protagonist, Reverend Ernst Toller.

In this film, Reverend Ernst Toller confronts challenging inquiries concerning his faith, morality, environmental concerns, and the uncertain future awaiting humanity. These weighty dilemmas pose significant challenges, particularly for someone occupying a prominent role within a community, as Toller does in Snowbridge, New York. Serving as the head pastor of the historic The First Reformed Church was constructed during the era of British colonization and the subsequent underground railroad movement. The film draws a remarkable parallel between the recession of Christianity in terms of active congregants across the United States and the fictional narrative of the movie, lending credence to its plausibility.

While attempting to make the church more popular, he has also attempted to make the church more spiritual, deviating from its Calvinist origins. He has a greater

focus on advices than on scriptures, and has drafted the financial backing and ownership of an evangelical megachurch in nearby Albany, New York, which is possible to gain control of the church in the near future, much to Toller's apprehension.

In correlation with American society, the film depicts the decline of Christianity in the United States, particularly in the setting of the First Reformed Church, which is confronting challenges in maintaining its membership and relevance. This reflects the actual decline of Christianity in the United States and the difficulties encountered by diverse churches in maintaining their congregations. The film offers a critique of the role of white masculinity in environmentalism, with a particular focus on the character of Reverend Toller. This reflects the ongoing discussions in American society about the necessity for greater diversity and inclusion in environmental activism and the ways in which white masculinity can reinforce environmental injustices.

### **3.1 Narrative Aspects**

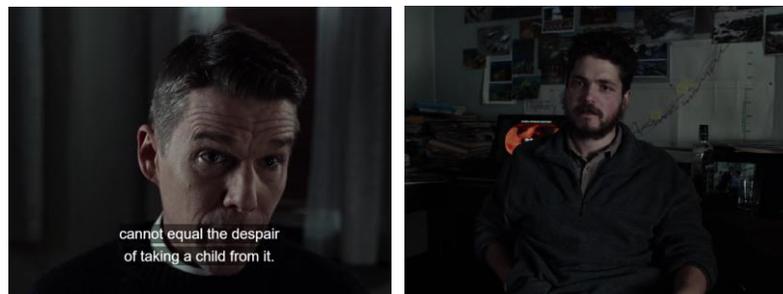
#### **3.1.1 Theme**

The film delves deeply into the theme of faith and doubt, particularly through the character of Reverend Ernst Toller. Toller, a pastor at the First Reformed Church, grapples with his own crisis of faith as he tries to provide spiritual guidance to others. His inner struggles and doubts about God's existence and the role of the church are central to the narrative.

REVEREND TOLLER: It was the sin against the Holy Spirit. It was the sin against Hope. The only sin that lies beyond forgiveness. It comes down to choice. We choose hope or despair. We cannot avoid choosing. We are not free to not decide. It's what we truly are. Courage is the solution to

despair. Reason offers no answers. We cannot be certain what the future holds. We must choose despite uncertainty.  
(*First Reformed*, 19:57 – 20:28)

The dialogue above illustrates the concept of sin and the nature of choice. They emphasize that there is one sin that lies beyond forgiveness, which is the sin against the Holy Spirit. This sin is not explicitly defined but is implied to be a fundamental rejection of hope and the choices that come with it. Toller trying to notes that reason offers no answers to the uncertainties of life. He suggests that we cannot be certain about what the future holds, and therefore, we must choose despite this uncertainty.



Picture 3.1 Reverend Toller told Michael about hope and despair through his spiritual journey  
(*First Reformed*, 15:28 – 16:42)

From this scene *Picture 3.1*, Toller tries to advise Michael on the purpose of life and the firmness of faith through his past traumas in the darkness of faith and his inner struggle to maintain faith. The loss of his son left him devastated and thinking that it was all his fault for holding on to the faith.

On the other hand, the film introduces elements of violence and radicalism, primarily through the character of Michael, an environmental activist who contemplates extreme actions. It raises questions about the potential consequences

of radical beliefs and actions. These scenes captured using medium shot technique to depict character's tension of expression whenever they talked about environmental issues.



Picture 2.2 Michael Mensana's perspective thoughts from environmentalism activist  
(*First Reformed*, 12:16 – 13:28)

### 3.1.2 Characterization

David Bordwell and his colleagues have identified recurring character types or conventions in cinema, such as the hero, villain, and anti-hero. These character types often fulfill specific narrative functions and are recognizable to audiences.

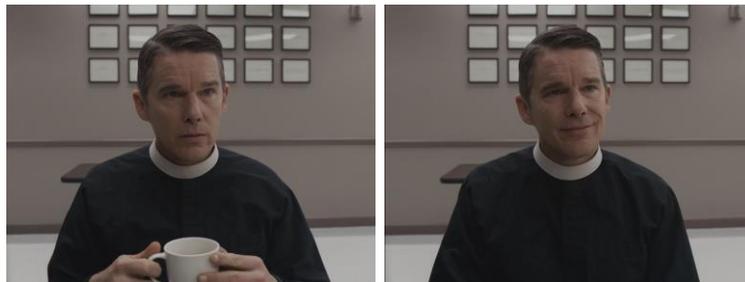
#### 3.1.2.1 Reverend Ernst Toller

Toller is the film's central character and protagonist. He is a troubled and emotionally tormented Protestant minister who is struggling with an existential crisis. Toller is characterized by his deep introspection, inner turmoil, and a sense of isolation. Throughout the film, Toller's character evolves as he grapples with his faith, personal demons, and ethical dilemmas. His journey is marked by self-

examination and a search for redemption. Picture 4 captured using medium shot to depict Reverend Toller.

REVEREND TOLLER: If humankind can't overcome its immediate interests enough to ensure its own survival, then you're right. The only rational response is despair. But do you think that, there's any existence apart from this?

REVEREND TOLLER: We should sin so God can forgive? I don't think that's what the Apostle meant. I think we're supposed to look with the eyes of Jesus into every living.



Picture 3.3 Reverend Toller  
(*First Reformed*, 32:06 – 32:28)

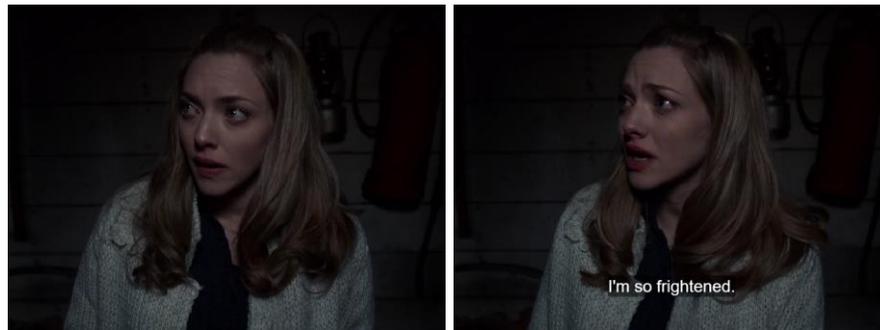
In this dialogue, Reverend Toller is grappling with the existential crisis of humanity's inability to ensure its own survival. He acknowledges that if humanity cannot overcome its immediate interests, then despair is the only rational response. However, he also questions whether there is any existence beyond this current reality.

### **3.1.2.2 Mary Mensana**

Mary is a pregnant young woman who seeks Toller's guidance. She is characterized by her kindness, vulnerability, and concern for the environment. She is also a widow, having lost her husband in the Iraq War. Mary's character

represents hope and a connection to the future. Her interactions with Toller play a significant role in his transformation and the unfolding of the story. Picture 5 captured using medium shot to depict Mary Mensana's concerns are heightened by Michael's suicide attempt when they find an explosive vest in their warehouse.

MARY MENSANA: I share Michael's belief. But not his despair. I mean, I wanna live. I wanna be a mother. I'd sensed it. He was becoming someone I didn't know. Like, before I was pregnant even. And he was just full of anger, you know?

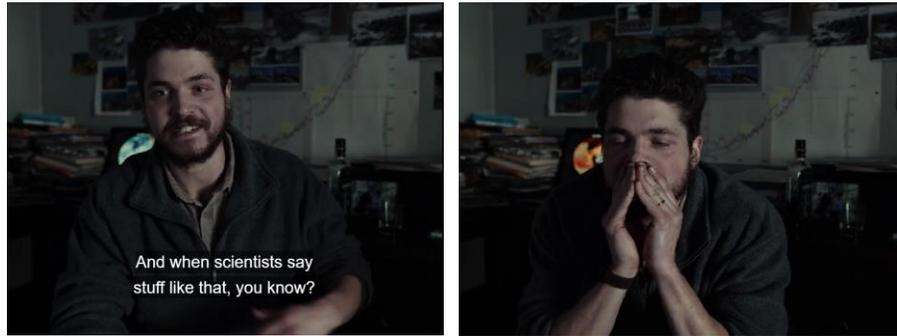


Picture 3.4 Mary Mensana  
(*First Reformed*, 35:31 – 36:20)

### 3.1.2.3 Michael Mensana

Michael Mensana is Mary's husband, who was an environmental activist. He is characterized by his passionate beliefs about climate change and environmental issues. In picture 6, this scene captured using medium shot technique to depict Michael's facial expression about his environmental concern and his future life.

MICHAEL MENSANA: Uh, the world is changing so fast. I mean, one third of the natural world has been destroyed in your lifetime. You know, the earth's temperature will be three degrees centigrade higher. Four is the threshold. And National Center for Atmospheric Research, the Postdam Institute.



Picture 3.5 Michael Mensana  
(*First Reformed*, 12:09 – 12:31)

From this dialogue illustrates Michael's despair stems from his perception that the world is beyond repair and that his child will inherit a desolate and unlivable environment. He sees no hope for the future and believes that the social structure will collapse under the stress of multiple crises, leading to anarchy, martial law, and the end of civilization.

Even though Michael is deceased at the beginning of the film, his presence is felt through his writings and his impact on Mary and Toller. His environmental activism is a catalyst for some of the film's events.

#### **3.1.2.4 Pastor Jeffers**

Pastor Jeffers is the leader of the nearby megachurch called Abundant Life, which is in contrast to the smaller, historic First Reformed Church where Reverend Toller serves.

PASTOR JEFFERS: Do you have any idea what it takes to do God's work? To maintain a mission of this size? The staffing, the outreach, the amount of people that we touch each day. Look, Abundant Life, we're with you. We do, I know this is

a hard time for you. Once we get through the reconsecration service, you need to go to rehab.

Through this dialogue Pastor Jeffers is portrayed as a strong-willed and assertive individual who is deeply committed to his faith and his role as a pastor. He is shown to be concerned about the well-being of his congregation, particularly Abundant Life, who is going through a difficult time. Pastor Jeffers emphasizes the importance of his work and the significant resources required to maintain the mission of his church.



Picture 3.6 Pastor Jeffers  
(*First Reformed*, 50:57 – 51:06)

While Pastor Jeffers is not a conventional "villain" in the sense of being evil or malicious, he shows the commercialization and compromise of faith for the sake of financial success. He stands for a more consumer-driven, contemporary approach to Christianity that prioritizes prosperity and growth over traditional religious values.

### 3.1.2.5 Edward Balq

Edward Balq is a wealthy businessman and a major donor to the church. He is characterized by his influence and power. Balq's financial support for the church and his involvement in its decisions create moral and ethical conflicts for Toller as he grapples with his own beliefs and the compromises made by the church. This scene captured using medium shot technique, Picture 8 depicts Edward Balq expression when they are discussing about church management.



Picture 3.7 Edward Balq  
(*First Reformed*, 57:48 – 58:01)

### 3.1.3 Setting

#### 3.1.3.1 First Reformed Church

The main setting of the film is the First Reformed Church, a small historical church located in upstate New York. This church serves as the primary backdrop for the story and is where Reverend Ernst Toller, carries out his pastoral duties. The church's austere and historical atmosphere reflects the film's themes of tradition and spiritual struggle.

REVEREND TOLLER: The church was partially rebuilt in 1837 following a fire. This section was preserved. Beside the Continental

Army flag, if you look closely, are two bullet holes fired during what was called the Skirmish of Snowbridge. First Reformed is the third oldest church in continuous operation in New York State. In a month we will celebrate our two hundred fiftieth anniversary.



Picture 3.8 Reformed Church  
(*First Reformed*, 04:16 – 04:35)

### 3.1.3.2 Toller's Living Quarters

This cramped and somewhat spartan room is where much of the character's personal introspection and turmoil take place. It is also where he keeps a journal documenting his thoughts and experiences.



Picture 3.9 Toller's Living Quarters  
(*First Reformed*, 22:15 – 23:24)

Toller's living quarters are located within the parsonage, which is a symbol of his spiritual calling and his role as a pastor. The parsonage serves as a sanctuary for Toller, providing him with a space to reflect on his faith and his role in the world.

This place is stark and uninviting, reflecting his emotional state and his spiritual struggles. This environment also serves as a backdrop for his spiritual journey, highlighting his desire for spiritual purification and his willingness to suffer for his faith.

### **3.1.3.3 Mary's House**

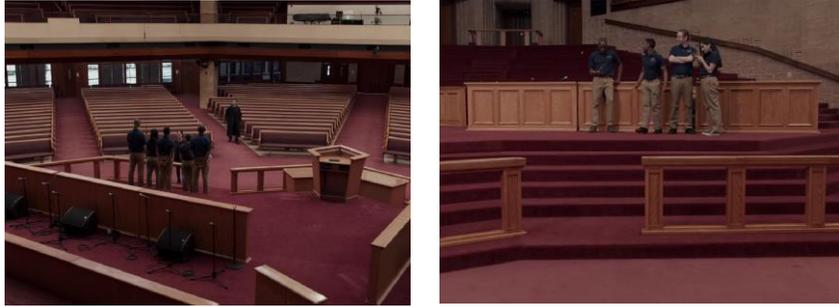
Seeks Toller's counsel and becomes a central character in the film. Her house is a significant setting where important conversations and interactions occur, and it reflects the domestic side of the story.



Picture 3.10 Mary's House  
(*First Reformed*, 09:17 – 09:55)

### **3.1.3.4 Abundant Life Church**

This is a larger and more modern church led by Pastor Jeffers. It stands in stark contrast to the First Reformed Church, symbolizing the tension between traditional faith and more contemporary, consumer-driven forms of religion.



### 3.11 Megachurch (*First Reformed*, 25:36 – 26:31)

Abundant Life Church is involved in various community outreach programs, including food banks, housing assistance, and legal aid. These programs reflect the church's commitment to serving the community and providing support to those in need.

#### **3.1.4 Plot**

##### **3.1.4.1 Openings**

The film introduces Reverend Ernst Toller, a reverend at the First Reformed Church, a small historical church in upstate New York. Toller is struggling with personal grief, faith, and physical health. He is also a former military chaplain. The church is preparing for its 250th anniversary celebration.

##### **3.1.4.2 Development Section**

The development section examines the interrelationship between themes of faith, despair, and the end of the world. These themes are interwoven throughout the narrative, particularly in Toller's journal entries and his interactions with Mary

and Michael. The development section also addresses the character development of Toller in particular. As the narrative progresses, Toller's inner turmoil and struggles are gradually revealed, while his character evolves as he grapples with his faith and personal demons. The pacing and tone of the development section are characterized by a slow and contemplative rhythm, which mirrors Toller's inner state. This engenders a sense of tension and foreboding, as the audience is drawn into Toller's world and his struggles.

#### **3.1.4.3 Climax**

The film reaches its emotional peak when Toller is faced with a moral dilemma. Toller must decide whether to intervene in Michael's plan or allow him to carry out his act of violence. Toller's actions and decisions in the climax have significant consequences for himself and those around him. The scene is reminiscent of the levitation scene earlier in the film, where Toller and Mary seem to be floating in the firmament. This scene is a prefiguration of the climax, suggesting that the world around them can be transcended at any moment by contact with or intervention from the divine.

#### **3.1.4.4 Closings**

The film ends with Toller's final journal entry, which serves as a reflection on his experiences and his faith. The journal is destroyed, symbolizing Toller's acceptance of his own mortality and the impermanence of human existence. The film concludes with a haunting and ambiguous ending that leaves the audience

with questions about Toller's fate and the broader themes of faith, despair, and environmentalism.

### 3.2 Cinematic Aspect

#### 3.2.1 Mise-en-Scene

The film *First Reformed* uses mise-en-scene to represent the main character's struggle with religion, spiritual neglect, and the impact of external and personal distress on faith and ritual. Toller and Mary float over breathtaking landscapes, followed by the depiction of devastation, waste and pollution. This symbolizes Toller's disconnection from reality and inner turmoil.



Picture 3.12 Mise-en-scene portrays environmental issues  
(*First Reformed*, 1:23:09 – 1:25:13)

The film's thematic exploration of faith and neglect of spirituality is shown through the protagonist's malnourishment, symbolizing spiritual malnourishment. The movie's distinctive cinematography and storytelling method enable the audience to observe the character's decisions without bias, thereby leaving the interpretation and evaluation to the viewers. The film's effective use of visual elements and storytelling techniques conveys the psychological and religious

themes, enhancing the thought-provoking narrative and character development. The contribution of these elements to the film's overall impact is noteworthy.

### **3.3 Religious Fundamentalism**

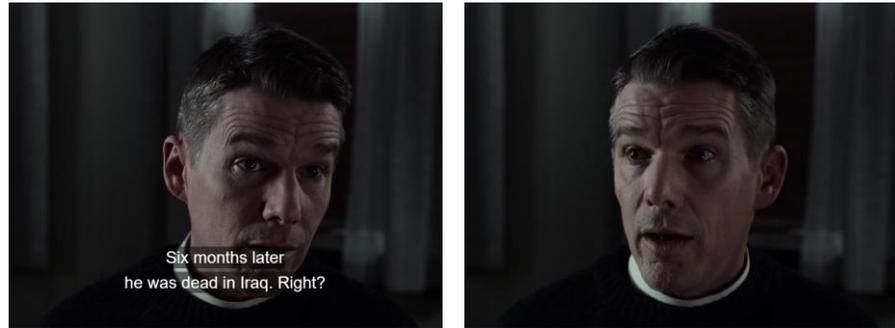
Reverend Toller represents a form of religious fundamentalism characterized by strict adherence to the doctrines and traditions of his church, the First Reformed Church. He is committed to preserving the historical and traditional aspects of the church, reflecting a rigid interpretation of religious principles.

#### **3.3.1 Toller's Personal Spiritual Journeys**

The characters in the film are all on personal spiritual journeys that can be viewed as internal movements. The journey of Reverend Ernst Toller is central, as he navigates his faith crisis and struggles with his sense of purpose as a spiritual leader. Mary's journey entails seeking guidance as well as contending with her husband's environmental activism. Individual quests for meaning and connection with the divine reflect the characters' internal spiritual development. Reverend Toller is experiencing a faith crisis as a result of personal tragedy and guilt. He lost his son in the Iraq War and feels guilty for encouraging him to enroll. This tragedy has shaken his faith in a benevolent God, and he wonders how a loving God could allow such suffering and injustice.

REVEREND TOLLER: My father taught at VMI. I encourage my son to enlist. It was the family tradition. Six months later he was dead in Iraq. There was no moral justification for this conflict. My wife could not live with me after that. Who could blame her? I left the military. Rev Jeffers at Abundant Life Church heard about my

situation. They offered me a position at First Reformed. And here I am.



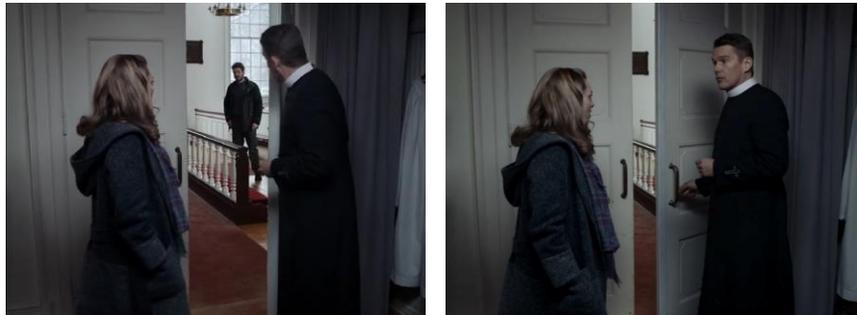
Picture 3.11 Toller explained how his family tradition made him faith.  
(*First Reformed*, 18:28 - 18:40)

In this scene, Reverend Toller shares his personal story of struggle and loss, highlighting the complexities of faith and morality in the face of tragedy. He recounts how his family tradition of military service led him to encourage his son to enlist, only for him to be killed in Iraq six months later. This event had a profound impact on Toller's life, causing him to question the moral justification of the conflict and leading to the breakdown of his marriage.

### **3.3.2 Moral and Ethical Dilemmas**

Religion often provides moral and ethical guidelines that shape individuals' behavior. However, within religious communities, differing interpretations of these guidelines can lead to moral and ethical conflicts. Individuals and groups may hold differing views on what is morally right or wrong based on their interpretations of religious teachings. Religious communities can present moral and ethical dilemmas when individuals' personal beliefs come into conflict with

the established norms of the community. Individuals may struggle to reconcile their own moral convictions with the expectations of their religious group, leading to inner conflict and moral dilemmas. As Reverend Toller becomes more entwined with Mary and Michael's concerns; he faces an ethical dilemma. Captured employing the medium-shot technique, *Picture 3.14* depicts Mary Mensana met Reverend Toller for the first time in Reformed church.

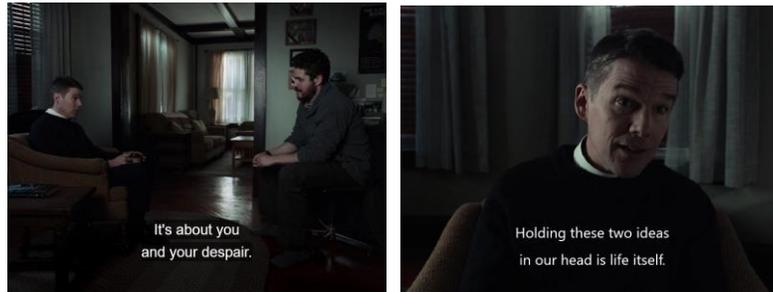


Picture 3.12 Reverend Toller meets Mary Mensana, she needs help to give closure for her husband  
(*First Reformed*, 06:25 – 07:05)

Michael's extreme beliefs lead to a tragic incident, and Reverend Toller is left questioning how to reconcile his faith, his pastoral responsibilities, and the actions he believes are morally right. Reverend Toller's role as a spiritual leader place him in a position to provide guidance to others, yet he's also dealing with his own crisis of faith. This dilemma prompts questions about the authenticity of his advice and the extent to which he can provide guidance when his own beliefs are in turmoil. This scene captured using medium-shot technique, *Picture 15* depicts Reverend Toller gives a preach to Michael Mensana.

REVEREND TOLLER: Courage is the solution to despair.  
Reason provides no answers. We have to choose despite

uncertainty. Wisdom is holding two contradictory truths in our mind, simultaneously. Hope and despair.



Picture 3.13 Reverend Toller told to Michael about his decision about their baby's abortion.  
(*First Reformed*, 15:11 – 17:57)

Reverend Toller's interactions with Mary and Michael force him to confront the limits of his compassion and spiritual guidance. He grapples with the ethical question of how to offer support and guidance to individuals facing profound struggles while dealing with his own internal turmoil. Reverend Toller's internal dilemma about his own redemption and potential sacrifice shapes his actions toward the film's conclusion. This raises ethical questions about the extent to which individuals are willing to go to find personal redemption and meaning.

REVEREND TOLLER: Explosives?

MARY MENSANA: It is a suicide vest. And there's other elements in there too. There're batteries, and, um, detonators, and tubes of jelly. You know he'd been working in the garage lately. And he said he was fixing a motor. And I didn't question him.



Picture 3.14 Reverend Toller and Mery found suicide vest  
(*First Reformed*, 35:14 – 35:25)

The conflict also explores the role of the church in addressing contemporary issues. Reverend Toller is torn between adhering to the traditional teachings of his church and advocating for change and action in response to urgent environmental and social challenges. The church's role is tied to themes of transformation and redemption. Reverend Toller sees his pastoral role as a potential source of redemption for himself, and his interactions with Mary and Michael bring the possibility of redemption to the forefront. The church serves as a sanctuary where characters seek solace and guidance. Mary approaches Reverend Toller seeking counsel about her husband's environmental concerns, and Toller himself turns to the church for reflection and introspection. The church becomes a place of refuge and contemplation amid life's challenges.

### **3.3.3 Conflicting Religious Movements**

Conflicting religious movements can arise when different groups or individuals interpret and pursue their religious beliefs in ways that lead to tension and conflict. The contrasting approaches of the First Reformed Church and the

Abundant Life megachurch symbolize conflicting religious movements. The traditionalism and historical significance of the First Reformed Church stand in contrast to the consumer-oriented approach of the megachurch. This juxtaposition reflects the tension between different movements within religious communities. Reverend Ernst Toller's role as the pastor of this church reflects his commitment to maintaining its legacy. The church is shown as a symbol of spiritual depth and historical significance. The megachurch's emphasis on modernity, spectacle, and a large, enthusiastic congregation contrasts sharply with the intimate and traditional atmosphere of the First Reformed Church. The megachurch is presented as a symbol of popularity, modern worship practices, and the commercialization of faith. These scenes captured using medium shot, *Picture 3.14* depicts the atmosphere of the Reformed church and Toller's guide of its history.

REVEREND TOLLER: The church was partially rebuilt in 1837 following a fire. This section was preserved. Beside the Continental Army flag, if you look closely, are two bullet holes fired during what was called the Skirmish of Snowbridge.



Picture 3.15 Toller explained the history of First Reformed church (First Reformed, 23:32 – 24:44)

REVEREND TOLLER: Oh yes, Sunday services are each week at 10 am. First Reformed is the third oldest church in continuous operation in New York State. In a month we will celebrate our two hundred fiftieth anniversary. ...here are examples of the original church chinaware brought over from the Netherlands. And the first chalice. On the lower shelf are souvenirs which are for sale. Key rings, pens, postcards, caps and T shirts, although we only have the shirts in size S. We're waiting for more to come in.

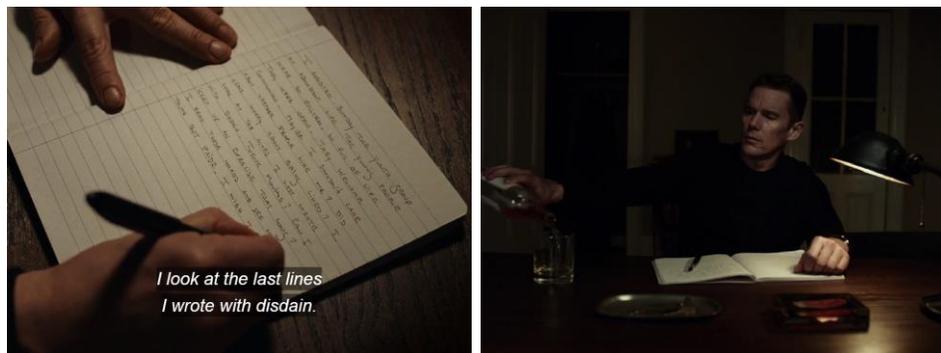
The conflict between the two churches raises questions about authenticity and sincerity in religious practices. The First Reformed Church is portrayed as a space where tradition and a deep connection to faith are emphasized. In contrast, the Abundant Life megachurch's commercial aspects call into question whether the focus is more on spectacle and entertainment than on genuine spiritual growth. The depiction of these conflicting religious movements explores the contrast between personal, introspective spirituality and corporate, outward displays of faith. Reverend Toller's inner struggles, journaling, and one-on-one interactions contrast with the megachurch's large-scale, charismatic gatherings.

### **3.3.4 Inner Spiritual Movement**

Peter Hill argues that an inner spiritual movement refers to an individual's personal journey and development in seeking meaning, connection, and fulfillment through spiritual practices and beliefs. In the film, Reverend Toller's introspective journaling serves as an inner spiritual movement, a journey of self-discovery and self-examination. His thoughts, doubts, and struggles evolve over the

course of the film, reflecting a movement towards greater self-awareness and understanding. This scene captured using close-up shot and medium shot, Picture 18 depicts Toller's journaling activity each night.

REVEREND TOLLER: Did Jesus worry about being liked? I look at the last lines I wrote with disdain. Twelve months. Can I keep up an exercise that long? When I read these words, I see not truth, but pride. I wish I had not used the word pride. But I cannot cross it out. If only I could pray.



Picture 3.16 Reverend Toller journaling his spiritual every night.  
(*First Reformed*, 07:56 – 08:06)

This dialogue reflecting on his own personal struggles, including his depression and the impact it has on his ability to pray. He is struggling to find a way to reconcile his faith with his personal pain. Toller is critical of his own use of the word "pride" in his writing. He recognizes that his words are not truthful and that he is using them as a way to avoid the truth about his own despair.

### 3.4 The Effect of Religious Fundamentalism

In the film *First Reformed*, the relationship between religion and violence is depicted through the character of Pastor Ernst Toller, who grapples with his faith and the decline

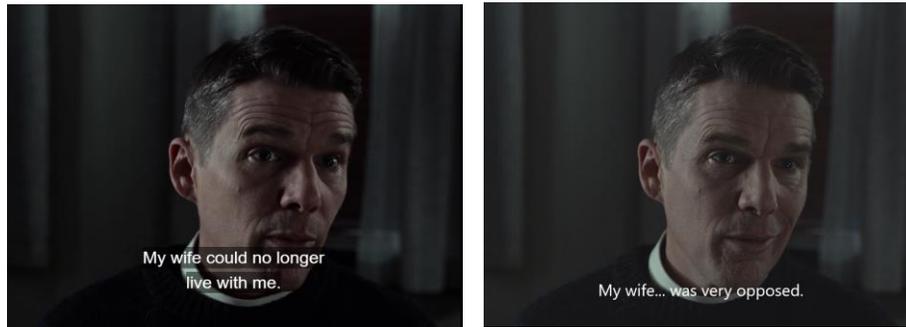
of his church. The writer found the crisis of faith in churches and the broader community has a parallel in the decline of religious institutions and their ability to provide spiritual guidance and support to their members. Toller's struggle with existential pain and theological angst leads him to question the role of organized religion in society and its potential influence on individuals' beliefs and actions.

#### **3.4.1 Impact on Toller's Inner Personality**

The film portrayed Toller's inner world, marked by his journal entries and voiceovers, offers a glimpse into the depths of his emotional and spiritual struggles. His character's introspection is a testament to the human capacity for self-reflection and the aspiration to make sense of the world, even in the face of overwhelming adversity.

His inner world, marked by his journal entries and voiceovers, offers a glimpse into the depths of his emotional and spiritual struggles. His journey is a testament to the human capacity for introspection and the aspiration to comprehend of the world, even in the face of overwhelming adversity.

The writer found that Reverend Toller experienced the tragic loss of his son, Joseph, during his service in the Iraq War. Toller harbors guilt for encouraging Joseph to enlist, given his own military background as a chaplain. In picture 19 captured using close-up shot technique to depict Toller's expression when he lost his military life and son in the war.



Picture 3.17 Toller told his lost about his military life, his son's moral justification, and his position in First Reformed from Abundant Life Church.

*(First Reformed, 18:16 – 18:52)*

Struggling with grief and remorse, Toller turned to adultery and alcohol consumption. Nonetheless, he eventually rediscovered his faith, leading him to assume the role of pastor at First Reformed Church. However, a spontaneous encounter with one of his parishioners and the man's wife challenges Toller's faith in both God and humanity to its core.

Moreover, the insurances from people around him that a priest must always be good and be an example, made Toller question his faith as if he was actually chosen to be a priest. In this case, Toller is under pressure from Pastor Jeffers that he must be able to manage the affairs of his church, but on the other hand Toller also has life trauma and disappointment about his messy family, which makes him behave inappropriately as a pastor, such as alcoholism and suicidal thoughts.

### **3.4.2 Impact on Woman Perspectives**

From a woman's perspective, the film presents a nuanced exploration of Christianity and environmentalism, highlighting the complexities of the relationship between faith and the natural world. The character of Mary, a reverent fundamentalist and believer in God, serves as a foil to her husband Michael's radical environmentalism, raising questions about the role of Christianity in addressing the environmental crisis. The film's portrayal of Mary's concerns about her husband's well-being and her desire to have a child soon, amidst the backdrop of environmental collapse, underscores the personal and emotional stakes of the crisis for women. Her character's interactions with Reverend Toller, particularly her conversations about her husband's struggles and her own hopes for the future, offer a glimpse into the ways in which women are impacted by the environmental crisis and the role they play in seeking hope and meaning in the face of uncertainty.

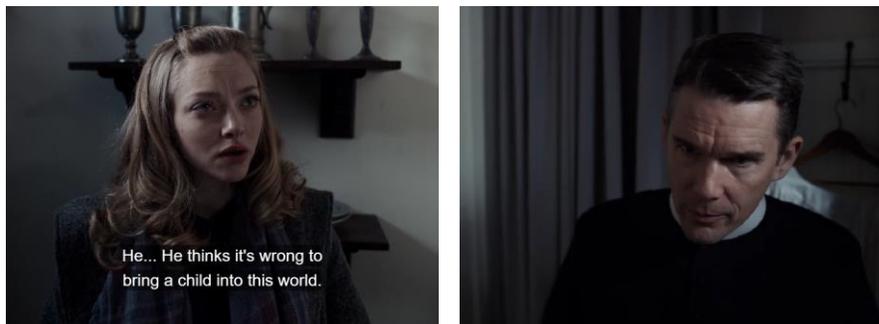
The film employs yin-yang symbolism to depict the notion of balance and harmony between humanity and the environment, drawing parallels to the historical association of women with nature and the feminine principle. Although not overtly feminist in nature, this symbolism subtly acknowledges the longstanding connection between women and the natural world, suggesting the possibility of fostering a more symbiotic relationship between humans and their surroundings.

This movie depicts how women are affected by religious fundamentalism, exemplified by the struggle Mary experiences dealing with issues like climate change and finances. Mary finds herself unable to address these challenges effectively, while

Toller fails to offer adequate solutions. It underscores how religious fundamentalism may fail to provide satisfactory responses to women's hardships.

On the other side, Mary, a devout member of the congregation deeply rooted in her faith in God, and her sceptical husband, Michael, an ardent environmentalist progressively leaning towards radicalism, each have private discussions with Reverend Toller in their home. Mary expresses considerations about Michael's contentment and shares with the Reverend that they are expecting a child soon. In this scene using close-up shot techniques, Picture 20 depicts Mary's afraid of Michael's plan to kill their baby.

MARY MENSANA: He thinks it is wrong to bring a child into this world. He wants to kill our baby.



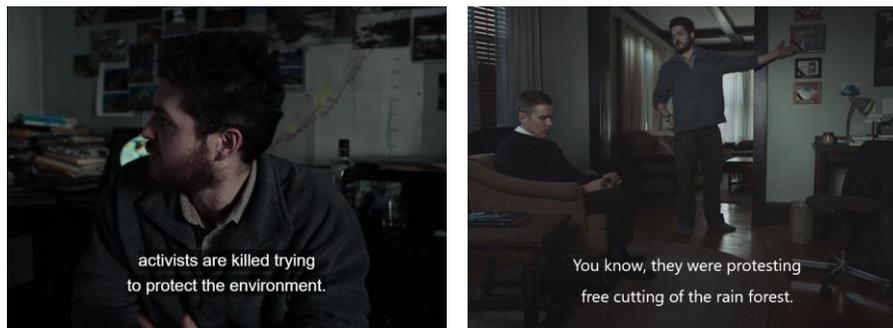
Picture 3.18 Mary expresses her about Michael's plan to kill their baby.  
(*First Reformed*, 07:20 – 07:31)

Meanwhile, Michael grapples with the daunting realization of impending fatherhood amidst the backdrop of global environmental crises, including rising sea levels and the impending effects of climate change in the coming decades. In this pivotal scene, both Reverend Toller and the viewers are confronted with the absence of clear answers, whether from divine sources or human wisdom, regarding the future of humanity.

Toller struggles to offer solace to Michael but requests to continue their conversations and promises to support Mary and the unborn child.

MICHAEL MENSANA: ...the bad times will begin. From that point everything moves very quickly. The social structure will not bear the stress of multiple crises. Opportunistic diseases. Anarchy. Martial law. The tipping points. This isn't some distant future. You will live to see this. My children will experience this...unlivability. And the behavior it causes...this...

In this dialogue, Michael Mensana is expressing his dire predictions about the future of humanity. He believes that the world is heading towards a catastrophic collapse, marked by multiple crises that will overwhelm the social structure. He warns that the consequences will be devastating, including the spread of opportunistic diseases, anarchy, martial law, and the breakdown of society.



Picture 3.19 Michael trying to explain environmentalist research about earth conditions in 2050.  
(*First Reformed*, 16:52 – 17:43)

This particular scene sets the stage for the film's deeper exploration into the impact of capitalism and excess on the environment, as well as the interplay between large corporations and religious institutions. Reverend Toller's arising, prompted by his

encounter with Mary and Michael, prompts him to question the severity of the environmental crisis, who bears responsibility for it, what measures can be taken to address it, and the extent to which action should be pursued. Lacking easy answers for Michael's inquiries, the Pastor embarks on a quest for understanding, becoming visibly disheartened by the revelations about the dire environmental situation in his community. The film portrays how a combination of greed, industrialization, and neglectful stewardship has propelled humanity toward an unsustainable trajectory.