

REGENT UNIVERSITY

DEVELOPMENT OF A SPIRITUAL FORMATION MODEL FOR THE MEMBERS
OF A MISSIONAL CHURCH

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

KARINA KREMINSKI

VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

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Regent University

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Karina Kreminski

**DEVELOPMENT OF A SPIRITUAL FORMATION MODEL FOR THE
MEMBERS OF A MISSIONAL CHURCH**

Has been approved by her committee as satisfactory completion of
the dissertation requirement of the degree of Doctor of Ministry

Approved By:

Dr Mara Crabtree, D.Min., Committee Chair
School of Divinity

Dr Dale Coulter, Phd, Committee Member
School of Divinity

Dr Graham Hill, Phd, Committee Member
Morling College

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to answer the question: ‘What does a spiritual formation model for the members of a missional church entail so that members of a church are transformed into missional Christians?’ Community Life Church Cherrybrook (CLCC) in Sydney Australia is a twenty three year old established church that, generally speaking, has been engaging in an attractional paradigm. Over the last few years the church has slowly been moving towards a missional paradigm that affirms the biblical view of the church as a group of God’s people sent into the world to be on mission with him. The author has become convinced that a primary way for the church to further engage with the missional paradigm is for its members to adopt a spiritual formation model in order for new practices to be learnt which will form people into missionaries within their context. By correctly viewing the church essentially as a body of people who are ‘sent into’ the world on God’s mission, the church can once again regain its purpose to be a light in our world and an active witness to the kingdom of God.

The ministry project will therefore identify formational missional spirituality practices emerging from a missional theology that a sample of people from CLCC can engage in, so that transformation from a non-missional expression of Christianity to a more missional expression can occur.

An analysis of the biblical and theological material will show that there is support for a missional spiritual formation model of the church. A preliminary review of the

literature on the missional church and practices will also reveal that support for a missional spirituality exists. Based on this, a model for the spiritual formation of a missional church will be formed according to an approach which seeks to produce missional formation through a series of practices and subsequent reflection on those actions. Finally, an assessment will be used to gauge at the final stages of the project the extent to which the participants have moved from non-missional expression of Christianity to a more missional paradigm.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Overview

In *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, the authors state, “Christianity in North America has moved (or has been moved) away from its position of dominance as it has experienced the loss not only of numbers but of its power and influence within society”¹. This marginalization is also generally true of churches in Australia. Statistics from 2013 state that 92% of Australians are not regular church attenders and 47% of those people say that they do not attend church because it is “irrelevant to [their] life”. When a survey asked which community services would most meet people’s needs, church was one of the lowest priorities.² While it is true that particular churches may be experiencing an increase in numbers and perhaps even influence, overall, the evidence seems to be that the impact that the Church in the West once had on society, is waning. Moreover any increases in church numbers need to be scrutinized regarding whether this is simply a result of Christians “church hopping” or whether the church is indeed connecting with its community and seeing the unchurched reached.

¹ Lois Barrett, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,1998), Loc 139, Kindle.

² Mark McCrindle, “Church Attendance in Australia,” *The McCrindle Blog*, March 28, 2013, accessed February 4, 2014. <http://mccrindle.com.au>.

As Christendom³ winds down and the people of God wake up to the fact that our culture is no longer welcoming or interested in the church, the church must find ways to respond. These responses must line up with biblical views of the church but they must also be contextual in terms of applying the gospel today. If this does not happen, the church will become increasingly insular and will find itself more marginalized in the liminal space in which it currently resides.

The church must be a witness in our world and in order to do this it must turn itself outwards even though the culture might be unreceptive. It must proclaim the gospel in ways that make sense to the local context in which each church is placed. It is only in this way that the church will be what God has purposed it to be; a body which joins in God's mission today to grow the kingdom of God. If the people of God could be shaped in a missional direction then the church could be the witness to this world that Jesus prophesied it would be.

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of this problem and will present a response. It will provide an outline of core ecclesiological characteristics based on missional theology. It will then translate this theory into practice in order to establish an atypical spiritual formation model to shape the people of God into a missional people.

Rationale for the Problem Being Considered

In the landmark book *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, Darrell Guder and others challenged the notion that the church in the West existed in a Christianized culture. It was a wake-up call to many Christians who assumed that they lived in a culture that was welcoming of the Christian faith:

The Christian church finds itself in a very different place in relation to its context. Rather than occupying a central and influential place, North

³ The term "Christendom" in this dissertation is not a synonym for Christianity but rather refers to the Christian world represented as a geo-political power and therefore a culturally dominant established expression of faith in society. This is different to the term being used to mean 'Christian culture' among God's people.

American Christian Churches are increasingly marginalized, so much so that in our urban areas they represent a minority movement. It is by now a truism to speak of North America as a mission field.⁴

This is not only true of the church in North American but also of churches in the broader West such as those in Australia. The overall trend in the West is that the church is in decline.

Hauerwas and Willimon state:

Sometime between 1960 and 1980, an old, inadequately conceived world ended, and a fresh new one began. ..Although there are many who have not yet heard the news, it is nevertheless true; a tired old world has ended...(In the past) Church, home, and state formed a national consortium that worked together to instill “Christian values”...A few years ago, the two of us awoke and realized that, whether our parents were justified in believing this about the world and the Christian faith, nobody believed it today...All sorts of Christians are waking up and realizing that it is no longer “our world”.⁵

This can be a frightening realization for many Christians as they become aware that they are on the margins of society rather than at the centre.

Somewhat ironically, even though many Christians have a sense that they live in an increasingly hostile culture, they have functioned with an implicit normative notion that the church should be at the centre of society. They have therefore resisted accepting the actual reality of the marginalization of the church. The author pastors in a church facing this cognitive dissonance.

Alan Roxburgh states:

Everywhere we go people tell us that the church has changed, something has happened, and they can't keep doing church the way they have in the past. A pastor and mother in Indiana sent Alan a note of full of pain. She had been a faithful minister in her denomination for many years but was now struggling with the whole thing. Her son had moved to British Columbia and now had nothing to do with the church, finding it utterly irrelevant to the issues of his world...Whether it is traditional, seeker, emergent or whatever is no longer the point for a growing number of people. They sense we are living in a different

⁴ Barrett, ed., *Missional Church*, Loc 139, Kindle.

⁵ Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 15.

world and that their church experiences don't connect with the huge issues of life that they face.⁶

The author can also share many similar stories of people who have walked away from the church that she pastors in Australia because they found it increasingly irrelevant to their everyday lives. This marginalization of the church is partly due to the end of Christendom. Christendom as a paradigm places the church firmly at the centre of society. The life of the church becomes integral to the state, social life and the family. This no longer holds true. George Hunsberger in *The Church between Gospel and Culture* quotes Kennon Callahan who says:

The day of the church culture is over... The day has gone when the church was generally valued by the society as important to the social and moral order and when for that reason, people tended to seek out a church for themselves. We sail today in a different kind of sea... We are caught between a Constantinian Christendom that has ended and to which we cannot return and the culture's relegation of the church to the private realm...⁷

The term Christendom is one that has several shades of meaning which can lead to different conclusions about the actual state of the church in the West. Phillip Jenkins in his book *The Next Christendom* for instance, argues that Christendom is expanding and growing. However, Jenkins uses the term in a more neutral manner referring to Christendom in the way that medieval Christians understood the concept, and this was that Christians were committed to the church above all things in society⁸. Secondly, the thesis of Jenkins' book is that Christendom is growing in the context of the "global South". This is quite a different situation to the West where the overwhelming evidence is that not only has Christendom ended, but commitment by Christians to the church above all things in society could also be said to be wavering. Australia finds itself geographically located in the global

⁶ Alan Roxburgh, *Introducing the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 75.

⁷ George Hunsberger, ed., *The Church between Gospel and Culture*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 17.

⁸ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), Kindle Loc, 408.

South however culturally, with a history that is similar to Western nations. The effects of the so called ‘next Christendom’ on Australia still remain to be seen. However, in terms of interpreting Christendom in Australia at present it is best, in the author’s opinion, to view Australia within a broadly Western context while acknowledging that global South nations are having an increasing yet difficult to quantify, impact on Australian Christianity.

Miroslav Volf agrees with this unique situation in which the church in the West finds itself. He says, “Religions, especially Christianity, are thriving in many parts of the world today. At the same time, a sense of crisis has gripped many Christian communities in the West. Once they were dominant social institutions in what was deemed to be “the Christian West”; today they find themselves increasingly on the margins, in some places even in exile.”⁹ This is certainly the case in Australia where Christian culture is becoming increasingly irrelevant to the broader society. An observation was made by the author in a television current affairs show where a Christian Senator in the Australian parliament used the term ‘pastoral care’ to explain what school chaplains provide to students¹⁰. Firstly the debate was around whether a secular nation should have chaplains and secondly the term pastoral care was derided as meaningless to society. This is an example, of the manner in which some Christians assume that Christian culture is still a dominant force in broader Australian society. Moreover it is an example of the way in which many Australians reject that expression of Christian culture placed on the overall Australian culture.

Christendom, because it assumed a Christian culture in society, left it to the average person to “come to church” and seek it out as a good option in and of itself. This was one factor which encouraged an ‘attractional’ paradigm as an overall model of church in the West. There is nothing essentially wrong with Christianity being attractive, however, if an

⁹ Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), 77.

¹⁰ Q&A, *School Chaplains and Science Cuts*, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s3998061.htm>, (Accessed 5th June 2014).

attractational model is appropriated by a church, this can often counter the church effectively incarnating the gospel in its local context and thus connecting with the culture for effective witness. Reggie McNeal explains the attractational model:

Traditionally, most churches have identified themselves as places where things happen and where congregants receive religious goods and services. As such, they produce worship services, programs, and events that attract people to attend. They provide club activities for club members who then rate the services they receive. In the member's view of the church, it is something that exists apart from them, it's an organization, an institution. In this model, church is a place to frequent and support by one's participation and gifts of time, money and energy.¹¹

To be attractive as a Christian witness is a good thing, however to exist in an attractational paradigm in a culture where Christendom has ended, is ineffective and counter to gospel witness.

The attractational model, along with other factors, has fuelled consumerism in the church and this has also watered down missional effectiveness and shaped lukewarm disciples. Alan Hirsch laments:

[T]he church in the West has largely forgotten the art of disciple making...As a result we have a rather anemic cultural Christianity highly susceptible to the lures of consumerism. This in turn works directly against a true follower of Jesus. In our desire to be seeker friendly and attractational, we have largely abandoned the vigorous kind of discipleship that characterized early Christianity and every significant Jesus movement since.¹²

Dallas Willard would also agree with this when he states in *The Spirit of the Disciplines*: "For at least several decades the churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian. One is not required to be, or to intend to be, a disciple in order to become a Christian, and one may remain a Christian without any signs of progress toward

¹¹ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), Loc 947, Kindle.

¹² Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 64.

or in Discipleship”.¹³A more vigorous expression of discipleship must be expressed in the Western church today if it is to be God’s witness in this world.

Moreover this attractional paradigm, which sat comfortably in Christendom, fostered a dualism in Christian perspective that contributed to the church’s irrelevance and marginalization. The attractional model aims to extract people—to take them “out of the world”—and locate them “in the church”. However the biblical concept is to call out a separated “people of God” in order to send them back into the world for witness to the reign of God. God is very much at work in the world to bring people to himself. Therefore, God’s people need to discern the movement of God’s Spirit in the world in order to cooperate with his continual salvific work. Roger Helland says:

Christians today regularly refer to their culture as the secular world - a dark and non-Christian place. It’s where one holds a secular job, attends a secular university, listens to secular music and watches secular movies and TV. Even though all cultures express religion and spirituality in one form or another, the so called secular world is often wrongly perceived as a separate realm disenchanting from the sacred realm where the God way up there and Christian faith reside. Some Christians place culture in one realm and place the institutional church, Christian faith and the personal spiritual life in another realm.¹⁴

All this is not to say that the attractional model is the sole cause of dualism, but it is one contributing factor due to its emphasis on “getting people into the church”: the implicit notion being “because this is where God is”. Consumerism and an extractional view of the purpose of the church can cause many Christians in the West to live in a state of mediocre discipleship and consequently as a less effective witness to our world.

The church has responded in various ways to its marginal position and has struggled in its position of liminality: having emerged out of Christendom, now it is trying to redefine itself but has not quite arrived at its future state. This is the tension that many leaders of the

¹³ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1991),258.

¹⁴ Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmanson, *Missional Spirituality: Embodying God’s Love from the Inside Out* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), Loc 331, Kindle.

church feel today. They find themselves leading in this tense liminal or “in-between” space. The term liminality is a technical term initially coined by anthropologist Victor Turner applied to the experiences of young African boys who engaged in coming of age ceremonies¹⁵. It is used here to describe the position of the church in the West. Having come from a place of power and privilege, the church in the West now stands in an ambiguous place. This situation can be described as a space in which the church is not what it once was but at the same time it is also wrestling with what it must become. The term liminal is applied to this uncomfortable space in which the church finds itself. In the author’s opinion this is certainly the space that the Australian church finds itself in. Having moved away from Christendom and currently experiencing decline, the church must now navigate what it will become as God guides his people. Even though some particular churches may not be experiencing decline, each church in the West faces this season of liminality and must reflect upon how to respond appropriately. A liminal situation is not necessarily a detrimental context as it can also be a circumstance where the Spirit of God moves to shape his church for his purposes.

Alan Roxburgh claims that the church has had three responses to this position of liminality. Firstly, many churches ignore the death of Christendom and function as though they are still the centre of our society. This normative posture assumes that the church should be the centre of society in order to influence culture. Culture, it is thought, should listen to and respect the presence of the church. As a result, the church strategy is to “keep doing what it has been doing” with a nod to perhaps trying to improve programs, events and activities. Roxburgh calls this the “developmental” approach:

A developmental church believes it can grow and reach people in the new space by improving on what it is already doing. This attractional perspective focuses on producing programs and content that attract people to the church. The social system inside the church is one that assumes most of what they are

¹⁵ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009) 205, 210.

doing is right but it's just not being marketed well. In other words, this is a social system that doesn't see the need to question its assumptions and ways of functioning.¹⁶

In other words, this kind of church believes that its energy should be expended upon the improvement of current programs. In this approach, the demise of Christendom has not been appreciated. A second approach is labeled "reactive": the church huddles inward, proclaims victory and reframes a narrative that speaks of a war between the church and a hostile world. This kind of reaction to marginalization turns the church into an insular institution and limits engagement with the world.¹⁷

In the author's opinion, a third reaction of the church is that it tries to become relevant to the world. At first glance, this might seem wholly laudable. It is helpful for the church to consider and reflect upon how it can relate to its local context. However, sadly, the church in its quest for relevance has often become captive to the culture and lost or minimized its distinctive message.

Ross Hastings outlines several cultural factors which have infiltrated the church to its detriment. He notes:

Consumerism manifests itself in the church in the manner in which people come to church with expectations of getting as opposed to giving to God their worship and to the people of God their ministry. Consumerism makes it difficult for Christians to move beyond being demanding spectators to become participants.Consumerism keeps us from mission.¹⁸

While not all churches have unconsciously embraced consumerism many are tainted by this worldview. Secondly, Hastings states that pervasive individualism has a detrimental impact on the church. He states that such trends "violate the communal nature of persons and the notion of church community."¹⁹ Lastly, he points to the problem of "control" as an obsession

¹⁶ Roxburgh, *Missional Church*, 127.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 126.

¹⁸ Ross Hastings, *Missional Church, Missional God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), Loc 916, Kindle.

¹⁹ *ibid.* Loc 956.

that the church has taken from the culture of modernity. He notes the overemphasis on strategic planning and structure in the church and says, “Church leaders are presumed to ‘take control’ to be CEO’s and technicians. Regrettably, this pursuit of control stands in contrast to the true essence of the church: a community that is gathered together through the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ and sent to represent the kingdom of God.”²⁰ While trying to become relevant, the church has to a significant extent become captive to the culture. In Hastings’ opinion, none of these reactions to the marginalization of the church have proved to be effective. Moreover, some reactions such as seeking relevance have had unintended consequences such as syncretism.

Once again, this leads to a culture of mediocre discipleship and less than effective witness to the world. David Fitch points to the correlation saying:

Our modernist confidences allow us to freely use models of ministry from the secular sciences whenever they seem “to work better”. We are after all only seeking to minister to individuals more effectively. Likewise evangelicals are prone to borrow concepts and definitions of what we are to do and be from society at large as opposed to engaging these things critically out of who we are as the “called out people” of Jesus Christ. Science and technology, marketing and advertising are therefore all modern wonders given to us to do things more efficiently. Sadly in the process many of our churches have quit being the church as it has historically been defined...and even worse out people look more and more like secular Americans as opposed to Christians.²¹

The link between the church’s response to its marginalization and a mediocre discipleship which does not produce transformed Christians who are on God’s mission in our world is clear to these authors.

In the opinion of these authors, God’s people live lives dislocated from making a significant impact in the context of their local community and the growth of the local congregation has become an end in itself. While this might not be true of all churches in the

²⁰ *ibid.*, Loc 943.

²¹ David Fitch, *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005),18.

West, the authors conclude that to a large extent the church exists for the benefit of its own members and it has become paralyzed in its ability to connect with its local context in a way that embodies the purposes of God. This has certainly been the experience of the author in the Australian church that she pastors. CLCC generally speaking, had a primary focus on the internal existing members as opposed to interrelating with the community in which it is placed, and seeing it as the mission field of God. It is in this context that one must ask basic questions: “What is the church?” and, consequently: “Why does the church exist”?

The church is a group of people chosen, redeemed, empowered and set apart through the death and resurrection of Jesus, in order to be sent into the world to proclaim God’s kingdom in this world. Hugh Halter and Matt Smay state, “God’s church is a missional church, a community that is sent and given away for God’s purposes”.²² They argue that, “Missional isn’t a form of church. It is a label we give to the qualitative or descriptive aspect of how a church actually lives. It’s about how much like Jesus those people become and how much they influence, woo and transform the culture in which they are placed”.²³ Even though, admittedly, the missional paradigm is a kind of model for the church, the emphasis is not on methodology; it is on formation—the formation of a people for the missional purposes of God. This model can act as a critique and purifier of the way that the church currently defines itself, leading it to become more in accord with the intentions of God for the church as seen in Scripture.

If the church has lost its way in this “in between” space in which it finds itself today and has increasingly defined itself according to the prevailing culture, it is vital that it allows itself to be built and aligned with God’s ways for his people. In doing so, it will also become a more credible witness in this world—a strategy for effectiveness. This reorientation can

²² Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, *And: The Gathered and Scattered Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), Loc 620, Kindle.

²³ *ibid*, Loc 672.

occur in the shape of an embodied apologetic consisting of formational ecclesial practices in line with missional theology.

Clear Statement of the Problem

The Church has been marginalized in the West and has entered into a position where it has moved away from what it once was and now is still in the process of discovering who it must be as Christendom has waned²⁴. Theologian George Hunsberger states, “We are caught between a Constantinian Christendom that has ended and to which we cannot return and the culture’s relegation of the church to the private realm, which is untenable if we have understood rightly that the gospel is news that has relevance to the public life of the whole world”.²⁵ As a result, the church has become uncertain as to how it should “be” in the prevailing culture and has engaged in various strategies in order to cope with this marginalization. The results of these strategies have had the effect of producing lukewarm disciples as members of the church, who are dislocated from their context and thus ineffective in being a witness to their local community.

CLCC is a church in Sydney which sits within the cultural context described. It is a church in the West which has employed the attractional paradigm for some years and is moving towards a more missional expression. In order for a missional paradigm to develop, members of the church must engage in a series of missional spiritual formation practices so that they become the missionaries that God wants them to be. The problem to be solved can be stated as follows: Since “missional” practice is a formational process, a model for the spiritual formation of members of CLCC must be designed and implemented so that the

²⁴ This observation has been analysed and defended by many contemporary authors including missiologists George Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder in *The Church between Gospel and Culture* and Darrell Guder in *The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*.

²⁵ George Hunsberger, “The Newbigin Gauntlet: Developing a domestic missiology for North America”, in *The Church between Gospel and Culture*, eds. George Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 3-25.

people of God can become more effective disciples who join with God on his mission in the world. These practices are implemented by the members of the church so that transformation towards becoming a missional people occurs.

Limitations on the Scope of the Ministry Project

The missional paradigm is a model and caution needs to be taken with appropriating any model as the sole perspective for the church. Even though it will be argued that the missional church model is scriptural, there are many other models of church which are also effective and scriptural. Each model has its flaws and contributions to God's church and even though one can argue for their model as they see it in Scripture, other perspectives do also need to be taken into account. However, missional practices fit in well with CLCC since it is transitioning towards becoming a missional church.

The sample group will be taken from CLCC and the hope is that this will be an effective way to produce change in the lives of the participants of the project. It would be ideal to be able to measure whether the small sample group instigates change in the wider congregation however this is beyond the description of this project. It is hoped that this would be a model for an established church to use in the future if that church is in a similar position to CLCC and wishes to engage in a missional expression.

The hope for this project is that it will produce missional formation for the participants in the project. However, this takes more time than this project allows. While ideally, a longer term would be given for the project, time restrictions are a reality: therefore this limits the actual change that can occur.

Theological and Biblical Perspective of the Problem

The Bible supports the formation of a missional people of God, that is the church. The term *ekklesia* often refers to an assembly of people, however the term is also used more broadly for ‘the people of God’ or the body of Christ as in Colossians 1:18. These people of God scattered throughout Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, Asia (1 Peter 1:1) were addressed in the letter by Peter who called this group of people, the church “God’s own people” (1 Peter 2:9 NRSV). Peter, even though not using the term *ekklesia*, preferring *laos*, writes that these people chosen by God, and *for* God, were “called out of darkness into his marvelous light” and that they were “once not a people but now... (are) God’s people” (1 Peter 2:9,10). Clearly, here we can see the link that Peter is making between *ekklesia* and *laos* considering them to be the same thing, that is the church, the people of God. Therefore we can see in this letter that Peter considers the people of God to be called out of the world yet this initiative by God is so that they can “proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out” (1 Peter 2:9). The church is here defined as a “called out” group of people who are sent into the world.

This notion of “sentness” can also be seen clearly in the commission that Jesus gave to his disciples in John 20:21: “As the Father has sent me I send you”. Here Jesus links his own mission from the Father to the mission of his disciples. He identifies them to be ones who would be defined by this mission as well as purposed for it. Brad Brisco and Lance Ford note:

With this statement, Jesus is doing much more than drawing a vague parallel between his mission and ours. Deliberately and precisely he is making his mission the model for ours, saying “as the father has sent me, I am sending you”. Therefore, our understanding of the church’s mission must flow from our understanding of Jesus’ mission.²⁶

Jesus also commissions the disciples, sending them on mission in Matthew 28:18-20. Here the disciples are told to go to the world and make disciples of all nations. This has been a basic text for missions in the past and it is undoubtedly an obvious text for the basis of the

²⁶ Brad Brisco and Lance Ford, *Missional Essentials* (Kansas City: The House Studio, 2012), 11.

view that all Christians are missionaries. However a caution needs to be applied here as van Gelder points out that a “Great commission theology” can solidify through these verses which is a “church centric view focused on the mission of the church and [emphasizing] human agency being responsible to work on behalf of God in the world by obeying Jesus in carrying out his commission.”²⁷ Instead of a church centric view of carrying out the commission of Jesus, the church must realize that it is on God’s mission not its own.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus again commissions his disciples, after the Holy Spirit has empowered them, to be his witnesses in the locality of Jerusalem, even further to Samaria and then the whole world. Moreover, during the time of Jesus’ ministry he commissioned the disciples on what could be called a short term missions trip. It says in Luke 9:2 that Jesus “sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.” It can also be seen that Jesus saw himself as being on God’s mission when he proclaimed in Mark 1:15 that “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the good news.” Jesus also reveals that he sees himself as sent into the world on mission in his prayer in John chapter 17 especially in verses 8, 18, 21, 23 and 25 where Jesus repeats that he has been sent into the world by the Father.

If we look at Jesus, a deeply missional person, certain characteristics can be seen in his ministry that are also characteristics of missional theology. These characteristics are what the people of God are expected to emulate, according to scripture, in order to be formed into a missional people.

The first characteristic is that Jesus’ ministry was incarnational: ‘the Word became flesh and lived among us’ (John 1:14). In order to communicate with humanity, God did not send a messenger: rather he came himself. God became embodied.

²⁷ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), Loc781, Kindle.

There is an expectation for God's people to also be "incarnational" in our world, to embody the gospel so that the church can be a witness. This embodiment is meant to function as an apologetic for the watching world. Matthew 28:19-20 is often used for evangelistic motivation but the call here is for the people of God to go out making disciples as they go about their daily lives. This process is one of formation as Jesus continues to train his disciples and in turn they disciple others as they go on God's mission in the world. Disciples of Jesus are meant to incarnate the good news so that this might be a witness to the community that the kingdom of God has arrived. This is clear in Matthew 5:13-16 where Jesus assumes that his followers are salt and light, "so that [people] may see your good works and give glory to God the Father in heaven" (v16). Being missional here entails living good lives which becomes a witness to a watching world. Moreover Jesus characterized his mission in Luke 4:18 as consisting of embodied acts that would bring release and recovery to a broken world. He says in Luke 4:18 that he has been anointed to "bring good news", "proclaim release to the captives" and "let the oppressed go free". All of these actions can be seen as God incarnating in our world to show his love and fulfill his mission to reconcile a fallen world.

In Luke 10, Jesus sends out seventy disciples on mission to the local community. The process is incarnational and formational. The disciples are to "remain in the same house" (v.7), "eat what is set before you" (v.8) and "cure the sick" (v.9). This is Jesus sending his followers out in anticipation of the broader church of the future, encouraging them to incarnate the presence of God as they connect deeply with the people they witness to. This process is not only a missional activity but one that forms them into sent disciples of God on his mission. Jesus is sending and forming at the same time rather than as separate activities.

This embodiment or incarnation of the gospel is also seen in the letters of Paul. In Philippians 1:27, he states, “Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”

Darrell Guder elaborates on this verse:

“Walking worthily” appears to be a key description of the life and conduct of these communities as they continue the apostolic witness which is their very reason to be. They are to walk worthy of God, of his call, of the Lord, of the gospel of Christ, of the calling to which you have been called. The missional congregation may be defined as the community that walks worthy of the calling to which it has been called.²⁸

The expectation in scripture is that the church, the people of God, incarnate the gospel and indeed become the “hermeneutic of the gospel”. As this occurs, this is their process of formation into the “sent ones” of God. This is also seen when Paul tells the Corinthian believers that they are like a letter written on their hearts to be known and “read” by all (2 Corinthians 3:2). Paul here speaks of a witness that comes from a people of God embodying the gospel. As the people do this, all can see the effects of the gospel. Formation is implied as a factor that bears its fruit in effective witness for the kingdom.

David Bosch says:

[The church’s] very existence should be for the sake of the glory of God. Yet precisely this has an effect on the “outsiders”. Through their conduct, believers attract outsiders or put them off. Their lifestyle is either attractive or offensive. When the church is attractive, people are drawn to the church even if the church does not actively “go out” to evangelise them.²⁹

In Paul’s letters, as the people of God incarnate the gospel, they engage in a formational process and mission at the same time.

A second characteristic of Jesus’ missional ministry is that it was *kenotic*. In Philippians 2:7, the *kenosis* of Jesus refers to a self-emptying, where Jesus gave up his rights

²⁸ Darrell Guder, ‘Walking Worthily: Missional Leadership after Christendom,’ Lecture 1, The Payton Lectures, Fuller Theological Seminary, May 2-3, 2007), 6.

²⁹ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 168.

and power in order to serve humanity. Self-emptying was not for its own sake, but for the sake and interests of others (Philippians 2:4). This self-emptying, cruciform pattern is also to be the way of life for the people of God. Bosch says, “the scars of the risen Lord do not only prove Jesus” identity however they also constitute a model to be emulated by those he commissions “as the Father has sent me so I send you.”³⁰ This *kenosis* for Jesus culminated in his death; however, his way of life was kenotic starting from his birth when he gave up his glory to put on flesh. This cruciform way of life is a formational part of the people of God as well as an action and posture that is missional—it is about serving others. The Apostle Paul in his letters conveyed the sense of living a cruciform life. As he imitated Christ, the church was formed into the image of Jesus (Galatians 4:19). Michael Gorman says:

Cruciformity is an ongoing pattern of living in Christ and of dying with him that produces a Christ-like life (cruciform) person. Cruciform existence is what being Christ’s servant, indwelling him and being indwelt by him, living with and for and according to him is all about, for both individuals and communities.³¹

This cruciform or kenotic way of living is formational for the people of God and shapes them into a missional people as they serve their world.

A third characteristic of missional theology which reflects the life of Jesus is that it is pneumatological. In John 20:21, before Jesus tells his disciples that he is sending them into the world as he was sent, he breathes on them the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit anoints Jesus for mission and continues the work by sending the disciples on mission. This act, along with the Lukan testimony which says that the Holy Spirit will send the disciples on mission to be witnesses for Jesus (Acts 1:8), clearly reveal that the Holy Spirit is a sending agent who sends disciples on apostolic mission for God’s purposes in the world. A specific example of the missional activity of the Holy Spirit is in

³⁰ *ibid.*, 514.

³¹ Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001):48-49.

Acts 10:19 when the Spirit connects Peter with a Gentile named Cornelius. This aspect of the ministry of Jesus is key and the expectation in Scripture is that the empowering, guidance and prompting of the Holy Spirit will also be for the church today to engage in mission. The practice of discerning the Spirit must be engaged in by God's people in order to discern what God is doing in his world.

Lastly, a characteristic of Jesus' ministry is that it was Trinitarian. Jesus was sent by the Father and empowered by the Spirit in order to be a servant in this world. The close relationship between Father, Son and Spirit can be seen in the Gospels and also in the letters of Paul. Romans 8:9-11 states that the people of God are "in the Spirit": the Spirit is also called "the Spirit of Christ" who raises Christ from the dead. Verse 15 says that the Spirit enables the people of God to cry out "Abba" to Father God. The mutuality, close relationship and interdependence of the Godhead is clear. This interdependence is a model for the church in the way that members relate to one another. David Cunningham quotes Catherine LaCugna who says, "The doctrine of the Trinity properly understood is the affirmation of God's intimate communion with us through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. As such, it is an eminently practical doctrine with far reaching consequences for the Christian life."³² Even though in evangelical circles this doctrine has not been put into practice entirely, it is a missional characteristic seen in the life of Jesus which needs to be emulated by the people of God for the purpose of community formation and mission.

The Scriptures therefore agree with the formation of a missional people of God, the church, a group of God's people who are sent out on God's mission. The various characteristics which define a missional theology that can be seen in the life of Jesus and the New Testament letters, must be put into practice to shape a people of God for better

³² David Cunningham, *These Three are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 30.

discipleship and witness simultaneously, in order for the church to be effective and biblically authentic in our post-Christendom situation.

Description of Ministry Project in Relationship to the Problem

The purpose of this ministry project is to design a model for the spiritual formation of a missional congregation at CLCC. This is necessary because the church has become marginalized in the West which has caused it in some cases, to turn inward. Not only that, but the church has taken on some characteristics of the culture which has meant that Christians have lost their purpose to be witnesses in the world. The solution is then to develop a spiritual formation model which will help Christians to become more outward oriented towards a needy world which longs for the restoration that God can bring. Missional theology focuses on questions which define the identity of the church and it clarifies the purpose of Christians. Missional theology when applied, leads to an ecclesiology which sees the church as a body of people sent into the world to join God on his mission. In this sense a missional ecclesiology can act as a purifier to the church challenging the church out of its inwardness.

It will be demonstrated that the paradigm of a missional church is evident in scripture and is in line with God's definition of his church. Biblical evidence shows that the four characteristics of a missional church described above are evident in Scripture. It is also clear from scripture that the people of God, or the church, are to emulate the characteristics that are outlined of a missional church in order for formation to occur. Therefore it could be said that a model for the formation of a missional church, is implied in scripture. Moreover, a missional theology which emerges based on scripture will also be examined in order to establish a model for the spiritual formation of such a church.

One important aspect of missional ecclesiology is the formation of God's people. If Christians are to understand what it means to be sent into the world as God's missionaries

then a formation process must occur which shapes them into a missional people of God. As literature is reviewed which describes a missional spirituality, it can be seen that this acts as a critique to some expressions of spiritual formation which have an emphasis of withdrawal from the world. The spiritual formation model which is missional therefore must have as its characteristic, the purpose to encourage Christians to engage with the world. Having said this however, there are also expressions of Christian spirituality that can be gleaned from history which are deeply missional and these case studies will be used in order to inform the model for the formation of a missional church.

The project design for a missional spiritual formation model will therefore exhibit the four characteristics of missional theology in order for the participants of that project to ideally, experience missional formation. If Christians engage in a spiritual formation which is missional, they can once again be the people that God intended them to be, that is, a body sent into the world on God's mission of restoration and reconciliation of the world.

Proposed Method of Understanding the Problem

This project will demonstrate that there is clear biblical evidence for the paradigm of a missional church which is in line with God's definition and purpose of his church. Moreover, it will be seen as a theology emerges from this biblical evidence and the theological literature is reviewed, that not only does a paradigm for a missional church emerge, it is also clear that these missional characteristics are expected to be emulated by God's church. Secondly, this project will review literature which describes spiritual formation in order to assess whether these traditional formational practices are missional. It will be seen that some of these practices are not helpful for the formation of a missional people, however there is much to glean from in the way of a more integrated missional spirituality approach in terms of appropriating a model for the formation of a missional people. Lastly this project will take an

interdisciplinary approach in order to formulate the spiritual formation model which will be based on missional theology and current habit formation practices.

A sample of approximately 9 people will be taken from CLCC in order to participate in this project. Several people in the congregation were sent an email which informed them about the project and asked for their help to participate. In the end, 9 people volunteered to join the project implementation. CLCC is an established church in the process of missional renewal and therefore these formational practices would contribute to its renewal in a missional direction. This sample group of people will complete and submit a survey which would identify how missional they are in actuality. The survey would be framed around the missional characteristics established in chapter 3 of the dissertation. An example of the statements would be:

- The formation of missional Christians into missional Christians requires community (Trinitarian)
- I believe that practicing hospitality is a spiritual discipline (Trinitarian)
- I feel very connected to my local community in the suburb where I live (incarnational)
- I see the church primarily as a people of God on God's mission in the world (incarnational)
- I have a strong desire to serve those who are less fortunate than me (kenotic).
- Sacrifice (giving up my comfort, power and resources) is something I desire to practice daily in order to join with God on his mission (kenotic).
- It is easy for me to discern God's Spirit in my daily surroundings (pneumatology)
- I believe the church cooperating when we are not gathered is just as important as when we gather (pneumatology)

Statements such as these would be on a survey and a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, would be used to allocate a score to each participant. This score would reveal that the higher the score, the more missional the participant is. This quantitative method would be finalized at the end of the project by asking participants to engage in the same questionnaire again one month after the project, in order to see if the individual participants scores are higher. The aim for the participants is that they increase their scores by one or two measurements by the end of the project implementation.

The project will establish several practices for the participants to engage in, as they go about the rhythms of their daily lives. These practices will be formational to help them become more missional. The participants will be encouraged to undertake their practices regularly for a period of 7 weeks for the duration of the project implementation. Participants will be told that they are free to opt out of the project at any stage for whatever reason if they would like to do so. The practices that will be established will be based on traditional spiritual formation practices however with a missional outlook or theology. They will also be practices in line with change models and they will be in accordance with the missional characteristics highlighted in Chapter Three. The practices for each participant will be:

- *Missio Divina* Bible reading- This means that the participants will be given Bible passages and they will be encouraged to read that Scripture in a public place such as in a park or a café preferably during the day as they go about their daily activities. The idea here is that the participants read the Scripture and apply how this scripture is relevant to the context around them. This is engaging in the incarnational characteristic.
- Praying with eyes open- The participants will be encouraged to pray as they go to work whether they drive or take public transport in order to discern what

God is doing in their localities where they live, work and play regularly. This is engaging in the characteristic of incarnational and pneumatology.

- Practicing radical acts of hospitality- The participants will be encouraged to engage in an act of hospitality during their everyday activities. The focus here is on engaging with marginalized people and showing them welcome. This exhibits the characteristic of *kenosis*.
- Meeting weekly with the group in order to engage in a practice of discernment and formation. The group will meet weekly for the 8 weeks in order to share what God has been doing as they engaged in the practices. This exhibits the characteristics of Trinitarian and pneumatology.

One crucial practice for shaping community will be accomplished by the sample group meeting up with the leader of the project, each week for a total of eight times, in order to share a meal, debrief and discern what God has been doing for that month as the participants engaged in their practices. This is part of the project and crucial for the formation process to occur since the belief is that transformation happens best in community. Therefore the first three practices are engaged individually by the participants and the last is based on the practice of community, relationship and accountability. The first three practices are designed to merge with the individual's daily rhythm of life during work and socializing rather than imposing extra disciplines on the participants. This fits in with the thesis presented here of practicing a missional spirituality which is interwoven with daily life. The meetings will be led by the project leader and based on hospitality, prayer and discernment to guide the participants on their journey of formation and transformation. The meetings will involve the project leader asking open questions such as; "What did you sense that God was saying to you this week?" "Where did you discern the Spirit of God?" "Did anything make

you feel uncomfortable this week?” “Why could that be?” “Can you share your experience of engaging in each practice this week?” “Which ones did you like?” “Which practices did you struggle with?” Other questions will also be posed however, these are merely examples. During this process, the prayer will be that the Holy Spirit works to form the participants as they learn from one another. These meetings will occur in an informal, manner with prayer and hospitality shown. By hospitality it is meant that the project leader’s home will be used as a place of welcome, learning and nurture.

The model in these meetings is an action- reflection model which focuses on practicing different behaviors until a new way of thinking is fostered and real change occurs. The action reflection model that this project is loosely based on, has four components: (1) diagnose—what needs to be addressed; (2) design—what type of behavior might we engage in to address this; (3) act—implement the planned behavior; and (4) reflect—what did we learn, whether we were successful or not regarding what was intended. These components will be engaged in for this project in that (1) the diagnosis is that behavior which has become non missional must become missional (2) the design of the project is for a sample group of participants from an established church to engage in missional behaviors through some practices which are missional (3) the behaviors will be practiced by the participants for two months (4) Reflection will occur through the monthly gatherings led by the project leader. A period of two months was chosen as it was a reasonable time to allocate in order to expect to observe some change in the participants. Ideally, more time would be allocated to the project as spiritual formation is a gradual process that occurs given a longer time frame, however for the purposes of this project a limited time needed to be chosen due to consideration of the participant’s lifestyles and limited availability.

Finally a qualitative research approach will be conducted one month after the project implementation in order to assess the success of the model and also to modify it if necessary

in the case that it is used in future instances. The approach taken will be a phenomenological study through focusing on the participants and their experience of the project. This will be conducted through non- highly structured interviews in order to establish how the participant experienced the project. This will assist the project leader in identifying where the project was flawed in order for improvement to occur and whether the project is engaging the “heart, head and hands” of the participants.

This qualitative research method is chosen for this project because the formation process cannot simply be quantified on a scale. To some extent this is possible however change has a multi faceted nature and is complex with regards to how it actually happens and what factors influence the change process. Therefore, even though a quantitative approach may establish if a person has changed somewhat, a qualitative approach would inform the process behind this change and may establish whether actual change has authentically occurred. Moreover, blockages to change may be discovered in the process. The focus would be identifying the participant’s “experience” of the project. As this happens, that is as a person’s present condition is observed, information is gained in order for change to occur. It is a principle of adult learning that in order to move a person from A to B one needs to start from A. It is hoped that with this combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, the results of the project will clarify and establishing whether a participant has experienced missional formation.

Brief Literature Search Results

In the book *Missional Spirituality* by Roger Helland and Len Hjalmarson they quote Brad Brisco from the Missional Church Network who highlights that if the church is to foster a missional posture, the primary and initial focus must be to start with spiritual formation. Brisco states that the church is called to not live for itself but rather to be on God’s mission

and then says “However, people will have neither the passion nor the strength to live as a counter cultural society for the sake of others if they are not transformed by the way of Jesus. If the church is to “go and be” then we must make certain that we are a Spirit formed community that has the spiritual capacity to impact the lives of others.”³³ Spiritual formation is therefore crucial for the emergence of a truly missional church.

In a chapter called “Spiritual formation in Theological perspective” by Jeffrey Greenman in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, he gives a definition of spiritual formation which is, “Spiritual formation is our continuing response to the reality of God’s grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world.”³⁴ This is a solid definition incorporating many of the characteristics of missional theology, however in reality and historically, spiritual formational practices have had several dysfunctions associated with them which can negate a missional paradigm.

Charles Ringma in his book *Seek the Silences with Thomas Merton*, writes that the church today must rediscover a “monastic spirit” meaning that any remnants of Christendom must be stamped out and a more authentic, humble faith must emerge in present day Christianity.³⁵ This is true and we can certainly learn from the monastic period of church history. A monastic paradigm of faith can equip Christians to be contemplative, reflective and more dedicated to their relationship with God. However it is the author’s opinion that a “monastic spirit” can conjure up images and practices that are the antithesis of a missional spirituality simply because the focus is on contemplation in the Christian’s faith journey. This can then lead to a “retreat from the world” practice of Christianity which negates a faith that

³³ Roger Helland and Len Hjalmanson, *Missional Spirituality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), Loc 220, Kindle.

³⁴ Jeffrey Greenman, “Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective” in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey Greenman (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 24.

³⁵ Charles R. Ringma, *Seek the Silences with Thomas Merton: Reflections on Identity, Community and Transformative Action* (London: SPCK, 2003), 110.

is active in the world. This can even encourage a posture of withdrawal from the world by Christians, which as has been mentioned Roxburgh calls “reactive”, given the death of Christendom in the West. Having said this, it is also true that various Christian traditions including the monastic tradition have a history of activism and missionality. One such tradition is the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century which will be viewed as a case study in Chapter Two.

However, even though this is the case, some interpretations of spiritual formation do have a reputation for withdrawal and retreat from the world. This is the opposite of a missional spirituality. Helland says that typical formational practices such as Bible reading and prayer can be compartmentalised and as a result can impede God working through them to bring the transformation intended which is the intent behind spiritual formation practices.

Even though spiritual disciplines are a way to focus on God and spend time in his presence so he can grow our character, often people who are the most dedicated to the spiritual disciplines can lack the proof of character transformation that must result from such disciplines. Helland says, “Most of the dilemmas spring from the way prayer and Scripture study are isolated from the rest of the Christian life. If they are to have any transforming effect, the effect must be found in the ordinary junctures of human life. In other words, our practice of the disciplines tends to be undisciplined”.³⁶ This practice of spiritual formation which can result in segregation from the rest of life and withdrawal from the world,³⁷ could foster an unhealthy and ineffective posture resulting in a dualism which separates tangible matter from “spirituality”. This can also lead to docetism which then concludes that matter is evil and this only perpetuates a “retreat from the world” kind of mentality.

Missiologist David Bosch says in his book *A Spirituality of the Road*, that this withdrawal from the world perspective emphasises a “decisive break with the world and a

³⁶ Helland and Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, Loc 1113.

³⁷ ‘The world’ here refers to God’s good creation as opposed to the negative connotations of the ‘world’ in 1 John 2:15.

flight from the ‘wicked city’ (as seen the in classic *Pilgrims Progress*). In this model the world is primarily seen as a threat, as a source of contagion from which the Christian must keep himself free. To be saved means, in essence, to be saved from this world, spirituality means otherworldliness”³⁸ This kind of view is unhelpful to a missional spirituality which focuses on incarnation and connectivity to others with a Trinitarian perspective. A withdrawal from the world attitude in spiritual formation needs to be changed into more of an integrated perspective of spiritual formation. David Augsburger says in his book *Dissident Discipleship* that a spirituality which helps to integrate the lives of believers is more effective for transformation. He says, “Tripolar spirituality by definition, possesses three dimensions; it is inwardly directed, upwardly compliant and outwardly committed...Tripolar spirituality sees all three as interdependent”.³⁹

This interdependence rather than compartmentalisation is also affirmed by Parker Palmer in his book *The Active life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity and Caring*. Palmer connects contemplation and action in a helpful way for missional spirituality. In this way the “reactive” posture of some Christians that Roxburgh writes about, is countered. Palmer integrates two things, contemplation and action, which have in some cases been polarized and this leads to his view of spiritual formation that is unusual yet effective for transformation. Palmer says

Contemplation and action cannot be separated the way that we separate work and vacation. Action will always set up the need for contemplation. But true contemplation is never a mere retreat. Instead it draws us deeper into right action by getting us more deeply in touch with the gifts that we have to give, with our need to give them, with the people and problems that need us.⁴⁰

³⁸ David Bosch, *A Spirituality of the Road* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1979), 12.

³⁹ D. Augsburger, *Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God and Love of Neighbor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 13.

⁴⁰ Parker Palmer, *The Active life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity and Caring* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), 122, 123.

The model for a missional spirituality is therefore one in which the practice of contemplation, rather than fostering a “retreat from the world” posture, has an outcome of leading the Christian towards a deeper and more significant engagement with our world, as Christ engaged in our world through his incarnation.

A second problem, in the author’s opinion, with the way that spiritual formation is sometimes interpreted, is that it tends to be focused on the individual. This counters a missional spirituality because missional theology as has been described, is Trinitarian and therefore based around community as opposed to any kind of individualism.

Individualism in spiritual formation can be a reflection of our individualistic culture and can therefore be counterproductive to shaping followers of Jesus. This ultimate self focus is counter to the theology of *kenosis* which emulates Christ’s self emptying in order to serve others. This is a practice of manifest love that followers of Jesus are to imitate. Helland acknowledges the rich tradition that is offered by various mystics and scholars of the past who have fashioned spiritual disciplines that Christians regularly practice. However he says:

we find it is common to practice spiritual disciplines for the sake of oneself as a consumer, with the view that biblical sanctification and the disciplines are meant to shape our morality and holiness...(however being conformed to Christ is for the sake of others in the purpose of spiritual formation).⁴¹

This is related to the issue of Christian conceptions of the word “holy” which even though this word has a meaning of “being separate from”, it has been wrongly interpreted to mean “keeping away from”. Instead, the biblical model is that God is the “holy One in our midst” (Isaiah 12:6). Even Jesus, the one who was holy, sat with, touched and ate with those who were considered unholy at that time. Therefore our model is to be holy people of God who engage in our world. Spiritual formation therefore needs to have a strong communal component and it must also be focused on the goal of conforming to Christ for the sake of others, not for the simple therapeutic end of becoming more moral or self-satisfied.

⁴¹ Helland, *Missional Spirituality*, Loc 278, Kindle.

Thirdly, another misinterpreted view of spiritual formation in the author's opinion, which is connected to the first point, is that spiritual formation can encourage Christians to practice a "disembodied" form of spirituality that is not grounded in actual practice and behavioural change. The concern is that belief in Jesus is affirmed verbally and even confessed and rehearsed through Bible reading and prayer. However, behaviour may remain unchanged because that belief is not "embodied". This mitigates against the practice of missional theology because missional theology, focuses on the incarnation of Jesus who put on flesh and "embodied" God. He practiced his "theology" for the sake of others and led an incarnational existence on earth rather than a disembodied "spiritual" one. It could be said that some Christians have focused on loving God with heart, mind and soul yet have neglected to love God with their bodies by acknowledging that God works in them, leading to behavioural change.

Missional spirituality is a form of embodied love and Helland affirms this by quoting Elaine Heath who says "...what would it mean to read our world with a hermeneutic of love?"⁴² Spiritual formation must therefore be the practical expression of love rather than a practice which merely states the love of God. Helland defines practice in this way by quoting Craig Dykstra, "Practices of the Christian faith... are not... activities we do to make something spiritual happen in our lives. Nor are they duties we undertake to be obedient to God. Rather they are patterns of communal action that create openings in our lives where the grace, mercy, and presence of God may be made known to us."⁴³ And then he says, "we don't merely believe our way into spirituality. We must practice our way."⁴⁴

If it is the case that the spiritual practices are forms which create space for God to administer his grace, then spiritual disciplines could be seen as a form of, in the author's opinion, "play with God" as opposed to the view which sees spiritual formation as primarily

⁴² *ibid.*, 728.

⁴³ *ibid.*, 905.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 905.

having a purpose of showing obedience to God. In this sense joy and desire for God enters into spiritual formation rather than a sense of duty. If a church is going to be missional then the practice of being like Jesus must be visible as a witness to the outside world. Once again if the church is going to be a hermeneutic of the gospel, the following of Christ must be embodied and practiced.

Lastly, spiritual formation in the author's opinion has sometimes been seen as programmatic rather than as being a way of life. This also fosters a dualist and compartmentalised approach which works against embodying practices and an incarnational approach. It also can downplay the role of the Holy Spirit leading to a watered down view of the role of pneumatology in missional practice. Often in spiritual formation the reliance is on programs and structure, which the Holy Spirit can work through, however they may in effect fill the space left for God to interact, intervene and speak to his people.

Missional spirituality must move away from mere practices and programs and move towards missional spirituality as the practice of a way of life. David Bosch says that "Spirituality or devotional life seems to mean withdrawal from the world, charging my battery then going out into the world."⁴⁵ How then can a missional spirituality be more integrated with a Christian's life rather than a program to be followed? Is the shaping of God's people as simple as only retreating and being "topped up" with spiritual food then going out into the world again for engagement? How can a spirituality be formed that is a spirituality for the road, as a way of life that actually connects with the picture of God's people as a pilgrim people rather than a stationary group? Mortimer Arias says that the process of discipleship in Scripture reveals that the people of God are a continually moving and transforming community. He says that with "On the way discipleship, conversion is not merely a point but a permanent process. And strangely enough it is the conversion of

⁴⁵ David Bosch, *A Spirituality of the Road* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1979), 11.

believers, not non-believers that is the focal point. Evangelisation also occurs inside the community of the kingdom”.⁴⁶ How can we then practice a missional spirituality rather than a more stationary ‘temple’ spirituality?

Zach Hoag in a blog on the concept of missional writes:

The problem with how the concept of *missional* has been utilized by the North American church over the last 10-15 years is the inevitable drift toward programming and commodifying it. In other words, **missional has often been reduced to a model and a market**. And we all know that the way we tend to treat the market is with initial excitement and consumption followed by a degree of disillusionment and boredom (which sets the stage for the next big thing).⁴⁷

Missional formation is not essentially a program or an activity but rather a way of being, a way of life and therefore missional practices must not create yet another program but rather must focus on leaving space for the Spirit to shape us as the pilgrim people of Jesus on our way to being made into his image.

This programmatic aspect of many spiritual formation models can be seen to some extent in Mike Breen’s book *Building a Discipling culture*. In this book he attempts to create formational practices in order to shape the people of God to be disciples who are on God’s mission.

He states that the core issue is not that the church must be more missional but that it must focus on discipleship saying “If you make disciples you always get the church. But if you make a church you rarely get disciples”.⁴⁸ His focus is discipleship primarily, then logically, mission will flow from that. His formational practices for discipleship are formed around the idea of a small number of people joining “huddles” where they are supported by a leader who is a coach and disciple. These huddles engage in some disciplines which are

⁴⁶ M Arias, *Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984)

⁴⁷ Zach Hoag, “Rooted: Missional as Creative Christianity,” <http://www.zhoag.com/2013/11/04/rooted-creative-christianity/>. Accessed November 4, 2013.

⁴⁸ Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Loc 101, Kindle.

arranged to allow God to bring transformation in those people's lives. Eight "shapes" are outlined which are designed for growth: Discernment, Deep relationships, Rhythm of life, Multiplying life, Personal calling, Definitive prayer, Spiritual health and Relational mission.⁴⁹ The language of the various shapes is used intentionally as the belief is that language creates culture. The whole point of this structure is to see the "shapes incarnate themselves into the people you are discipling"⁵⁰ and this is so that as the book says, a discipling culture emerges in the church community. The whole model takes its rationale from watching Jesus and the way that he interacted with his disciples in that he created a highly supportive and highly challenging structure at the same time as the disciples followed him.

Moreover, Breen's analysis is that the way that human beings learn the best is the classroom, apprenticeship, immersion model. The comparison is made to learning a language, that is, the most effective way to become fluent is to study, practice with another person and then be fully immersed in a culture which speaks the language. This is applied to his model of huddles using the shapes for transformation.⁵¹

There are certainly benefits to this model in that it is relational and intentional about shaping people into mission minded Christians and that the Shapes are designed specifically to produce people to the image of Jesus so that belief actually does turn into embodied behaviour. However, there are also some aspects of this model which may be less helpful if the purpose is to shape a missional people. Firstly, Breen tends to dichotomise discipleship and mission whereas missional theology actually brings the two together as one. Missional theology is very helpful in terms of the usual division between the two which tends to prioritize discipleship over mission. Missional theology says that the two need to be happening at the same time and actually serve to reinforce one another. Breen states in

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, Loc 629ff, Kindle.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, Loc 2858, Kindle.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, Loc 184, Kindle.

another article that mission has possibly become an idol and that because of this the movement may fail. He says:

God did not design us to do Kingdom mission outside of the scope of intentional, biblical discipleship and if we don't see that, we're fooling ourselves. Mission is under the umbrella of discipleship as it is one of the many things that Jesus taught his disciples to do well. But it wasn't done in a vacuum outside of knowing God and being shaped by that relationship, where a constant refinement of their character was happening alongside of their continued skill development (which included mission).⁵²

Once again, this is dichotomising discipleship and mission which is unhelpful. Secondly, the model could be accused of being too programmatic and technique-oriented which counters missional theology. If being missional means to be kenotic, referring to giving up power and control, occasionally our usual programs in the church can be a manifestation of trying to control or design processes and structures by our own power. Even though the Holy Spirit can work through programs and does, heavily programmed structures might also have the effect of hampering the Spirit from taking control. If it is true, as Robert Mulholland has said, that spiritual formation is about letting go of control and not assuming that using a certain technique will make us arrive to where we want to be in our relationship with Jesus, then we must be careful about processes which are heavily structured practices that place us firmly in control.

As can be seen from this brief literature review, according to various authors, including this author, spiritual formation has been misinterpreted by some so that it has countered a missional theology rather than fostered it. This in turn can lead to the formation of a people of God who are oriented inwardly and less able to function effectively in the 'in between' space that Christians find themselves in the West. However, what is termed a "missional spirituality" is evolving in some literature which not only creates contemporary

⁵² Mike Breen, "Why the Missional Movement will Fail," <http://weare3dm.com/mikebreen/we-are-3dm/why-the-missional-movement-will-fail>, (Accessed 10 November 2013).

formational practices, but also draws on more missional interpretations of spiritual formation from history, which can help to create a model of spiritual formation practices today that help to shape the church into a missional people.

Results and Contributions of the Project

The completion of this project will result in a spiritual formation model that is missional with the intention of forming some members of CLCC, into a group of missional people. The hope is that this transformation will positively affect the broader congregation however, these measurements are beyond the scope of this project. The hope is also that this model may be of use to other churches which are in a similar situation as CLCC and would like to move to a more missional model.

It is also hoped that after the completion of this project a model in the form of a published book will emerge for any church desiring to implement a more missional expression in the congregation in that church. The practices are transferable to most contexts and especially in the West, among middle class churches, where marginalization, inwardness and consumerism in the church are thriving.

Conclusion

These are challenging days for the Church in the West. In the author's opinion not only does the Church find itself in a place of marginalization and in an 'in between' space, it is also faced with decline and irrelevancy as has been stated by various authors mentioned in this chapter. Even though some particular churches may be experiencing growth, overall, the trend seems to indicate that the Church in the West is in decline. The answer is not to try another model or method for successful church growth but rather to reflect on how it looks for the church to exist in its time of marginality and remain aligned with God's definition of

his church. If one takes a cursory glimpse at the state of the people of God today, the author believes that there is a measure of insularity and consumerism within many churches, which has been unhelpful for the church to fulfill its mandate to be a light in the world.

The solution is a model of spiritual formation for the church, to be designed and implemented based on theology which is in line with God's perspective of the church. This perspective is missional theology which acts as a purifier to current expressions of the church in the West which have become insular and consumeristic. The four characteristics of missional theology which will be applied to a model for the spiritual formation of the church are: incarnational, pneumatological, Trinitarian and kenotic.

These four qualities outline a missional theology and as practices are established based on these characteristics, a model can be formed for the spiritual formation of some members of CLCC which is missional. This missional spirituality, in the opinion of the author is a challenge to perceived views held by some Christians, who emphasize inwardness and retreat in spiritual formation. However, having said this, there are some models of a robust missional spirituality found in history, that will be referred to in Chapter Two through some case studies. These examples will also be used to inform the spiritual formation model developed. Therefore, a model for the formation of a missional church by implementing spiritual practices, needs to be established at CLCC in order for the people of God to recover their mandate to be God's witnesses on the earth for the glory of God and for the growth of his kingdom. This is a more helpful "strategy" for the church in the West in its season of marginalization and existence in an "in between" space, in order for God's people to embody that they are "called out of darkness" in order to "proclaim the mighty acts" of God (1 Peter 2:9,10).

CHAPTER TWO: SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

A model for the spiritual formation of members of CLCC, a developing missional church, needs to be shaped in order for members to become missional Christians. In order for this to occur, literature in the area of missional spirituality will be reviewed to speak into the model for spiritual formation that will be proposed in this project. Initially, the importance of the topic of spiritual formation for a missional church needs to be addressed as many advocates for the missional church model tend to emphasise methodology over formation. However, many theologians and practitioners in the missional church model agree that the formation of a missional people is crucial to the development of a missional church.

After this point is clarified from the literature reviewed, various views on missional spirituality will be surveyed. Literature on missional spirituality occasionally identifies itself as such however this author will also identify literature which may not overtly identify itself as engaging in the topic of “missional spirituality” but links spiritual formation with the development of God’s people into missionaries to their local contexts. From this literature survey, various characteristics of a missional spirituality can be identified in order to inform a model for the development of a missional people at CLCC.

In the literature on missional spirituality, what often emerges is a critique of popular perceptions of spiritual formation. This critique will also be discussed briefly. Having stated this, however, the literature review will conclude with three case studies that point to a missional spirituality practiced at various times in church history where the link between spiritual formation and forming the people of God into missionaries was forged. These case studies will also inform the spiritual formation model for CLCC.

The Importance of Spiritual Formation for a Missional Church

Through their literature, some advocates for the missional church can sometimes emphasise methodology over formation. This highly pragmatic approach is critiqued in *The Missional Church in Perspective*. The authors contend that these advocates have reduced “missiology to an applied discipline, thus eclipsing its richer biblical and theological assertions”¹ and that the missional church conversation “was not primarily about the church developing yet another strategic approach for reaching a new generation”.² Even though the theology behind the concept of missional does eventually lead to a methodology, it is primarily about the nature of the church. Craig Van Gelder states, ““Doing” the church’s ministry is absolutely essential to a full view of the church. But such a functional approach to defining the church leaves unaddressed some basic questions about the nature of the church.”³ Moreover, if the church is seen as the people of God, then the nature of a group of people must be transformed by the Holy Spirit in order for those people to become in line with God’s missional character.

Other theologians and practitioners who write about the missional church agree that the formation of a missional people is crucial in missional ecclesiology. Theologian Darrell Guder writes in a lecture given at Fuller Seminary that the formation of a missional people happens as those people “walk worthily” in their call to incarnate the gospel. He quotes Stephen Fowl who emphasises the public nature of the witness of the people of God: “Walking worthily entails that the members of the body display certain types of habits, dispositions and practices toward one another”: adding, “that demonstrate before a watching

¹ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), Loc1753, Kindle.

² *ibid.*, Loc 428.

³ Craig Van Gelder *The Essence of Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), Loc 343 Kindle.

world what the inbreaking of the kingdom of God is really all about”.⁴ It is in this sense that Guder states that the church which is a missional community functions as a “parable” of the kingdom of God. He states:

The missional community is enabled to, and in fact, it should understand itself as a *parable* in the full New Testament sense of that concept. It shows the watching world what the kingdom of God is like. It conveys in understandable pictures and explanations the “wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).⁵

This description of the people of God is apt as it conveys the sense that they are witnesses to the gospel as they incarnate it in their local contexts in their daily lives. In doing so, they become an expression of the inbreaking of the kingdom of God. If this is the case then the formation of a missional people is a matter of importance as a watching world relies on the visible witness of the church in order to see the reality of the gospel fleshed out. The formation, then, of kingdom habits, practices and behaviours of the church is something that is of key importance in the life of the church. This link to spiritual formation is evident in Guder’s thinking when he states,

Worthiness has then to do with the ways in which the community practices its calling towards each other. It has to do with the “mind” they are to share in the imitation of Christ, what Fowl translates as “the pattern of thinking, acting, and feeling.”⁶

The importance of spiritual formation for a missional church is also highlighted by Darrell Guder and the other authors of the seminal book *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. In a chapter entitled ‘The Common Witness of Missional Practice’, the authors explore the idea that certain practices of the people of God can lead to the formation of those people into a missional community. They state, “The cultivation of faithful missional communities is an ongoing process of formation and

⁴ Darrell Guder “Walking Worthily: Missional Leadership after Christendom,” Lecture 1 (The Payton Lectures, Fuller Theological Seminary, May 2-3, 2007), 9.

⁵ *ibid.*, 12.

⁶ *ibid.*, 10.

transformation.”⁷ The authors recognise that this process occurs through the transformative work of the Holy Spirit as he shapes his people into a missional community particularly through practices that the community engages in regularly so that the ‘cultivation’ process happens. The ecclesial practices that are mentioned include baptism, communion, discernment of the Spirit, and worship. These practices are applied to the gathered and scattered church. The practices by a missional community benefit the life of the church however for this life serves the purpose of witness to a watching world. The authors state:

However they take shape, these practices not only form and guide the internal life to the community but also define the church’s action within the world. Witnessing to God’s creative intent for all humanity, they model and thus proclaim a different way of life to a watching world.⁸

The authors therefore believe that the formation of a missional church is important so that God’s people can be shaped into missionaries who reflect God’s missional character. The purpose of this formation is for the sake of the world so that the world can see the gospel incarnated which points to the reality of Jesus at work in the world today.

The more recent book *The Missional Church in Perspective* agrees that the spiritual formation of a missional church is of importance. As we saw, the authors critique the pragmatism that has entered the missional conversation and redirect the focus of that conversation back to its initial expression: the theological issue of the nature and identity of the church. The connection between the identity of the church and its formation is obvious: identity is something conferred onto the church by God, however the people of God must allow themselves to be conformed to that identity, and this is a process. The transforming work of the Spirit aligns the identity of the people of God with God’s vision for the church. This is a matter for discipleship and spiritual formation; as the authors state:

⁷ Lois Barrett, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), Loc 3233, Kindle.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Loc 3266.

Discipleship is following Christ into participation in God's mission in the world in the power of the Spirit. This means that it lies at the heart of the missional turn. Since missional church is fundamentally about identity- about being the church- developing and deepening the Christian identity of every disciple must be at the forefront of the church's focus.⁹

The authors also point to the urgency and revisioning that must occur in the area of formation as the demise of Christendom becomes more apparent. Christendom relied on the formation of a Christian as "good citizen" and "good family member" through the broader culture. This is not feasible in our current culture. Therefore, even more so now, the church must be responsible for cultivating and practicing behaviours and postures that conform the Christian into the image of Jesus Christ who was on a mission for the sake of this world.¹⁰

We have seen that some theologians who are noted for promoting missional theology also affirm the importance of formation. Moreover practitioners of missional theology also believe that spiritual formation is crucial and this is reflected in the more recent publications advocating the missional church. In *The Forgotten Ways*, a practical book on the application of missional theology in the church, Alan Hirsch focuses on discipleship and formation of the people of God in order that they might become missionaries. He says:

Disciple making is perhaps the most critical element in the...mix, because it involves the critical task of becoming more like our Founder, Jesus- of actually embodying what he was about. When dealing with discipleship, and the related capacity to generate authentic followers of Jesus, we are dealing with the crucial factor that will in the end determine the quality of the whole- if we fail at this point, then we are almost guaranteed to fail in all the others.¹¹

Hirsch's conviction about the importance of spiritual formation as applied to a missional church is clear. He believes that in order for the people of God to be shaped as missional people, they must embody the essence of Jesus in everyday life.

The importance of spiritual formation is an implicit conviction in *The Missional Quest* by Lance Ford and Brad Brisco:

⁹ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Loc 3082, Kindle.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Alan Hirsch *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 63.

It is clear that the first missional people, the apostles and early Christians, danced the rhythms of inner formation. Frequency of prayer, fasting, shared meals and worship fuelled their world changing mission. Both Jesus and the apostles observed fixed hours of prayer, Sabbath keeping, getaways of solitude and the joy of the Jewish feasts and festivals. Unlike most of us today these folks frequently broke away from the prison of productivity and did a lot of time wasting!¹²

While Ford and Brisco highlight the importance of spiritual formation in a missional church, their view suggests to some extent that a Christian must first retreat in order to be refreshed before going out into the world, rather than practicing everyday disciplines integrated into their daily lives. This issue will be explored further along in this chapter.

Views on a Missional Spirituality

In *Missional Spirituality*, Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarson define missional as ‘to participate in God’s mission as he and we work out his will in the world’ and spirituality as “to live in and by the Holy Spirit”.¹³ Therefore a missional spirituality is “a spirituality that forms and feeds mission. Spiritual disciplines will form us and doing the Father’s work in the community will feed us”.¹⁴ If a model for the spiritual formation of a missional church is to be designed and implemented, then a missional spirituality will need to be engaged in by the people of God. A missional spirituality forms a missional people because engaging in the missiological practices, it is hoped, will form missionaries.

Helland and Hjalmarson view missional spirituality as a way of life or a way of being in the world as Christians. They state that many leaders in churches, however, and also the people in congregations in general, have a very programmatic view of church life. As a result, the practice of Christianity has become professionalised. Strategies for ecclesiology are taken from the market; business models and assumptions of success and drivenness are implicit in

¹² Brad Brisco and Lance Ford, *The Missional Quest* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012),65.

¹³ Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality: Embodying God’s Love from the Inside Out* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), Loc 232, Kindle.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, Loc 237.

the church system. They say that, instead, being the people of God has more to do with being sons and daughters of God than being moulded by a business model. They state:

We long to be competent as sons and daughters, not fortress in temple spirituality, freed to venture out on reconnaissance with Christ on mission in the wide open expanse of God's cathedral in creation and culture... we need new maps, compasses and logbooks to navigate the turbulent oceans of cultural change and liminality.¹⁵

Gleaning insights from Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, the authors claim that the church has been tainted by our culture's propensity towards secularism, dualism and disenchantment. According to the authors, this has impeded the people of God from practicing a missional spirituality in our season of liminality, and has stopped the church from becoming broadly missional. Helland writes:

Christians today regularly refer to their culture as the secular world. It's where one holds a secular job, attends a secular university, listens to secular music and watches secular movies and TV. Even though all cultures express religion and spirituality in one form or another, the so called secular world is often wrongly perceived as a separate realm disenchanted from the sacred realm where the God way up there and Christian faith reside. Some Christians place culture in one realm and place the institutional church, Christian faith and their personal spiritual life in another realm. This dualism is secularisation.¹⁶

The authors claim that the effects of our culture's increasing dualism, disenchantment and secularism have become pervasive in the church and as a result the church has become professionalised, programmatic and controlled. The result is that Christians find it difficult to practice a missional spirituality as a way of life. If dualism is fostered where the sacred and the secular are neatly separated, it is difficult for the people of God to practice missional spirituality as a way of life in a holistic manner. Missional spirituality, according to the authors, requires an integrative spirituality that is embodied and provides the believer with the

¹⁵ *ibid.*, Loc 275.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, Loc 331.

capacity to discern the presence of God in daily life rather than simply in the so-called sacred spaces.

In order to break through the mist of disenchantment, secularism and dualism that exists in the church, the authors suggest that practices must be engaged that emerge from a missional spirituality. The authors claim that as the people of God engage in these practices, transformation will occur and the dualism between the sacred and secular will break down:

As God's people engage in tangible practices (habits, disciplines) of inward and outward life, they are formed according to the culture of the Father's house. We need to integrate individual and communal practices in which both individual and communal transformation will occur.¹⁷

Christians have focused on making sure that their belief systems are correct, assuming that if one believes the right thing then right practice will naturally eventuate. However the authors believe that this is not always the case. Instead they place emphasis on practice and behaviour as a way to embody a missional spirituality:

We don't merely believe our way into spirituality. We must practice our way. Knowledge without action stunts spiritual growth. We can listen to sermons and attend good Bible studies, but until we put Christian truth into practice, little transformation will occur.¹⁸

The practices of a missional spirituality therefore will form character and conduct in the church that exemplifies missional behaviour in line with a missional theology. The authors also believe that embodied practices shape our internal desires and loves which in turn affect our belief and behaviour. The fact is we can often believe something strongly but not act upon it. The theory that these authors propose is that if Christians engage in missional spirituality practices, this will in turn shape their love for Jesus since the Christian has already made Jesus their Lord. (This issue will be further covered in chapter four in relation to the actual project and model for spiritual formation.) In summary, the authors believe that

¹⁷ *ibid.*, Loc 901.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, Loc 906.

embodied practices formed around a missional spirituality will transform a people of God into a missional people.

In *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*, Elaine Heath takes a similar view on missional spirituality as the authors of *Missional Spirituality*, however she draws from the rich tradition of the Christian mystics as providing model engagement with the world. More so than the former authors mentioned, this book merges discipleship with evangelism. As explained in Chapter One, evangelism is often artificially separated from discipleship and Christians feel that one can be practiced rather than the other. In this book, Heath points out how it is impossible to separate the two if the Christian begins by focusing on the love of God as the mystics did. Even though Heath does not use the term missional spirituality, the concept as outlined previously is certainly in her writings. She argues that the ancient mystics can be a model for Christians today as we seek to practice an integrated missional spirituality:

For this reason, the great exemplars of holiness—the Christian mystics—are without exception the first and best teachers of the theory and practice of evangelism. Their contemplative vision of the love of God and the redemptive purposes of God in the world shatter our programmatic and market driven assumptions about evangelism. Their passionate surrender to Christ exposes imperialistic, exploitative and manipulative versions of evangelism and highlights the falsity of accusations that evangelism is just one more way the church is in collusion with the world.¹⁹

Heath believes that as a Christian is consumed by a vision of the love of God, a natural result is that the Christian feels compelled to engage in mission or “evangelism” as she puts it. This in effect counters the controlling impulses frequently found in the church that are often manifested in “evangelistic programs”. These may not be best expressions of true mission by the people of God.

Christian mysticism adds a valuable contribution to the missional spirituality conversation as it emphasises the love of God that has been deposited in the Christian through the death and the resurrection of Jesus. As Romans 5:5 says, the love of God has been poured

¹⁹ Elaine Heath, *The Mystic Way of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), Loc 123, Kindle.

into the Christian heart by the Holy Spirit. Mysticism is helpful then because if neglected, spiritual formation could be reduced to a process of behavioural change through engaging in pre-determined practices. A focus on the love of God is much clearer in *The Mystic Way of Evangelism* than *Missional Spirituality*. Rather than focusing primarily on practices for behavioural change as *Missional Spirituality* does, Heath focuses on knowing and experiencing the love of God within the Christian. This love produces change so that the Christian is compelled to be missional. Heath defines Christian mysticism saying:

Christian mysticism is about the holy transformation of the mystic by God, so that the mystic becomes instrumental in the holy transformation of God's people. This transformation always results in missional action in the world. The idea that mysticism is private and removed from the rugged world of ministry is simply false.²⁰

Both an internal focus on the love of God and embodied missional practices are needed in order for missional formation to occur. This will be further elaborated in Chapter Four of this thesis.

A crucial practice for Heath in missional spirituality is *kenosis* or of self-emptying based on the example of Christ who, as the Apostle Paul put it, "emptied himself" on the cross. Heath applies this in two ways to missional spirituality. Firstly, it is applied to the institutional church. Heath concurs with the view of several authors we have discussed who believe that Christendom has ended or is ending in the West. She argues that the church is entering an exilic or liminal period and believes that this is a positive thing:

The history of God's people is a history of life cycles, a history of clarity about call and identity, followed by complacency, followed by collusion with the powers, followed by catastrophic loss. Contrary to being a disaster, the exilic experiences of loss and marginalisation are what are needed to restore the church to its evangelistic place... The church will once again become a prophetic, evangelistic, alternative community, offering to the world a model of life that is radically "other", life giving, loving, healing, liberating. This kind of community is not possible for the church of Christendom.²¹

²⁰ *ibid.*, Loc 132.

²¹ *ibid.*, Loc 296.

Therefore, as the church enters into liminality and marginalisation—in other words, as it empties itself of all its power—there is an opportunity for the church to once again become missional as it relies on God and becomes a faithful witness to the world in modelling a counter-cultural powerlessness and self-sacrifice. It can be seen here how *kenosis* can affect the institutional church in a positive manner to transform it into a missional community.

Secondly, Heath applies the notion of *kenosis* to the individual Christian. Drawing upon Julian of Norwich, she writes:

Love is God's meaning. Julian sees the mighty power, the absolute authority of the Lord. Yet the Lord of her vision exercises authority by means of *kenosis*. His power is life giving, maternal, fiercely set on the liberation of captive souls.²²

The individual Christian can imitate the kenotic act of Jesus on the cross in order to witness to a watching world. As a Christian practises *kenosis*, the world witnesses self-sacrificial love in action that can turn people to the love of God. *Kenosis* is therefore a missional practice. It is behaviour that the Christian engages in to imitate the missional heart of God.

In *Mission-Shaped Spirituality*, Susan Hope also focuses on the connection between the missional heart of God and the cultivation of a missional posture within the people of God. Her major contribution to the missional spirituality conversation is that she focuses on encountering God in the everyday rather than retreating from daily life in order to connect with God. In her opinion, connectivity with God can happen as Christians engage with the presence of God in daily life and especially through missional acts. There is no separation here between discipleship and evangelism. Through acts of service and daily living, we find our encounter with God and our spirituality develops. Hope tells the story of a vicar who was feeling passionless about his ministry and drained. Instead of spending time in retreat, he decided to go out into his community, discern the presence of God among people, and

²² *ibid.*, Loc 639.

contribute where he could. He found that this refreshed his faith. The vicar concluded, ‘The thing that I’d lost had been found. And with it had come new energy for life and for ministry. It came though simply “going”’.²³

Hope emphasises discerning the presence of God in daily events. By learning to see where God is on his mission all around us, we can connect and engage with what he is doing. Her view, then, is that contemplation and action are connected. Initially, the Christian must contemplate the presence of God and this will inevitably lead to action. She states, “Contemplation, seeing deeply, seeing into the heart of things, has always been a component of spirituality”.²⁴ Hope notes that the Good Samaritan had eyes to see the need of the troubled person before him and that this led to his act of giving care (Luke 10:25-37).

Whereas *Missional Spirituality* focuses on engaging in practices in order for a missional attitude to develop and *The Mystic Way of Evangelism* focuses on the inner experience of God’s love that must be encountered for mission, *Mission-Shaped Spirituality* focuses on the discernment that is needed by the Christian in order to engage with God’s activity and mission in our world. Hope states, “Mission is not something that we engage in with a lot of resources, but rather opening our eyes to see what’s around us.”²⁵ This opening up of eyes leads to love of God and love of neighbour. This is not viewed as a task to perform for others but rather as a way to connect with God’s heart that leads to the refreshment of the Christian as he or she engages in God’s mission. Consequently there is a need for the church to “train the eye” in order for people to be able to see beyond church life and engage with God’s Spirit in the world.²⁶

Hope also spells out a process for action-reflection; a method of helping the people of God to discern God’s activity, engage in contemplation, take action and then enter into

²³ Susan Hope, *Mission-Shaped Spirituality* (London: Church House, 2010), 6.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 23.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 27.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 29.

reflection regarding the action's outcome. (This action-reflection model will be discussed in chapter four.) Hope says, "reporting back (regarding the action taken) is not all about celebration. It's about beginning to make sense of what has been happening out there on missions. There is the opportunity for reflection."²⁷ She gives the example of Jesus who sends out the 72 on mission (Luke 10:1-12). As they return, there is opportunity not only for celebration of success but also there is opportunity for reflection on the outcome, particularly when Jesus gently critiques his disciples for focusing on success. Jesus redirects their attention to God, saying that their focus must be on God's salvation, not on their success (Luke 10:17-20).

In *The God Next Door*, Simon Holt reinforces the idea that discernment is needed in order to practice a missional spirituality. According to Holt, a Christian must discern the activity of God around them in order to engage with his or her heart for mission but also in order to experience spiritual formation as they engage in missional activity. Once again, discipleship and mission are linked and the Christian grows closer to God through the practice of missional activity rather than retreat from the world. The unique perspective that Holt brings to the missional conversation regarding spirituality is that he sees that the place in which we live is the context for the activity and mission of God. In this sense he articulates an incarnational theology in practice which focuses on the people of God embodying the gospel where they live and where they are planted. Holt sees the neighbourhood in which one lives therefore as a context for the missional activity of God and a context for the Christian to engage with this mission. Holt says:

Similarly associations in your mind between the words mission and neighbourhood might be slim. Perhaps you more easily link the word mission with other more exotic and distant places, or with particular activities of the church. Perhaps mission seems simply too grand and important to tie to the ordinariness of your own street. But again, forging a greater connection

²⁷ *ibid.*, 102.

between mission and the daily task of loving our neighbours is a task worthy of our time. More than that I think it's crucial.²⁸

The emphasis in Holt's statement is on the fact that God's missional activity occurs in the neighbourhood in which we live. Moreover this is an incarnational way of living which sees that the Christian is placed in a context by God and must see themselves as stewards and learners in that particular context. The neighbourhood then, to some extent, is the sacred place of God's activity. If this is the case, Christians need to engage with their neighbourhoods in order to participate in the missional activity of God. Once again, this is not merely a task but rather an expression of the spirituality of the people of God.

The difficulty is that Christians are also a part of their culture and the culture gravitates towards insularity rather than engagement. As Holt says, "From its earliest incarnation, suburbia was designed as a refuge, a place of escape."²⁹ This seems to be the experience of many living in the suburbs. There is a tendency towards disengagement rather than connectivity even though perhaps the desire might be to in fact connect. Holt says:

There is no doubt that the way of life suburbia holds out continues to tug at something deep within the Australian psyche. Ownership, space, identity, family—all of these are part of the mix in the nature of the suburban dream. What's more, those who live there often tell stories of genuine connection and contentment. However, as both critics and residents remind us, suburbia also presents significant challenges to the experience of neighbourhood as a place for community. They are challenges that have to be faced.³⁰

Holt states that there is a difficulty in building community in this context however it is something that Christians must practice in order to connect with the activity of God since he is on mission in the neighbourhood. The authors of *Missional Spirituality* encouraged practices as a way of shaping behaviour and cultivating a missional posture which reflects the heart of God. Similarly, Holt encourages Christians to engage in certain practices in order that they might connect with God's missional activity in their locality. One example is for

²⁸ Simon Holt, *The God Next Door* (Brunswick, VIC: Acorn Press, 2007), Loc 383, Kindle.

²⁹ *ibid.*, 730.

³⁰ *ibid.*, 879.

Christians to undertake an “exegetical walk”³¹ around their locality in order to see the neighbourhood in all its detail. This practice might lead to discernment and prayer for the neighbourhood and even action taken to engage with God’s activity. This is a practice that helps form the Christian into a missionary.

Characteristics of a Missional Spirituality

What has become clear up to this point is that various authors have different emphases on the topic of missional spirituality. Each of them link spirituality with an outward, missional or evangelistic focus. This is the key to this concept. The crucial point is that the Christian’s connection to God happens with an outward focus; an engagement with the missional characteristic of God. This brings transformation to the people of God, making them more missional and wanting to engage with God’s missional activity in the world. The authors of *Missional Spirituality* believe that this happens as the Christian engages with practices so that behaviour can change and the people of God become more missional. This leads to the dual emphasis of loving God and the neighbour as practices become embodied and people become lovers of God connecting to his missional heart.

The author of *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*, while not specifically mentioning missional spirituality, focuses on how the love of God within a person can compel the people of God to be missional. This emphasis is important so that behavioural change is not the primary outcome of engaging in missional practices. The author of *Mission-Shaped Evangelism* emphasises that discernment is key in missional spirituality and that the people of God must train their eyes to see the work of God in daily life in order to engage with it. Finally, the author of *The God Next Door* brings to attention the context in which the people of God live and that the neighbourhood is the place of God’s activity that needs to engagement.

³¹ *ibid.*, 1813.

Through this literature review, core characteristics of a missional spirituality begin to emerge. As these characteristics are identified they will help to speak into a model for the spiritual formation of a missional people of God. These concepts are theological and so they will be further explained from that perspective in Chapter Three. It is to these missional spirituality characteristics identified in the literature that this chapter now turns.

Incarnational

To characterise missional spirituality as *incarnational* is to describe it as grounded and embodied by the people of God. The Word “put on flesh” in order to connect with our world and Christians are to imitate this. Brad Brisco and Lance Ford say “the word missional expresses the sending nature of the church, while incarnational represents the embedding of the gospel into a local context... incarnational is more about how we go and what we do as we go.”³² Just as God’s strategy to reach a broken world was to incarnate, the people of God too must embody the gospel in their local context in order to be a witness for God. This has become apparent in some of the literature already reviewed. The incarnational characteristic of missional spirituality is most evident in *The God Next Door* which emphasises that the people of God must see their context, that is, their neighbourhood, as the place where God’s missional activity occurs. It is also clear that an incarnational approach is endorsed in *Missional Spirituality* in that the authors advocate engaging in practices which embody the gospel so that the people of God become the hermeneutic of the gospel.

Even though this may sound obvious in terms of Christian practice, what makes an incarnational way of living difficult is the fact that we live in a culture which values “excarnation”. Some missional literature identifies this characteristic and sees it countering the effective embodiment of the gospel. In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor says:

³² Brad Brisco and Lance Ford, *Missional Essentials* (Kansas City: The House Studio, 2012), 18.

“Official Christianity has gone through what we can call an ‘excarnation’, a transfer out of embodied ‘enfleshed’ forms of religious life, to those which are more ‘in the head’. In this it follows in parallel with “Enlightenment” and modern unbelieving culture in general”.³³

And further:

We have moved from an era in which religious life was more “embodied”, where the presence of the sacred could be enacted in ritual, or seen, felt, touched, walked towards (in pilgrimage); into one which is more “in the mind”, where the link with God passes more through our endorsing contested interpretations- for instance, of our political identity as religiously defined, or of God as the authority and moral source underpinning our ethical life.³⁴

If our society lives more “in the head” then this impedes a certain kind of embodiment of our values. Excarnation, disenchantment, dualism and secularism³⁵ make living incarnationally difficult for the people of God. The authors of *The Missional Church in Perspective* agree: “The implications (of Taylor’s analysis) are striking. The church in the West has come to operate largely within a secular social imaginary, in which mission is a predictable, manageable, executable human effort following divine laws, commandments and principles.”³⁶

An incarnational approach to missional spirituality can aid in embodying the values of the gospel into our locality so that our witness is effective as the gospel outworks itself in real life. In *Embodying our Faith: Becoming a living, Sharing, Practicing Church*, Tim Morey sees that this incarnational way of living for the people of God contributes to their spirituality and their effective witness. He says:

As we move deeper into a post-Christian twenty-first century, the people of God will need to rediscover the power of an embodied apologetic. By this I mean an apologetic that is based more on the weight of our actions than the strength of our arguments. This is an apologetic that is high-touch, engages people relationally, ordinarily takes place in the context of an ongoing

³³ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), Loc 8784, Kindle.

³⁴ *ibid.*, Loc 8779.

³⁵ As we saw in the review of *Missional Spirituality*.

³⁶ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Loc 2571, Kindle.

friendship, and addresses the needs inquirers have and the questions they pose. It provides the weight to our answers that reason by itself cannot.³⁷

The connection to spirituality comes through when Morey describes spiritual formation practices for the people of God which function not only as practices to shape a people of God but also as a witness to a watching world. He says that we must “make the activities we normally associate with spiritual formation a larger part of our pre-conversion efforts.”³⁸ Moreover this author would add to Morey’s statement that not only does embodying the gospel act as a formation process for God’s people and a witness to our world, it also serves to shape the people of God into missional Christians who reflect the missional heart of God.

Other missional literature also sees that being incarnational is a characteristic of missional spirituality. Alan Hirsch in *The Forgotten Ways* sees that living in an incarnational manner means that we will be effective witnesses. Moreover, as we live in this way, we are also practicing the imitation of Christ and by implication engaging in the process of spiritual formation:

By living incarnationally we not only model the pattern of humility set up in the incarnation, but we also create space for mission to take place in organic ways. Mission becomes something that fits seamlessly into the ordinary rhythms of life, friendships, and community. Incarnational ministry essentially means taking the church to people rather than bringing people to church.³⁹

One of the “habits” or practices that are described in this book in order to more effectively follow through in the incarnational way of living as the people of God is to become embedded in the local community. This is similar to Simon Holt’s main thesis in *The God Next Door*. Hirsch says, “The incarnational impulse, with its attentiveness to context, must lead followers of Jesus deeper into the lives of the people they are seeking to reach... [it] seeks to identify with the host community, reveal God’s character and presence, and redeem

³⁷ Tim Morey, *Embodying our Faith: Becoming a Living, Sharing, Practicing Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 40.

³⁸ *ibid.*, 87.

³⁹ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 89.

through embedding the gospel.”⁴⁰ By living incarnationally we therefore practice a missional spirituality as formation into missional Christians and witness occurs simultaneously in the people of God.

This incarnational characteristic is also advocated by missional practitioners Lance Ford and Brad Brisco in *The Missional Quest*. They identify two aspects of the incarnational way of living as the people of God that connects mission with spiritual formation. Firstly, they state that to live incarnationally means to recognise proximity; and secondly, to practice presence. Proximity simply means that the people of God must draw close to their local contexts in order to engage with those who are not Christian. Presence means that a modelling of the self-emptying of Jesus on the cross is needed in order to identify with those who don't know the gospel so that they might see acts of love generated among the Christian community. “Presence moves beyond proximity to identification and surrender. Jesus identified with and advocated for those he was called to...this suggests an incarnational approach that calls us to relational identification with our neighbours that will lead to tangible acts of love and sacrifice”.⁴¹ Therefore the practice of proximity and presence is effective witness and it also shapes the people of God into missional people as they imitate Christ.

Pneumatological

Through the literature, we can see that a characteristic of a missional people of God is that they have a strong pneumatology; that is, a missional spirituality sees the presence and work of the Holy Spirit to be essential. This can be seen mostly in *Mission-Shaped Spirituality* where Hope emphasised that the people of God need to train their eyes to see and to discern what the Spirit of God is doing in around them in order to take action and engage with God's mission. This is also the case with *The God Next Door* where Holt's thesis is that the Holy Spirit is at work in the locality of the neighbourhood and that it is the responsibility of

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 100.

⁴¹ Lance Ford and Brad Brisco, *The Missional Quest* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2012), 34.

Christians to discern where God is at work so that better engagement can occur. This is a formational process so that Christians become more missional as well as an expression of Christian spirituality. The emphasis here in missional pneumatology is not so much that the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of the people of God for their formation into the image of Christ. Though this is certainly very true, missional spirituality emphasises the work of God's Spirit in the world and that Christians must discern this activity in order for engagement and formation to occur.

Anthony Gittins explains this well in *Bread for the Journey* where he describes his concept of "mission in reverse". Mission in reverse, according to Gittins, means that the people of God are aware that God is not only at work in his church, but also at work in the world. This has two consequences. Firstly, it means that it reverses the usual view that God is only at work in his church. Secondly, it means that not only is the non-Christian impacted by the gospel through the Christian, but the Christian is also transformed by the Spirit of God at work through the non-Christian and his or her context.⁴² Christians must look at the world and see that God is already at work so the process is one of discerning the work of God and cooperating with it.

Not only that, this also means that the Christian will be impacted by what he or she discerns as the Spirit of God moves in what might have traditionally been called a secular space. Gittins says that when mission in reverse is undertaken, it models true mutuality. He says:

Jesus was constantly criticised for this palpable mutuality, for eating and consorting with "sinners", prostitutes, lepers, unclean people, outcasts, tax collectors and the rest. But he did not patronise them much less "use" them, they were his mission and ministry. They contributed to his transformation in mission as he encouraged and marvelled at theirs.⁴³

⁴² Anthony Gittins, *Bread for the Journey: The Mission of Transformation and Transformation of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 12.

⁴³ *ibid.*, 62.

In *Missional Renaissance*, Reggie McNeal encourages a missional practice which looks somewhat like Gittins concept of mission in reverse in practice. He relates how he encouraged “prayer-scaping” which Christians involves going to a public place and asking God to help them see what he sees. As a result, Christians began to see where God was at work in their local community beyond their church. This also brought about a new vision or a transformation in their way of seeing things. McNeal writes:

This simple outing radically changed their outlook as they realised that what was in the heart of God was much bigger than typical church concerns. They began to see broken families, homeless people, at risk children, stressed teenagers- all people they were not engaging with their church ministry. Gripped by the heart of God, they gained an urgency to address what they saw.⁴⁴

As these Christians discerned the work of the Holy Spirit beyond the boundaries of the church, this led to a transformation in their way of thinking and would lead to the desire to take action in order to engage with the world. In this sense, this is a pneumatological practice.

Alan Roxburgh states even more explicitly that the church has focused excessively on the Holy Spirit at work in the church rather than in the world. He does not counter the claim that God’s Spirit is at work for the formation of the church but only points out that God’s Spirit is active in our world and that this must affect shape missional practices. Roxburgh urges:

The most crucial missional practice is a recovery, confession and praxis of God as the active agent in our world. Our focus must turn, again, to God’s agency... the triune God is known, discerned and present in the local and everyday. The God we confess in Jesus Christ is on the ground in neighbourhoods that thirst for God in a world that desperately misses God. Most proposals for Christian practice assume the only place where God can be present is in our churches.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), Loc 1250, Kindle.

⁴⁵ Alan Roxburgh, “Practices of a Missional People,” *The Missional Network* 3 (Fall 2013), 2.

Roxburgh sees that the church has become too internally focused and that a re-emphasis on missional spiritual formation practices must be made by discovering those same practices outside the church where God is also at work. He says:

[An] initiating practice will involve for example a readiness to reconnect with neighbour, to sit at their table, to be welcomed without predetermined agendas about making people into something defined by internal or denominationally programmatized “discipleship” proposals. A second practice would involve listening to what is actually happening among the people of the communities where we live...without which there is no discernment, no hearing the Spirit and no missional engagement.⁴⁶

This somewhat sharp critique of the internal focus of the church regarding spiritual formation practices, according to this author, has some validity. The point that Christians can learn to discern the work of the Spirit in their locality in order to be formed into missional Christians is a crucial characteristic of missional spirituality.

Trinitarian

We will see in Chapter Three that a Trinitarian theology seeks to look at God, people and our world from the perspective of the three persons of the Godhead; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A missional spirituality sees that Trinitarian theology is applied in the daily life of the people of God. However, Trinitarian theology has not traditionally been seen as very practical. Karl Rahner notes:

Despite their orthodox confession of the Trinity, Christians are in their practical life almost mere “monotheists”...it is as though this mystery has been revealed for its own sake and that even after it has been made known to us it remains as a reality, locked up within itself. We make statements about it but as a reality it has nothing to do with us at all.⁴⁷

Elizabeth Johnson counters the view that Trinitarian theology is not practical by emphasising the relationality of the Godhead. She says, “The priority of relationship in the idea of the

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁷ Karl Rahner, quoted in David Cunningham, *These Three are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 29.

trine God... challenges classical theism's typical concentration on singleness in God... since the persons are constituted by their relationships to each other, each is unintelligible except as connected with the others".⁴⁸ Catherine LaCugna reinforces this, saying, "The doctrine of the Trinity properly understood is the affirmation of God's intimate communion with us through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. As such it is an eminently practical doctrine with far reaching consequences for the Christian life."⁴⁹

This aspect of relationality that both LaCugna and Johnson affirm is an aspect of missional spirituality. Thus, a characteristic of missional spirituality is that it is Trinitarian. In the literature reviewed, it is clear that concepts which stem from a Trinitarian theology such as noticing the work of the Holy Spirit, connecting with people through relationship, mutuality, reciprocal relationships and community, are all key parts of missional spirituality. The authors of *Missional Spirituality* say, "The Trinity describes a relational family of three divine persons in one eternal essence; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christian spirituality is relational and Trinitarian. What difference does the Trinity make for a missional spirituality?"⁵⁰ They answer this question by giving an example from Celtic Christianity which saw that the Trinity was family within itself and that this must be a model for the Christian life including the formation of a Christian.⁵¹

Moreover, the authors believe that this emphasis on a God who is relational and who is very much in community with himself cancels out the prevailing view of a God who is cold, distant and non-relational. They state that people today crave community and therefore spirituality must be missional so that the people of God connect to a humanity which is experiencing existential loneliness.⁵²

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁰ Helland and Hjalmarsen, *Missional Spirituality*, Loc 511.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 516.

⁵² *ibid.*, 520.

Yet while community is a buzzword, it remains an elusive experience. We all hunger to belong, but community is not built in meetings and events. Rather community is nurtured in mutual service and interdependence, in significant interaction and vulnerability in shared stories and common purpose.⁵³

A missional spirituality is deeply Trinitarian in that the people of God reflect the community within God to model this community for a broken world. As this happens the formation of a missional people occurs.

This more communal view of the people of God on mission together counters the individualism that sits within our culture and has also infected the people of God. Instead, a Trinitarian spirituality can help the people of God to recover this sense of community and family. In *When the Church was a Family*, Joseph Hellerman says:

The one-sided emphasis in our churches on Jesus as “personal saviour” is a regrettable example of Western individualism importing its own socially constructed perspective on reality into the biblical text. Our individualistic culture encourages us to assume that God’s main goal in the history of humanity consists of getting individual people saved. Salvation is all about what God has done for me as an individual... I suggest instead that we view God’s work in human history as primarily group-oriented.⁵⁴

In *It takes a Church to Raise a Christian*, Tod Bolsinger affirms this more communal way of viewing God and comments on the way that this ought to influence the Christian community:

“In many ways ...the doctrine of the Trinity leads us to see that life in its essence is relationship. While so many in our society celebrate the significance of the solitary individual, the truth is that humans are by nature and design, deeply dependent upon one another”.⁵⁵

This practice of relationality, mutuality, community and interdependence springing from a Trinitarian perspective should not be idealised. In reality, it is difficult to practice for reasons we have already seen. However, one way that Christians can develop this

⁵³ *ibid.*, 536.

⁵⁴ Joseph Hellerman, *When Church was a Family* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 125.

⁵⁵ Tod Bolsinger, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian: How the Community of God Transforms Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 61.

characteristic is by engaging in the practice of hospitality. This is an important concept for missional spirituality and once again connects discipleship with evangelism or mission as the people of God engage in hospitality practices themselves, while also connecting with what God is doing by his Spirit.

The practice of hospitality is the practice of welcoming those who are different, according to theologian Letty Russell. This stems from the inclusivity that is practiced in the interior life of the Trinity. Russell says, “Hospitality is the practice of God’s welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God’s actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis.”⁵⁶ While this is quite a broad view of hospitality, it relates to a missional spirituality in the sense that Christians must learn to see those who are different, marginalised and broken and discern God’s work in their lives. It is only in this way that, in an attitude of welcome and reciprocity, Christians can meet the needs of others.

As the work of God is discerned among those who are different, marginalised and struggling, the people of God can take action in order to show the welcome, relationality and community of God. This does not have to be done by large acts but rather through small, sacrificial acts that display the love of God as seen in the trinity. In *Untamed Hospitality*, Elizabeth Newman says that hospitality is about being willing to be drawn into the heart of a Trinitarian God and that this happens through small concrete acts: “If hospitality is our participation in God’s giving and receiving, then as scripture testifies, this gift and reception is always particular, concrete and seemingly insignificant.”⁵⁷ Thus a missional spirituality that is Trinitarian and practices hospitality to model the relationality of the Godhead need not be overtly spectacular but is more interested in daily, ordinary, embodied self-sacrificing acts. Moreover, we ought not consider such small acts as ineffective. As Christine Pohl says:

⁵⁶ Letty Russell, J. Shannon Clarkson, and Kate M. Ott, eds., *Just Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2009), 19.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Newman, *Untamed Hospitality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 174.

Although we often think of hospitality as a tame and pleasant practice, Christian hospitality has always had a subversive countercultural dimension. “Hospitality is resistance”. Especially when the larger society disregards or dishonours certain persons, small acts of respect and welcome are potent far beyond themselves. They point to a different system of values and an alternate model of relationships.⁵⁸

Small actions that practice Christian hospitality can therefore model community, interdependence, relationality, self-sacrifice and welcome to those who are different and perhaps marginalised. This is to some extent a reflection of the interior life of God. It is in this sense that missional spirituality can be Trinitarian. As the people of God model the interior life of the Trinity, they are formed into missional Christians focused on connecting with our world rather than turning inward.

Kenotic

A characteristic of missional spirituality that has already been mentioned is that it is kenotic, that is, it patterns itself on the self-emptying act of Jesus Christ on the cross. This came through clearly in *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*: as the people of God look to the kenotic act of Jesus on the cross, they are inspired to example this in their daily lives living in a self-sacrificial way that models the love of God. Missional spirituality sees that the people of God live lives that are cruciform in that they live for God and others rather than for themselves. Jeffrey Greenman states that the goal of spiritual formation is to become conformed to the image of Christ and that this means living a cruciform life:

Being conformed to Christ or becoming like Christ involves embracing a cruciform way of life with a distinctive shape expressed in obedience to God, which is marked by self-sacrifice and humble service for the sake of others, a way that Jesus demonstrated during his earthly ministry and commended to all his followers.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 61.

⁵⁹ Jeffrey Greenman, ed., *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 26.

This aspect of self-sacrifice is brought out by David Augsburger in *Dissident Discipleship*. He states, “We are co-buried, co-crucified, we have co-died and now we co-live, co-inherit and co-suffer as we are co-glorified and co-formed into the son of God’s image to become sisters and brothers in Christ.”⁶⁰ As a result:

Following Jesus as his disciple does not call for obliterating our mimetic desires, on the contrary it demands that they be redirected, reoriented and refashioned away from selfish, acquisitive and violent forms of mimesis to patterns of imitation that are forgiving, other regarding, peaceable, loving and marked by humble service.⁶¹

This is the imitation of Christ in his self-emptying. Just as Christ emptied himself and self-sacrificed for a world that did not deserve it, the people of God must also practice this as a form of spiritual formation that will shape them into missional Christians. Self-sacrifice is outward-oriented and shapes Christians to serve rather than to turn towards a more interior posture. The whole life of Jesus was kenotic, not only his self-emptying in crucifixion. In a sense, the incarnation was a kenotic act in that Christ left the glory of heaven to put on flesh and serve a lost humanity. This means that missional spirituality is a continual practice rather than marked by a separation between the sacred and secular or a withdrawal from the world.

Michael Gorman highlights this:

We often prefer both to compartmentalize and to routinize our lives, not only in terms of inconsequential habits but also in terms of our spirituality. It is not uncommon for people though perhaps not consciously or deliberately, to separate their ‘spiritual’ or religious beliefs and practices from their behaviour... Cruciformity does not permit any of this.⁶²

A missional spirituality which is kenotic does not accept dualism which is detrimental to the formation of the people of God.

⁶⁰ David Augsburger, *Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God and Love of Neighbor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 38.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, 40.

⁶² Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 382.

Segundo Galilea in his classic work *The Way of Living Faith* relates cruciformity and *kenosis* especially to the manner in which the people of God are meant to connect with the poor and marginalised. He describes a ‘missionary spirituality’ in this manner: “To follow Jesus is to collaborate with him in the liberating salvation of the world, which is an extension of the kingdom of God. Following and mission appear side by side in the gospel.”⁶³ He then focuses on how this must occur towards the poor and most needy. Galilea says:

Mission is to leave one’s own geographic or cultural Christian world in order to enter the world of even the poorest and the most unchristian. The non-believer, the fallen away Christian, the poor and the oppressed are always the subject of missionary love, and the more mission leaves its own world in search of them, the more it is radicalised and the closer it approaches the model and desire of Christ.⁶⁴

For Galilea this requires a kind of death that happens as the people of God give up their selfish desires and live as Christ to serve the world, especially those who are the most vulnerable. This is not only an act of the imitation of Christ but also a way that formation happens to the people of God as they become missionaries. This act of *kenosis* is by no means an easy process and requires a dependency on the Spirit of God for its practice. As Thomas Merton said: “The experience of struggle, of self-emptying, self-naughting, of letting go and of subsequent recovery in peace and grace on a new level is one of the ways in which the *pascha Christi* (the death and resurrection of Christ) takes hold of our lives and transforms them”.⁶⁵ The practice of *kenosis* for a missional spirituality is not facile but it is about the daily actions of living a cruciform live that enable spiritual formation to occur as well as the people of God becoming a witness to a watching world.

⁶³ Segundo Galilea, *The Way of Living Faith: A Spirituality of Liberation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 157.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 158.

⁶⁵ Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 163.

An Implicit Critique of Popular Views on Spiritual Formation

It is apparent through the literature review so far that, occasionally, missional spirituality literature applies an implicit and occasionally overt critique of popular views of spiritual formation. This author agrees with those critiques, however, there are also examples from the past which point to a robust expression of missional spirituality. These will later be reviewed as case studies.

This author ministers in a church that practices traditional spiritual retreats where a small number of Christians go to a quiet place removed from the city for a few days. The idea is to engage in the spiritual disciplines of solitude, silence, Bible reading, prayer and community. When, after one retreat, this author asked several of the participants whether they felt like they had become more ‘missional’ as a result of the retreat, the answer was “no”. They claimed that they had experienced rest with God and inner peace from all the distractions of life but did not feel as though the retreat instigated in them a desire to cooperate with the mission of God in our world.

This is simply one example of what this author discerns in the lives of many Christians in CLCC—the view that in order for spiritual formation to happen, a Christian must retreat in order to rest in God and receive a filling from God. Yet this does not seem to be forming Christians who will engage in their local context to be on God’s mission. This author is not claiming that making space to receive rest and filling from God is wrong; on the contrary, it is needed in order to refocus on God in the midst of a busy and distracted culture. However, simply practicing retreat, whether that be daily through prayer, Bible reading and the other usual spiritual disciplines, or taking longer periods or retreat with several people, does not necessarily form missional Christians. Both disciplines of retreat and engagement are needed.

Others writing on missional spirituality seem to agree. Alan Roxburgh asks:

Why is it that when terms such as discipleship, spiritual formation, sanctification and so forth are used, their referent is practically always to inner, private, individual experiences between self and God? How did we get to a place where practically all our language around the relationality of God has been turned into a set of private, inner, individual spiritual (therefore, dematerialized and of no 'earthly' good) experiences?⁶⁶

Roxburgh claims that Christianity took on this dualism, which separates the spiritual and the earthly, in the late Medieval period where "God would now be sought not in the 'world' (the realm of the ordinary and the sensible) but in the realm of the 'spirit' (hence the basis for conceiving such matters as discipleship in terms of 'spirituality' and inwardness)."⁶⁷ As a result he feels that Christians have established spiritual disciplines that reflect the inwardness of the church rather than practices that ought to be discovered in the world. He says, "Might it be the case that our conceptualities of discipleship and spiritual formation are so compromised by this turn (of dualism) that we must follow the Spirit out into the ordinary and everyday to discover the practices of a missionary people?"⁶⁸

Roxburgh sees that the practices for the formation of a missionary people need to be embedded and materialised in the context in which the Christian lives as opposed to emerging from the church, since the Spirit is also active in the world. Embodied and contextualised practices such as sharing meals with neighbours and actively listening to what is happening among the people in the communities in which Christians live are proposed by Roxburgh as alternative practices to the usual spiritual formation practices.

Simon Holt also sees that spiritual formation practices have popularly come to be known as inward, disembodied and escapist. He says that often when Christians think of spiritual formation disciplines, they imagine withdrawal from the world such as in Bible reading, prayer, solitude, meditation, and confession. He does not devalue these disciplines or state that all spiritual disciplines lead to withdrawal, only that it seems that these are the

⁶⁶ Roxburgh, "Practices of a Missional People," 3.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

disciplines that have come to be emphasised in evangelical Christian circles. He says, “When it comes to practices that nurture our spirituality, we most commonly think of those that require exiting our daily routines, at least momentarily.”⁶⁹ He then states that a missional spirituality establishes practices of engagement rather than only withdrawal. Holt claims, “When it comes to spiritual disciplines for the neighbourhood—practices that nurture our residential environments and our own spirituality within them—what we need most are not disciplines of withdrawal but of engagement”⁷⁰ He encourages Christians to perform these practices of engagement in a routine manner in the same way as the disciplines of withdrawal. Some of these practices have been mentioned in this chapter already and will inform a model for the formation of missional Christians. Having said this, it should be kept in mind as has already been said; both disciplines of engagement and withdrawal are needed for a mature Christian life. Holt is simply bringing a corrective to what he perceives as the tendency of Christians to engage predominantly in disciplines of withdrawal.

The authors of *Missional Spirituality* also agree that dualism has been fostered in the church and realise the resulting need to establish missional spirituality practices that will encourage Christians to engage with the world. They say:

An evangelical tendency is to separate spiritual disciplines into the inward and the outward. It’s helpful to isolate and cultivate specific practices such as prayer, solitude, fasting, study, worship, fellowship and service, but a missional spirituality must integrate inward dimensions of the heart and mind with outward dimensions of the physical and social.⁷¹

Practices for the formation of missional Christians must therefore stem from the context in which the Christian lives, to be practiced daily in the rhythms of normal life rather than only in retreat. Even some missional literature can be seen moving towards emphasising retreat over engagement. In *The Missional Quest*, the authors describe what it means to be a missional Christian and they give practical examples of how Christians can engage with the

⁶⁹ Simon Holt, *The God Next Door*, Loc 1638.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 1638.

⁷¹ Helland and Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, Loc 1105.

world in order to be on God's mission. They then encourage Christians to take time away from the busyness of missional activity in order to rest with God, noting the importance of spiritual retreat and formation. They advocate daily retreat, monthly retreats, vacations and sabbaticals in order to slow down, rest and receive from God.⁷²

This is a good rhythm to engage in and every Christian needs to put disciplines of withdrawal into place in order to connect with God. Yet this kind of notion which says that experiencing God in the retreat is practiced in order to go out and engage in missional activity could lead to an observation of dualism where God is in the spiritual moments of retreat but not in the daily activities of life. The truth is of course that God is always present in our daily lives. However if Christians fall into a dualistic view of life, then Christians have fallen into the disenchantment that Taylor mentions, where the spiritual is segregated from the secular.⁷³ While the authors of *The Missional Quest* do not fall into this trap, care needs to be taken to balance disciplines of engagement with withdrawal, and viewing each as a channel for the Spirit of God to form and guide the Christian.

In his book *And: The Gathered and Scattered Church*, Hugh Halter believes that a missional paradigm, which the church is moving into, is an opportunity for a redefinition of spiritual formation practices:

There is an opportunity that every church has at this unique time of transition. If we can start to redefine spiritual formation as becoming like Jesus instead of just knowing about Jesus, and if we can provide a pathway for their spiritual development along the way of real life instead of just giving a weekly call to "do better", I think we can find a new stride for our leadership and our people.⁷⁴

This is said in the context of having stated that many people express their frustrations with traditional spiritual formation disciplines. Among the frustrations expressed were: "It's

⁷² Brisco and Ford, *The Missional Quest*, 68-71.

⁷³ See earlier discussion of Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

⁷⁴ Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, *And: The Gathered and Scattered Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), Loc 1303, Kindle.

always about church attendance, Bible study and prayer”; “It’s rarely integrated with normal life”; “It suggests that I do a lot of things alone by myself or in quiet places”; and most significantly, “spiritual formation practices always seem to extract us from the real world as opposed to helping us integrate with the world.”⁷⁵ Some of these concerns have been expressed to this author in the church that she pastors.

Instead, practices need to be established that are integrated into the daily rhythms of the Christian’s life so that formation and engagement happen simultaneously. One caution in this regard is to make certain that these practices of engagement do not become private, individualistic practices as this would counter the Trinitarian nature of missional spirituality and would simply emulate some of the traditional spiritual formation practices that, perhaps due to misinterpretation, have encouraged individualism. Practices of engagement need to be communal and participatory, sharing life with other Christians as well as connecting with those who are not. A missional spirituality therefore is a subtle critique to spiritual formation practices as they are popularly perceived and practiced by some and refocuses the Christian towards engagement, embodiment and embeddedness in the context of his or her community in the world.

Three Missional Spirituality Case Studies

Despite the fact that many Christians, according to the authors reviewed, have perceived that spiritual formation practices in the church have emphasised individualism, disembodiment and presumed retreat from the world, there are many examples from history of Christians who have engaged in spiritual formation practices that had strong missional elements. These examples of a missional spirituality from history will inform a model for the formation of a missional church.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, Loc 1294.

Celtic Christianity

A missional spirituality can clearly be seen in the Celtic Christian movement in the fifth century. Firstly, Celtic Christianity was missional because it was pneumatological. In *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, George Hunter points to the prayer lives exemplified by these Christians. Rather than compartmentalising “life and prayer” as separate aspects of encountering God, they were able to merge the two. Instead of mostly taking breaks for prayer in order to be filled up with God so that the challenges of the day could be met, they prayed during daily activities. Not only that, the prayers were less petitionary and more designed to foster awareness of God’s presence in the everyday. This reveals a profound pneumatology: they were Christians who listened to the voice of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives. Examples include praying when getting up in the morning, starting the morning fire, bathing or washing clothes or dishes, and going to bed at night. One example for such a prayer for starting the morning fire begins: “I will kindle my fire this morning. In presence of the holy angels of heaven, God kindle Thou my heart within a flame of love to my neighbour, To my foe, to my friend, to my kindred all, to the brave, to the knave, to the thrall”.⁷⁶

Hunter says that prayers were prayed for many things:

... for sowing seed and harvesting crops; for herding cows, milking cows, or churning butter, for before a meal and after, for a sprain, or a toothache; for a new baby or a new baby chick. Celtic Christians prayed while weaving, hunting, fishing, cooking or travelling. They knew prayers for the healing of many conditions, including blindness, warts, bruises, swollen breasts, and chest seizures.⁷⁷

This way of practicing spirituality was not only pneumatological, relying on discerning the Spirit in the local context; it was also incarnational in that it was a non-dualistic approach to the practice of Christianity. By connecting with the context and seeing that God was present in the daily things of life, this avoided a dualism which was fostered in

⁷⁶ George Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), Loc 480, Kindle.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

Western Christianity. In fact, Hunter states that the Celts would “counsel us to relinquish the illusion that a brief daily devotional each morning, in which (say) people read a snippet of Scripture, a brief reflection and a short prayer... will shape great souls”⁷⁸. This underlines our earlier point that the separation of spirituality from everyday life does not produce deep transformation or behavioural change and that incarnational and non-dualistic practices must be established in order to shape a missional people. The above is true of Celtic Christians, but also true of other Christian groups in history though not all obviously, as the perception of spirituality that has lingered among many Christians today is that it is focused on withdrawal and disembodiment.

Instead of scheduled prayer however many times a day, the Celtic Christians followed the Apostle Paul’s encouragement to pray without ceasing. This meant that they practiced praying with their eyes open and did not see it as a secondary kind of prayer but rather equally as valid as praying in retreat with eyes closed.

Hunter says:

Feel free often to pray with your eyes wide open. Often you have to keep your eyes open when you pray while driving, speaking, attending a meeting or conversing with someone. But praying with one’s eyes open is not a regretful necessity of a second class approach. Closed is not necessarily better than open.⁷⁹

Once again, this reveals an incarnational approach to life in that there is a sense of embodiment being practiced by Christians as they are present to their local context, aware of the presence of God, knowing that he is active and wanting to engage the Christian on his mission. Hunter believes that this incarnational way of being stemmed from a more integrated and positive view of nature. Instead of seeing nature as destroyed by sin, the Celtic Christians saw it as infected by sin and that this meant that God was still very much at work and present in his world. According to Hunter, this meant that Christian mission could move into a

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, Loc 1651.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, Loc 1656.

culture and affirm where God was at work already. This counters the view that many Christians have today: they cannot see God at work in the world and can only see that he is at work in and through the church.

The mundane aspect of Celtic spirituality, which is in fact incarnational, is an aspect of spirituality with which the West has not adequately engaged. It could be said that this is one of the reasons that disenchantment has occurred and that dualism was fostered. Hunter quotes missiologist Paul Hiebert and says that churches have showed more interest in metaphysical issues rather than the “middle level” issues that most people are concerned about in their daily life. He says, “When Christianity ignores or does not help people cope with these middle issues, we often observe split level Christianity in which people go to church so they can go to heaven but they also visit the shaman or the astrologer for help with what they are facing next week”.⁸⁰ This would not happen with the missional spirituality expressed by the Celtic Christians who were embodied and incarnational in the way that they practiced their Christianity. It was a spirituality that merged with the daily things of life.

The Celtic Christians were deeply Trinitarian, not only because they prayed to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but also because they understood that since God is Trinity, this implies that we were made for formation in community as opposed to primarily individual formation. Hunter says that a Celtic Christian “participated in the common life, meals, work, learning, biblical recitation, prayers, ministries and worship of the whole monastic community.”⁸¹ There were different levels of community that could be experienced and they were all for the formation of the Christian. Christians connected with a peer for the purposes of accountability, support and challenge. Christians were also placed in slightly larger communities of about ten people and this was the community that the Christian spent the

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, Loc 449.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, Loc 1651.

most time with. Moreover it was within this community that the Christian practiced witnessing to non-Christians. Hunter says,

Through your small group and the community's life and perhaps as a soul friend, you observed and gained experience in ministry and witness to pre-Christian people. The community's purpose for you... were to root your consciousness in the gospel and the Scriptures; to help you experience the presence of the triune God and an empowered life; to help you discover and fulfil your vocation; and to give you experience in ministry with seekers.⁸²

This is reflective of a Trinitarian spirituality that realises that God is in relationship and that he has formed people to be in relationship, therefore we must model our lives on the relationship that exists within the godhead. This is a relationship of intimacy, trust, interdependence, mutuality, self-sacrificial love, and interpenetration.

This is also seen in the manner in which the Celtic Christian practiced hospitality towards the other. Hunter points to "the role of the monastic community's hospitality in ministry with seekers, visitors, refugees and other guests."⁸³ The process of integration in to the Celtic community was one of hospitality and love as the Celtic Christians welcomed any strangers by feeding them, blessing them, providing a place to stay and then integrating them into the community by placing them in spiritual formation preparation with others.⁸⁴ Not only does this reveal aspects of welcome and hospitality, it also shows that Celtic spirituality was kenotic in that each Christian showed self-sacrificing love to the other. It is fair to conclude even from this brief look at Celtic spirituality that the Celts practiced *kenosis* towards one another and towards the stranger, particularly towards the poor. Their spirituality was not for its own sake, in order to become morally superior or to become more spiritual as an end in itself. Instead, their practice of missional spirituality aimed to bless the world. Hunter writes:

In the Celtic tradition, we do not immerse our minds in Scripture and pray virtually without ceasing that we might be blessed, but that we might bless others- within and beyond the church. Our formation is for the sake of ministry and mission; most of our needs are met as we lose ourselves for the

⁸² *ibid.*, Loc 722.

⁸³ *ibid.*, Loc 791.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, Loc 807.

sake of Christ and his reign in human experience and human affairs. We are incrementally and over time formed in the likeness of Christ, in order to be liberated from our self-interest and narcissism and more importantly, to be given the credibility, the compassion and the power from which ministry and mission make a difference.⁸⁵

In summary, the Celtic Christians practiced a missional spirituality due to their incarnational, Trinitarian, kenotic and pneumatological view of Christianity.

St Benedict's Rule

In *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch says,

Only monasticism... saved the medieval church from acquiescence, petrification and the loss of its vision and truly revolutionary character... In the midst of a world ruled by the love of self, the monastic communities were a visible sign and preliminary realisation of a world ruled by the love of God.⁸⁶

As the monks of the fifth and sixth centuries practiced their missional spirituality, they purified the church from the excesses and privilege of Christendom. They did this by leading exemplary lives for the sake of others, working hard to till the land, taking care of the poor and the peasants who were neglected at that time, and seeking for a just and fair manner of treating the poor in a society where there was little value placed on the marginalised. Bosch concludes, "Although the monastic communities were not intentionally missionary.... they were permeated by a missionary dimension."⁸⁷ One example of this was St Benedict who established the Rule of Benedict which focused on guidance for hospitality, rules for work, prayer, interacting with the poor, and character formation. Bosch says, "Precisely because of its profoundly spiritual yet at the same time eminently practical nature, the Benedictine rule has been one of the most effective linkages of justice, unity and renewal the church has ever known."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, Loc 1691.

⁸⁶ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 230.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 233.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 234.

The Benedictine community established by St Benedict of Nursia which practiced the Rule of Saint Benedict may not have been intentionally missional, however, as Bosch noted, it did have a missionary dimension. The intent was that it would be a community of practicing Christians who lived contrary to the values of the world and this in itself was a witness to the kingdom of God come on the earth. The Benedictine community did not emphasise going out to the world as the Celtic Christians did, however their missional spirituality surfaced especially in the ways that they practiced a Trinitarian, kenotic and incarnational lifestyle. Their pneumatology was not as marked as the Celtic Christians who discerned the presence of the Spirit in their daily lives, however this is due to the fact that there was hardly any sense of dualism in the practice of Benedictine missional spirituality. Those who practiced the Rule of St Benedict integrated spiritual matters with daily living and, therefore, their spirituality was grounded, practical and earthy.

The most obvious aspect of the missional spirituality was the manner in which St Benedict's Rule encouraged Christians to live an incarnational lifestyle. One way in which this was manifested was through the structure of prayer and Bible reading prescribed for different days, hours and various seasons. An example is the practice of one of the Divine offices during the night. St Benedict says;

Making due allowance for circumstances, the brethren will rise during the winter season, that is, from the calends of November til Easter, at the eighth hour of the night, so that having rested till a little after midnight, they may rise refreshed. The time however, which remains over after the night office (Matins) will be employed in study by those of the brethren who still have some parts of the psalms and the lessons to learn.⁸⁹

These kinds of structured practices integrate encounter with God through Bible reading and prayer, with daily life through the various times and seasons of life.

Julian Stead in *Saint Benedict: A Rule for Beginners* says that this can be adapted into our modern day lives, not necessarily by adopting the same schedule but rather adapting “a

⁸⁹ *Holy Rule of St Benedict*, Kindle 2010, Public Domain, Loc 420.

life of prayer, work and sacred reading to conditions where we live, which in today's high tech society are not determined so much by the rhythms of nature".⁹⁰ Moreover this sacred reading involves a "dialogue between the reader and the word of God"⁹¹ and therefore engages the person in discerning the presence of God in the everyday living of life as the word of God is applied.

This respect for the everyday is also seen in Benedict's attitude towards work and manual labour. Rather than marginalising manual labour in favour of the importance of prayers, Benedict sees that both are important. He says that monks should practice their prayers however if:

the needs of the place, or poverty should require that they do the work of gathering the harvest themselves, let them not be downcast, for then are they monks in truth, if they live by the work of their hands as did also our forefathers and the Apostles. However on account of the fainthearted let all things be done in moderation.⁹²

Stead notes, "Benedict definitely thought there is spiritual value in manual labour. *Perfectae Caritatis* expressed Benedict's mind: In discharging his duty, each religious should regard himself as subject to the common law of labour."⁹³ Therefore while Benedict encouraged the regular routine practice of prayer throughout the days and the seasons, work was also seen as sacred and spiritual.

The notion of putting Christian belief into practice rather than allowing it to sit mainly in the mind was also an important aspect of Benedictine spirituality, revealing a missional dimension. This is what it means to incarnate the gospel. Christianity is not simply left as concepts to be believed in with the mind but it is practiced so that transformation occurs. As this happens, this is a missional witness to a watching world. This manifests through the

⁹⁰ Julian Stead, *St Benedict: A Rule for Beginners* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012), Loc 2466, Kindle.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, Loc 2475.

⁹² *Holy Rule of St Benedict*, Loc 853, Kindle.

⁹³ Julian Stead, *St Benedict: A Rule for Beginners*, Loc 2485.

Benedictine notion of *Conversatio Morum* which essentially means “the monastic way of life”. Terrence Kardong elaborates:

When *coversatio* is used to refer to monasticism, it is mainly the external and tangible element of the life that is in question....it has a connotation of practice rather than theory. To undertake the monastic conversation means that one actually assumes the life patterns of the monk...Concreteness seems to be a vital part of the very origin of the monastic movement. It was the result of the desire on the part of some early Christians to put the teachings of the New Testament into literal practice.⁹⁴

This habit of putting into practice or embodying what the people of God believe is essential for a missional spirituality. Rather than a dualism which fosters a separation of belief and practice, Christian beliefs must be incarnated so that the people of God are a living expression of the gospel.

The Trinitarian and kenotic aspects of the Rule of St Benedict are also core in this expression of a missional spirituality. The Rule states that any guest who comes into the community must be welcomed with honour and hospitality in the example of Jesus who said, “I was a stranger and you took me in” (Matthew 25:35). The Rule says;

When, therefore a guest is announced, let him be met by the Superior and the brethren with every mark of charity. And let them first pray together, and then let them associate with one another in peace. ..In the greeting let all humility be shown to the guests, whether coming or going, with the head bowed down to the whole body prostrate on the ground, let Christ be adored in them as he is also received.⁹⁵

This welcome is showed not only to the friends of the monks but also the stranger, the marginalised, the poor and the forgotten. In this way, the Rule encourages a practice of seeing Christ in the presence of the poor and vulnerable. The notion is not only of welcome but also of honour and blessing. This practice is Trinitarian as it models the self-sacrifice and welcome that the godhead practices towards itself and to our world.

⁹⁴ Terrence Kardong, *The Benedictines* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1988), 97.

⁹⁵ *Holy Rule of St Benedict, Loc 905*, Kindle.

This hospitality and welcome happens because the monks are encouraged to practice a kenotic way of living in that they look to the needs of others rather than to themselves. This was applied to the internal community but also to the needy stranger and outcast seeking help from the community. The Rule states, “No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself but instead what he judges better for someone else.”⁹⁶ This emulates Christ’s *kenosis* in Philippians 2:7. As Kardong recognises, “the philosophy presented is pure altruism: the monk is asked to think only about the needs of others and not about his own.”⁹⁷ This is indeed a difficult practice to put into place, however The Rule expects that by the power of God’s Spirit the Christian is able to emulate Jesus in his *kenosis*. Stead describes the Benedictine view of humility:

To give to the poor, expecting nothing for oneself in return, to endow schools and hospitals or give volunteer service to the sick, are acts of love in the Christian sense because they imitate and, as it were, reincarnate the love with which God the son assumed a human love and gave all of it for us.⁹⁸

The practice of *kenosis* noted here was an integral part of the missional spirituality expressed by the Benedictine community.

The Anabaptist Tradition

A final example of a missional spirituality in practice comes from the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century. While the Anabaptists were not known for going to their local contexts as missionaries, these Christians practiced a hermeneutic of love and *kenosis* by incarnating the gospel. They also attempted to embody the practices of Jesus through mutual communal effort, thus highlighting a Trinitarian theology. Daniel Liechty writes that the key question for Anabaptists was “How should a Christian live?”

They did not agonise over and question their salvation. Their experience of salvation, what they called the “new birth”, was for them a beginning point. To become a “follower of Christ” in daily life, exhibited in active love, was at the

⁹⁶ Terrence Kardong, *The Benedictines*, 110.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 111.

⁹⁸ Julian Stead, *St Benedict*, Loc 1025.

very heart of their understanding of spiritual salvation. It was for them the highest meaning of human existence.⁹⁹

So, for those with an Anabaptist faith, spirituality would produce formational change otherwise there was no practical significance to being a follower of Jesus. This therefore brought about a critique to the usual Protestant distinction between justification (faith) and sanctification (works). They had an integrated in which faith was embodied in practice.

An illustration of this comes from the story of Dutch Anabaptist Dirk Willems who was being persecuted by a constable in 1569. As he fled across a frozen lake, the constable, close on his tracks, did not make it and fell into the lake. Instinctively, Willems turned back to help this man out of trouble even though he knew it would mean his own arrest and persecution.¹⁰⁰ Anabaptist spirituality caused behavioural change. The faith of the Anabaptists matched their practice. This is the question for Christians today: what kinds of practices will encourage Christians to embody the radical teachings of Jesus in order to become missional?

This integration between faith and practice is seen clearly in Anabaptist Balthasar Hubmaier's discussion of faith:

Leonhart: How many kinds of faith are there?

Hans: Two kinds, namely a dead one and a living one.

Leonhart: What is a dead faith?

Hans: One that is unfruitful and without works of love, James 2:17

Leonhart: what is a living faith?

Hans: One that produces the fruits of the Spirit and works through love (Gal 5.)¹⁰¹

The essential nature of a faith that is integrated is clear in this brief dialogue and shows the commitment that Anabaptists had towards embodying and incarnating their faith as opposed to merely holding to a belief. One practice that was engaged in for the purpose of integrating

⁹⁹ Daniel Liechty, "Introduction" in *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, ed. Daniel Liechty (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 10.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 140.

¹⁰¹ C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology* (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press 1997), 152.

faith into an embodied practice was the Anabaptist version of *lectio divina*. Bible reading was not primarily for the purpose of contemplation but rather for “living the Bible”. Snyder says:

It is not in the sense of a systemic ‘divine reading’ as a means to contemplation (as was practised in the monasteries) that we may speak of an Anabaptist practice of *lectio divina*... For the Anabaptists, learning, remembering and repeating the words of Scripture was a means to a practical end; it was living the Bible continually that really counted. It was in this sense of learning the Bible in order to live it- and not in the medieval (or modern) sense of a devotional ‘exercise in divine reading’- that one may speak of an Anabaptist practice of something like *lectio divina*.¹⁰²

Reading the Bible in a contemplative manner is helpful, however the Anabaptist manner of reading Scripture, which is more practically focused, is also helpful because the word of God is applied directly to daily life. This is helpful for a missional reading of Scripture, which seeks to apply the Word of God to the context that the Christian is living in. This characteristic of embodying faith speaks into a missional spirituality because truly incarnating the teachings of Jesus will be an effective witness to a watching world and moreover will form missional Christians.

Anabaptist spirituality was also kenotic. Christians were encouraged to practice self-emptying in order to serve the other, just as Christ did. Peter Walpot, an Anabaptist, summed up this kenotic Christianity, saying: “Nobody hates his own flesh. Rather, he nourishes it and maintains it. And since we are all members of one another and one flesh of his flesh and of his bones, that is how we should treat one another. We cannot scorn each other, in the same sense that we cannot scorn or forsake our own self.”¹⁰³

Anabaptist spirituality spoke into the truth that we are to look to the interests of others rather than have a posture that is aimed internally. In the Anabaptist process of discipleship, yieldedness was practiced continually and living a life of self-emptying and

¹⁰² C. Arnold Snyder, *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004), 116.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, 172.

surrender was the norm. Anabaptist Jan Wouters, martyred in 1572, wrote a letter to his daughter from prison before his death, speaking of the Anabaptist focus on *kenosis*:

This my dearest daughter... you will find, that we must follow Christ Jesus, and obey Him unto the end, and you will also find the little flock who follow Christ. And this is the sign; they lead a penitent life; they avoid that which is evil, and delight in doing what is good; they hunger and thirst after righteousness; they are not conformed to the world; they crucify their sinful flesh more and more every day, to die unto sin, which wars in their members... they do evil to no one, they pray for their enemies; they do not resist their enemies, their words are yea that is yea, and nay that is nay... they are also these who bear the cross of Christ for he says "if anyone will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me" Luke 9:23... join these cross bearers, that you may come to Christ, who bore the cross for us, for we must follow his footsteps, and be like our Lord, the disciple like his master, and as we suffer with him, so shall we forever rejoice with him'¹⁰⁴

A theology of *kenosis* is present in Wouters' letter to the point in which it led to an ultimate emulation of the sufferings of Christ through martyrdom.

The expectation of martyrdom was the norm in Anabaptist spirituality. Ethelbert Stauffer notes that this is heard through their hymns:

A later Hutterite hymn elaborates this idea still further: whosoever will enter into a covenant with God needs three witnesses in Heaven- Father, Son and Holy Ghost- and three witnesses on earth- spirit, water and blood. The first baptism of the baptism with spirit, the second the baptism with water, but the third is the baptism with blood....the true baptism of Christ entails the cross. The Anabaptists know this and therefore accept consciously baptism as a pledge of faith to follow their master devotedly unto death.¹⁰⁵

Anabaptist spirituality was deeply incarnational and kenotic. It aimed to take seriously the words of Jesus and put them into practice. It was an embodied spirituality. Faith and practice were not separated but, rather, integrated in the life of the Christian. These two characteristics of a missional spirituality that can be seen in the Anabaptist tradition can be helpful for the way that they might inform a model for the spiritual formation of a missional people of God.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 157.

¹⁰⁵ Ethelbert Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom" (trans. R. Friedmann) in *Essays in Anabaptist Theology*, ed. H. Wayne Pipkin (Elkhart, Indiana: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1994), 231.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter reveals that spiritual formation in a missional church is crucially significant if the intention is to shape a people of God to be missionaries. Many writers on missional practice focus overwhelmingly on methodology in a missional church but, in essence, to practice a missional theology is to think through the identity and the nature of the church. If this is the case, then in order for change to happen, formation is necessary above methodology.

The formation of a people of God into Christians who are on God's mission requires that a missional spirituality be developed in order for that transformation to occur. Various authors write on the topic of missional spirituality, some explicitly using the term and others describing the notion without using the term. A variety of literature emphasises the importance of practices for the formation of God's people, the experience of the love of God which is necessary for Christians to engage with God's mission, the discernment of the Spirit that is needed and also the contextualisation that must occur for Christians to engage with God in their locality.

From this literature several characteristics of a missional spirituality can be discerned and they are that a missional spirituality is pneumatological, it is incarnational, it is kenotic and lastly it is Trinitarian. These characteristics have been described in this chapter. As one views the literature it can also be seen that an implicit critique emerges of the popular perception of traditional spiritual formation practices. This author feels that this critique is warranted and that a missional spirituality can bring a corrective to this perception and practice. However, there are also various robust and clear expressions of a missional spirituality from history which can be found and which will inform a model for the formation of a missional people of God in CLCC.

CHAPTER THREE: THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Overview

The literature review has revealed the various views on missional spirituality that exist and also has pointed to its characteristics. Following on from this, a theological and biblical warrant must be presented in order for a missional spiritual formation model to be established for the members of CLCC. This is the purpose of this chapter.

In order for a spiritual formation model to be developed for a missional church, the biblical and theological perspective of the notion of church needs to be briefly identified. While Scripture offers a number of ways to describe the communal dynamics of Christianity, the metaphor used mostly in this work is that of the “people of God”. This will be applied mostly to the notion of the *scattered* church rather than primarily the *gathered* church. Drawing on the idea of assembly in the Old Testament, this chapter will focus primarily on the New Testament perspective.

Stemming from this metaphor of the church as the people of God, a missional paradigm in ecclesiology will be defended as having a solid basis in scripture and support in theology. This view has a Protestant emphasis on the priesthood of all believers rather than having a clergy-centred approach. In order to form a model for the spiritual formation of a missional church, an examination of the characteristics of a missional theology is needed. Four aspects of missional theology will be explained: Trinitarian, pneumatological, incarnational and kenotic. The practical outworking of these characteristics will be the subject of chapter four. Three factors in a spiritual formation model of the missional people of God are suggested by scripture: firstly, a spiritual formation model must develop practices;

secondly, it must cater for the scattered church, and thirdly, it must help the people of God to understand that their identity is centred in their being sent into the world on God's mission.

A Theological and Biblical Perspective on 'Church'

The term 'church' needs to be clarified. The Bible presents a few definitions and images which need to be distinguished in order for a spiritual formation model to be developed for a missional church. As the notion of church is clarified in terms of what it means for this project, a clearer view of its application can be seen.

The word "church" (*ekklesia*) is found in the gospels only in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17 and is scattered throughout the New Testament conveying different definitions and images. Millard Erickson states that two backgrounds must be taken into account when thinking through the New Testament word "church"¹: the classical Greek and the Old Testament. In classical Greek background, the term *ekklesia* referred to the regular assembly of the citizens of a city. This secular use of the word *ekklesia* simply means a gathering of people, particularly free men which reveals a social stratification at work. This usage can be seen in Acts 19:32, 39 and 41 which applies to a meeting or gathering of people. The second background that needs to be considered is the Old Testament. The Septuagint used *ekklesia* to translate the word *qahal* which referred to an assembly and the act of assembling. This can be seen in Deuteronomy 9:10 when Moses refers to the assembly of God's people at the foot of Mount Sinai as they received the law.

These two backgrounds give the context for the Apostle Paul's frequent use of the term *ekklesia* to mean a specific local gathering of believers. Paul writes his letters to particular churches in various cities: "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1:2), "to the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2) and to "the church of the Thessalonians" (1

¹ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House, 1996), 1031.

Thessalonians 1:1). The primary reference is to the gathered community, or the manner in which the church manifests in particular cities or contexts, but it is also true that the church is universal in nature. In other words, the church is greater than its various expressions in specific contexts. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, for example, the gathered church is emphasised, that is, “at Corinth”, but the universal church is also highlighted; that is, “the church of God”. The church is local and therefore has a gathered component (as is implied by *ekklesia*) but it is also universal and has a scattered dimension. This is clear in Erickson’s theological definition of the church: “The whole body of those who through Christ’s death have been savingly reconciled to God and have received new life. It includes all such persons, whether in heaven or on earth. While it is universal in nature, it finds expressions in local groupings of believers which display the same qualities as does the body of Christ as a whole”.²

This distinction between the gathered and scattered church is important to understand. From a congregationalist perspective, when the Christian thinks of church, the view is of a gathered people or the local church. However, the church universal or the scattered church, points to the truth that when believers leave the gathering, they are still the church even though they are scattered. Both terms are important for the understanding of the New Testament view on church and need to be seen as equally appropriate for our definition of church. Paul Stevens writes, “The church is a rhythm of gathering (*ekklesia*) and dispersion (*diaspora*) which involves movements referred to as the ‘come’ structures and the ‘go’ structures of the church”.³ Putting this in historical context, Hastings says,

The interwovenness of these two dimensions was perhaps more evident in New Testament churches than has been realised. The social features of the times, and specifically the fact that voluntary associations were a relevant feature of Greco-Roman society, influences the nature of the church significantly. These associations gathered around philosophical schools, synagogues or households. The reality that the *ekklesia* in those times

² *ibid.*, 1034.

³ Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), Loc 653, Kindle.

engaged in a network of other voluntary associations offers a model for a church as much more engaged with the world of people and the polis that is popularly believed.⁴

This notion of the scattered church needs to be brought more into view without negating the importance of the gathered church. Considering the Hebraic background of the term, Miroslav Volf agrees that the church as seen in the New Testament is primarily an assembly. However, he also states:

Doubtless, however, the life of the church is not exhausted in the act of assembly. Even if a church is not assembled, it does live on as a church in the mutual service its members render to one another and in its common mission to the world. The church is not simply an act of assembling; rather it assembles at a specific place. It is the people who in a specific way assemble at a specific place.⁵

Here Volf points to the importance of the church beyond the specific gatherings of people. Moreover he implies that what is important are the people in that they constitute the church. This idea of the church being the people of God who are scattered especially comes through in the letter of 1 Peter in the New Testament. This letter is rich in images from the Old Testament. The concepts of the people of God and *diaspora* frame the letter.

The author appropriates the term ‘people of God’ and adds that this people has been “sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood” (1 Peter 1:2). The author repeatedly appropriates this Old Testament terminology for Christians. This is seen most clearly in 1 Peter 2:9 where Peter uses the term “God’s own people” to describe the church. While this term which is translated as “a people for possession”, is not found in the Old Testament, the concept can clearly be seen in Exodus 19:5, Isaiah 43:21, and Malachi 3:17. Moreover, the New Testament uses various images to describe the church that illustrate the notion of ‘gathered’ and ‘scattered’ and one of those biblical images is the people of God.

⁴ *ibid.*, Loc668.

⁵ Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 137.

This is seen not only in 1 Peter but also in 2 Corinthians 6:16. It should also be kept in mind that the author in 1 Peter 2:9-10, places the terms “race”, “people” and “nation” together.

The author addresses his letter not to a specific church, as Paul does, but to the *diaspora*: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1:1). The term *diaspora* is applied here in a spiritual sense to Christians who are scattered around the Asia Minor area. The word ‘exiles’ moreover emphasises that the Christians are scattered and away from their homeland which is heaven. The term ‘exiles’ is repeated in 2:11, 12. There, the exhortation by the author is that Christians must live “honourably” among the Gentiles. This is important because a crucial aspect of being the people of God is being holy as God is holy (1:16) and consequently they must rid themselves of the things that might stop them from being witnesses to the world (2:1, 2:11, 12).

Highlighting these two concepts which frame the letter of 1 Peter serves to show that the church can be seen as the people of God who are not only gathered but also are scattered. The people of God are the “Israel” of God scattered throughout the world but still one in terms of identity. Once again, this is an important aspect to note because normative views of church, in this author’s opinion, are that of a gathered assembly. As a result this has caused the development of spiritual formation practices which focus on the gathered church rather than formational practices which attend to the scattered nature of the church. It is also the case, that some practices such as Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are universal church practices which link the concepts of the scattered and gathered church.

To some extent, this contrast between the gathered and scattered church can also be seen in the contrast between the institutional church and the discipleship model of church as articulated by Avery Dulles. Dulles explores various church paradigms and models stating

that various models are needed for the practice of church. He says the “institutional church” largely exists for its own members:

... the institutional model gives strong support to the missionary effort by which the church goes out to non-members. But it seeks to save their souls precisely by bringing them into the institution. For the proverbial old-style missionary who is not a totally mythical figure—success is statistically measurable; How many baptisms have been performed, how many persons have entered the church, how many continue to come regularly to church and receive the sacraments?⁶

For Dulles, the emphasis in the institutional church is the gathering of believers as they bring others “in” and “come regularly to church”. There is nothing essentially wrong with this. The problem, however, is that if this is the sole emphasis in the church without a view of the scattered element, this could become a very extractionist view of the church that stops the people of God from engaging in the world and being formed as missional disciples. Dulles contrasts this institutional paradigm to the discipleship model of church which sees the church as a pilgrim people on a journey with God who are shaped by God to be missionaries in the world:

Together with Jesus, the disciples constituted a contrast society, symbolically representing the new and renewed Israel. The... community of the disciples with its exceptional style of life, was intended to attract attention, like a city set upon a mountain top to a lantern in a dark place. It had a mission to remind the rest of the people of the transcendent value of the kingdom of God to which the disciples bore witness. It was therefore important for them to adopt a manner life that would make no sense apart from their intense personal faith and God’s providence and his fidelity to his promises.⁷

This discipleship model of church described by Dulles could to some extent be labelled as the missional model. While this missional model understands and incorporates the view of the church as gathered, it is a model that functions as a corrective to with its emphasis on the people of God being formed as a scattered, missionary people. It therefore has integrated

⁶ Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1978)42.

⁷ *ibid.*, 209.

discipleship and missionary aspects. It is to this concept of the missional church that we now turn.

The Biblical and Theological Framework of the Missional Church

In order to examine the missional church, the theology and biblical evidence behind this paradigm must be viewed. Historically, the missional paradigm can be traced back to the modern missionary movement of the eighteenth century. However, for the focus of this work, the author will point primarily to key theological developments in the twentieth century that will lead to explaining the view of *missio dei*. It needs to be taken into account that this missional paradigm emerged from a particular context, which is to say that this should not exclude other expressions of missional Christianity which were active in other various contexts. However, the focus here will be in the context of theological developments in the twentieth century in Europe from a broadly Evangelical perspective.

In the nineteenth century, mission became aligned with Enlightenment views. According to Rodman, for “the first time in history [mission was not regarded as] God’s very own work but as a purely human endeavour. Thereafter a very anthropocentric theology emerged.”⁸ While this may not be applied to all nineteenth century mission, the move towards anthropocentrism in this context was notable. Further, “at times missions became completely divorced from its biblical and theological underpinnings and was identified with Western imperialism and colonialism”.⁹ It was in this context where mission was being interpreted very anthropocentrically that Karl Barth in the early twentieth century, from a German theological context, expounded his view of *actio dei* which stated that mission was an activity of God himself. Barth believed that mission flowed from the nature of a Trinitarian God and was therefore prior to Jesus’ command in Matthew 28:19, a command which churches tended to pick up and use in order to advance the mission of the church. This reorientation by Barth

⁸ MacIlvaine W. Rodman, “What is the Missional Church Movement?” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167 (January-March 2010): 89-106, 94.

⁹ *ibid.*

grounded mission firmly in the nature of God rather than commencing from an anthropocentric viewpoint.¹⁰ This was developed in 1952 by Karl Hartenstein who spoke of mission as “participation in the sending of the son, in the *missio dei*, with an inclusive aim of establishing the Lordship of Christ over the whole redeemed creation”.¹¹ Most importantly, what was established was

a Trinitarian basis for mission by stressing that the missionary movement has its source in the Triune God. This represented a dramatic shift away from what has been primarily a church-centric view of mission based on a high Christology, one that became operational through the church’s obedience to the Great Commission.¹²

The notion of *missio dei* articulated by Hartenstein was therefore a crucial concept that began to form a missional theology. Mission was now founded in the nature of God and it was seen that God was on mission from the beginning of the world. “To fulfil that mission he engages in a series of sending acts. The Father sent the Son into the world at the incarnation (John 1:14). The Father guides the Son during his ministry (5:31). The Son sends the church into the world after His resurrection (20:21). The Son sent the Spirit into the world at Pentecost (14:16-17, Acts 2:1-4).”¹³ Here the rich Trinitarian, pneumatological and incarnational characteristics of missional theology can be seen. David Bosch says

Mission [is] understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It [is] thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine of the *missio dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit [is] expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.¹⁴

Chris Wright also sees that mission is in the very nature of God and identifies this clearly in his book *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* which depicts

¹⁰ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 390.

¹¹ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), Loc, 804, Kindle.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ Rodman, “What is the Missional Church Movement?” 96.

¹⁴ Lois Barrett, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), Loc 188, Kindle.

the story of God's mission in the universe as described in Scripture. Wright conveys that God can be seen to be on mission throughout the Bible and that it is not merely a human characteristic which is given to us by God. God is essentially missional by nature. He says,

The God revealed in the Scriptures is personal, purposeful and goal oriented. The opening account of creation portrays God working toward a goal, completing it with satisfaction and resting, content with the result. And from the great promise of God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 we know this God to be totally, covenantally and eternally committed to the mission of blessing the nations through the agency of the people of Abraham...From that point on, the missions of God could be summed up in the words 'God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year and as generations come and go'¹⁵

The view of the mission of God as stemming from his very nature and moreover the all-encompassing view of that mission, are clearly seen in this quote. This also leads Wright to say that mission is an activity of God rather than the church. He states:

Mission is not ours; mission is God's. Certainly, the mission of God is the prior reality out of which flows any mission that we get involved in. Or, as has been nicely put, it is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world but that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church, the church was made for mission- God's mission.¹⁶

Therefore, throughout Scripture, we see that mission is the overall purpose of God in the world reflecting his nature. Genesis 12:1 depicts a God who chooses individuals not for their own benefit but for the purpose of sending them on a mission that eventually brings blessing to the whole world (v3). In Isaiah 6:8, once again God is depicted as a God who chooses one person—in this case, Isaiah—to send him to his own people in order that they might hear clearly the purposes of God. The book of Isaiah continues with this theme in chapter 61 where the emphasis is on a prophet who is sent into the nations in order to bring God's restoration. The author declares, "[God has] sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the

¹⁵ Chris Wright, *The Mission of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 63.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 62.

prisoners” (61:1). In the New Testament, the word “send” or “sent” is used over sixty times. Many of these are clustered in the Gospel of John. This term is mostly used of the God who sends and of Jesus as the sent one.¹⁷

This leads Ross Hastings to say,

... the concept of the missional church is not a fad but is theologically foundational for the church...despite its semantic ambivalence, I deem it important to persist with the term missional for the simple reason that the majority of Western churches still need awakening to this core identity, with the caveat that the missional church as this concept is derived from the biblical account and the theological tradition of the church.¹⁸

Missional theology therefore helps to discern the nature of God but it also speaks into the truth about the identity of the church which leads to a missional ecclesiology. However, before the identity of the church is examined, the intersection of missional theology and the church as applied to our Western culture will be briefly analysed.

A key thinker who influenced missional theology helping the church to understand its core identity and purpose in the West was Lesslie Newbigin. Newbigin helped the church to realise not only that God in essence was missional but that the cultural context in the West had changed so that the term ‘mission’ needed to be applied in a different way. As missional theology is applied to the context of the West, this helps the church to realise the way that it needs to reposition itself in order to fulfil the purpose of God. Newbigin realised that the religious landscape had changed in the West. The West could no longer be considered Christian because it had entered a post-Christendom context.¹⁹ Being a missionary, he began to see that the notion of *missio dei* needed to be applied in the West in the same way that he applied this in the nation of India.

Bishop Newbigin and others have helped us to see that God’s mission is calling and sending us, the church of Jesus Christ, to be a missionary church in our own societies, in the cultures in which we find ourselves. These

¹⁷ Brad Brisco and Lance Ford, *Missional Essentials* (Kansas City: The House Studio, 2012), 11.

¹⁸ Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, Loc 434, Kindle.

¹⁹ Lois Barrett, et al, *Missional Church*, Loc 197, Kindle.

cultures are no longer Christian; some would argue that they ever were. Now, however their character as a mission field is so obvious as to need no demonstration. The issue for the Christian church is its faithful response to this challenge. But that is also its problem. Neither the structures nor the theology of our established western traditional churches is missional. They are shaped by the legacy of Christendom.²⁰

It is important to take note of this cultural analysis as missional theology is applied to the West because, as Hastings says, the church has yet to take ownership of its missional nature and because of this, many Christians do not see themselves as missionaries in their local contexts. Many Christians in the West might still think that mission is something that the church does overseas and that the missionary is someone who is especially called to go to another nation. In other words, Christians in the West still need to see themselves as missionaries in their local culture, as Newbigin did.

Missiologist George Hunsberger agrees with this. Speaking on the inadequacy of American missiology, he says:

We have failed to give clear cut attention to the development of a domestic, contextual missiology for our own North American setting. In its place has grown an implicit, functional missiology suffering from a lack of scrutiny. In most of our churches, ask what people think about 'mission', and immediately you get responses about 'people over there' in faraway places across the globe, people who have 'little to no knowledge' about Christ, among whom our missionaries are working to bring the light of the gospel. Shift the focus by saying, 'No, I mean local mission right here'. Now what you hear about are benevolent projects for helping the poor and disadvantaged. Again you say, 'But what about evangelising your own community?' Then the conversation shifts to the ways the church is seeking to attract, gain and retain new members.²¹

Many Christians in the West do not see that their local context is a mission field or that due to the post-Christendom posture of the West, each Christian is now a missionary. Moreover, descriptions of mission in a local context are sometimes phrased more in terms of what the institution of the church is doing such as "helping the poor" or seeking to attract people into the church; terms which show symptoms of an extractive approach. Engaging in

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ George Hunsberger, ed., 'The Newbigin Gauntlet: Developing a Domestic Missiology for North America', *The Church Between Gospel and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996) 4.

mission in a local Western context, then, seems to mean either a focus on acts to help the marginalised or engaging in an attractional model which seeks to bring in those outside the boundaries of the church. It is clear, then, that a missional theology is important because it explains the nature of God, but it is also crucial because it encourages the church to see its true identity as missional in nature and therefore for each Christian to see themselves as missionaries. This applied theology is important in the West where the church has been marginalised.

The true identity of the church, if it reflects the missional nature of God, leads to the development of a missional ecclesiology. Hastings says, “What ails the contemporary church is forgetting the essential theology that determines its ecclesiology, the theology of the *missio dei*... It gets us back to the basic understanding that the church is a sent community because it is the community of the sending triune God”.²² A missional ecclesiology which focuses on the idea of a sending church helps to inform a model for the spiritual formation of missional Christians.

The idea that God is a sending God who sends his people into the world is based on John 20:21 where Jesus says, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” In this one verse, it can be seen that the missional nature of God, expressed through the sending of his Son into the world, is linked to the Son sending the people of God, the church, into the world in the same manner. It could be said that here the Son is commissioning the church, defining the church as sent and describing the manner in which the people of God are sent. ‘With this statement, Jesus is doing much more than drawing a vague parallel between his mission and ours. Deliberately and precisely he is making his mission the model for ours, saying, “As the

²² Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, Loc 1134, Kindle.

Father has sent me, I am sending you”. Therefore, our understanding of the church’s mission must flow from our understanding of Jesus’ mission.’²³

This perspective sees the church as missionary by its very nature and each member as a missionary in their local context. This means that rather than the church viewing itself as attractational in essence, or as drawing people in, its basic impulse is to go out into the world, commissioned by God for the sake of the restoration of the world. George Hunsberger says that we need to critically ask the question “What is the shape of the church today?” and that as this is examined its purpose can be thought through more carefully.²⁴ He states that the church has taken from its Reformation heritage an understanding that it is “a place where certain things happen.”²⁵ In other words, the church is a place where people go in order to hear preaching, to receive the sacraments, and to engage in worship. Hunsberger states, however, that a consumerist mentality has crept into the contemporary church whereby the church sees itself as a vendor of spiritual goods and services. Therefore a church is the place that a Christian goes to in order to get their spiritual needs met. The emphasis is on the gathered church that assembles at a particular place and time in order to receive benefits. This view of the church as vendor of spiritual goods and services also means that the church contains programmes that are offered to church members that members can choose from depending on their tastes and inclinations. If a church member does not like the programmes offered at a particular church, they are free to “shop” for better services at other churches which are in a position to offer them. This institutionalised and consumerist view of the church reflects the common problem that the church tends to view itself as an institution which exists for the benefit of its own members.

The contrast to this is when the church sees itself as missional by its very nature.

Borrowing from David Bosch, Hunsberger describes the church as “a body of people sent on

²³ Brad Brisco and Lance Ford, *Missional Essentials*, 11.

²⁴ George Hunsberger, ‘Sizing up the Shape of the Church’, *The Gospel between Church and Culture*, 337.

²⁵ *ibid.*

a mission”.²⁶ This view emphasises the scattered element of the church in that each member of the church does not cease to “be the church” when the church is not gathered. All members, in other words, see themselves as missionaries. This does not mean that the gathered element of the church is unimportant, but that when the church gathers, it does not do so for its own sake but in order to equip the members for mission as they leave to go into the world to be on God’s mission. This is an elaboration of the idea that the people of God are priests and possess a catholic identity which is reinforced through practices such as Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, that are practices which send the church out on mission. The church, then, is a gathered and scattered people who, knowing they are defined as “sent”, live for the sake of joining with God on his mission in his world. This causes a shift in the church’s posture from recruitment to mission:

The two words move in opposite directions. Recruitment is the orientation inherent in the vendor church, which tries to attract people to be regular and committed consumers of its programs and services- that is, to be satisfied customers. Mission moves in an opposite direction. It moves outward. It is concerned about giving the gospel away not getting people in.²⁷

This has an effect on the formation of the members of the church. Members no longer see that the point of the church is to gather in order to receive spiritual goods and services but rather that each person is being formed as a missionary on God’s mission. Hunsberger points to the shift from program to embodiment that needs to occur in a missional church:

It makes a difference whether a church is oriented toward producing programs and services for potential consumers, or whether it is committed to cultivating habits of life that help us be faithful to the gospel together. The latter focuses attention on how we embody the gospel and how we make it light, salt, seed and aroma for the world around us... programs are not for consumption but for growth.²⁸

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*, 345.

²⁸ *ibid.*, 344.

Therefore, when the church, reflecting the missional nature of God, understands its missionary nature, this affects the discipleship process. Such a church develops practices that help the scattered church embody the gospel. As Hunsberger says, this means “cultivating habits of life that help (the church) be faithful to the gospel”. One important element of that faithfulness is to be missionaries in a local context.

According to missional theologians, this aspect of an embodied discipleship process or formation process is a crucial aspect of missional ecclesiology. In *Missional Church*, the authors point to several characteristics of missional ecclesiology stemming from the church understanding itself as missionary by nature. One characteristic is that a missional ecclesiology can be practiced or translated to practice.

The basic function of all theology is to equip the church for its calling. If that calling is fundamentally missional, then what we understand and teach about the church will shape God’s people for their faithful witness in particular places. A missional ecclesiology serves the church’s witness as it “make disciples of all nations... teaching thee to obey everything that I (Jesus) have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).²⁹

This is to say that spiritual formation practices can be developed for a people of God in order to shape them into missional Christians. Craig Van Gelder also points to this shaping process, rightly attributing this formation to the work of the Holy Spirit. He states that “the missional church needs to understand that the Holy Spirit cultivates communities that represent the reign of God”.³⁰ He argues that the Holy Spirit is not only the creator and the one who shapes the missional church, but also that he is active in our world being the source of all life. Both aspects are important in a missional church paradigm. He says, “The Spirit gifts and empowers these communities to accomplish this task, helping them to focus on specific ecclesial practices that demonstrate Gods intent for all creation.”³¹ These practices must be ones that the Holy Spirit works through in order to shape the people of God into missionaries.

²⁹ Lois Barrett, et al *Missional Church*, Loc 319, Kindle.

³⁰ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile., *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Loc 1204, Kindle.

³¹ *ibid.*, Loc 1213, Kindle.

Some specific missional practices will be designed in chapter four of this work as an aspect of this project.

It is therefore the case that if God is missional by his nature and if the church reflects this nature, the people of God will view themselves as missionaries sent into their local context for the sake for the world. The church must therefore counter its perception that it is a “vendor of spiritual goods and services” by engaging the people of God with spiritual formation practices that fit a missional ecclesiology and emphasise the scattered church element rather than the gathered church. This does not mean that the gathered church is not important but that scattered church practices also need to be seen as crucial for the development of a missional people of God.

Four Theological Characteristics of a Missional Ecclesiology

A missional ecclesiology which outworks itself as missional church practices for a people of God must stem from a missional theology. While an overview of missional theology has already been given in this chapter, a more focused theological and biblical assessment of some key characteristics of missional theology must be undertaken. These characteristics can be developed and practically applied as specific practices in this project for the members of CLCC. These practices will be the basis for a spiritual formation model for the members of a missional church.

Kenosis as a Missional Characteristic

One characteristic of a missional theology that may not be immediately apparent is that it manifests a kenotic element when applied to a missional ecclesiology. It is possible that it is not apparent because this characteristic is so all-embracing, foundational and crucial for a missional posture. This is why this characteristic will be addressed first, as without this

characteristic, it is impossible for the people of God to see themselves as missionaries to their local context.

The word *kenosis* is found in Philippians 2:7 referring to how Jesus “emptied himself” and willingly chose to become a servant by limiting his divine glory and becoming human. Jesus engaged in “self emptying” in order to become human so that he would be able to serve humanity through dying on a cross for the glorification of God. Four aspects of this self emptying or *kenosis* can be pointed to in Philippians 2:6-8.³² Firstly, it can be seen that the Son voluntarily chose to humble himself and engage in *kenosis*. That “he emptied himself” (v. 7) implies a voluntary act that was chosen by Christ rather than something that was forced upon him. Secondly, the *kenosis* implies a self-giving; an emptying of self-focused desires and instead taking on the posture of a servant. Thirdly, the passage refers not to one act of *kenosis* on the cross but of three actions. In verse 3, it can be seen that the Son refused to take advantage of his divinity; in verse 7, the Son takes on the nature of a human being, and in verse 8 he died on a cross. These are three separate steps in which the Son engaged for the process of *kenosis* to be complete. Fourthly, Jesus’ kenotic act was based on obedience to the Father and we can see this in verse 8 when he “became obedient to the point of death”. Jürgen Moltmann points to the self-emptying of God in this passage and says:

Following Philippians 2, Christian theology speaks of the final and complete self-humiliation of God is man and in the person of Jesus. Here God in the person of the Son enters into the limited, finite situation of man. Not only does he enter into it, descend into it, but he also accepts it and embraces the whole of human existence with his being. He does not become spirit so that man must first soar to the realm of the spirit in order to participate in God... he lowers himself and accepts the whole of mankind without limits and conditions, so that each man may participate in him with the whole of his life.³³

³² Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 91.

³³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 276.

This passage points to the truth that God, in essence, is a cruciform God who exhibits *kenosis* as a core characteristic as part of his nature.

It is therefore the case that *kenosis* is not something that God merely does but rather it is something that he is. God is a God who is cruciform or kenotic. Kenosis flows from the divine triune identity in which God is an interpersonal communion of love. This is poetically summed up by Ross Hastings who points to the eternal wounds of Christ from the cross.

When the Lamb is worshipped in heaven, it is perpetually depicted as freshly slain (Rev 5:6). The wounds of Christ, it would seem, will be a source of wondering adoration throughout eternity, in the new creation, and, no wonder, for they are the source of reconciliation and renewal of that creation. That at the heart of the reconciliation of all things is the Son of God slain is evidence enough that this is at the heart of God's intentions for the universe he created.³⁴

If the wounds of Christ are everlasting and a source of adoration then it could be said that the nature of God is kenotic. The Trinitarian God gave himself up by becoming human and dying on a cross and this shows his kenotic nature. Moreover, God's nature cannot be separated from his acts and therefore if God engaged in cruciform acts through his becoming human and dying on a cross, this reveals his nature. Gorman states: "thus if the cross is theophanic, God must be understood as essentially cruciform"³⁵ and "*kenosis* and crucifixion are intimately expressive of the *missio dei* in the world because divine being and act are inseparable."³⁶

God's very nature is kenotic, however it is also the case that the people of God must reflect this nature and the church must develop into a cruciform community. Only in this way will the people of God live for the sake of the world as missionaries to their local context. David Bosch says, "The scars of the risen Lord do not only prove Jesus' identity, however, they also constitute a model to be emulated by those he commissions "As the Father has sent

³⁴ Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, Loc 3021, Kindle.

³⁵ Michael Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification and Theosis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 33.

³⁶ *ibid.*, 38.

me so I send you”³⁷ This notion of modelling the *kenosis* of Jesus is also seen in Philippians 2 where Paul writes of Christ’s *kenosis* but prefaces it by saying “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” (v5). In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said that in order for a person to find their life they would need to lose it by taking up the cross and engaging in self-denial (9:23-24). This is the process of *kenosis* to which Philippians 2 refers, however here Jesus is saying that he expects the same of his followers. Ron Clarke points out that as Luke was writing for the context of the early church, this would have acted as a reminder to them to keep focused on the selfless life of Jesus. This would encourage the early church as they were persecuted for their beliefs. He says, “Luke reminded (the early church) that carrying the cross to Jerusalem meant fully embracing Jesus’ ministry... by setting his face to the city he proved to his disciples, as well as the readers that discipleship calls for courage, vision and conviction.”³⁸ It is clear that if God is kenotic then he wants his people to be kenotic also.

Kenosis in practice for the people of God has three elements. Firstly, it is not something that is done once but rather is a life of cruciformity. Michael Gorman constructs an argument around the concept of the narrative of the cross that can be seen in the life of Paul.³⁹ Gorman states that Paul saw himself as a slave to Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:19; 2 Corinthians 4:5) who lived a life of cruciformity. Paul sought to emulate this in that his life would tell the story of the cross. Paul’s spirituality was a narrative spirituality that told a story about *kenosis*. Gorman contends that it is best, in terms of spiritual formation, not to refer to the imitation of Christ but rather to living a life of cruciformity.⁴⁰ Gorman states, “Cruciformity is an ongoing pattern of living in Christ and of dying with him that produces a Christ-like (cruciform) person. Cruciform existence is what being Christ’s servant, indwelling him and being indwelt

³⁷ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 514.

³⁸ Ron Clarke, *Jesus Unleashed* (Oregon, Eugene: Cascade, 2013), Loc 4163, Kindle.

³⁹ Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*, 30.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 48-49.

by him, living with and for and “according to” him, is all about, for both individuals and communities.⁴¹

In this sense, one can speak of a continual kenosis occurring in the Christian’s life. Since the Christian has been co-crucified with Jesus (Galatians 2:19, Romans 6:6), the life of a Christian is about self-emptying and posturing oneself as a servant of God and others. This counters the practice of dualism that sometimes occurs in the life of a Christian whereby spiritual acts might be performed but do not produce inner transformation of the heart. A life of cruciformity makes this impossible.

We often prefer both to compartmentalise and to routinize our lives, not only in terms of inconsequential habits but also in terms of our spirituality. It is not uncommon for people, though perhaps not consciously or deliberately, to separate their ‘spiritual’ or religious beliefs and practices from their behaviour... Cruciformity does not permit any of this... Each Christian can therefore ask ‘In what part of my life story is the story of the cross not being told?’⁴²

Kenosis keeps the people of God accountable to living a life of the cross as opposed to merely doing acts which are seen to be good. In this way, the Christian community transforms into not only a cruciform community but also into a contrast community in that *kenosis* is a value that is counter to the values of this world. Gorman points to this value of *kenosis* as applied to the time that the apostle Paul was writing saying:

Cruciform holiness stands in marked contrast to key Roman values (which can infiltrate the body of Christ), especially those values associated with the libertine and status seeking lifestyle of the elite, and those related to the power and domination predicted of imperial divinity. This cruciform holiness means in sum, becoming like Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son and thus also becoming like God- For God is Christlike “You shall be cruciform, for I am cruciform”⁴³

This is also applicable to Christianity today as the people of God seek to be counter to this culture which relies on status and pride for its *raison d’être*.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*, 382.

⁴³ Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 124.

Secondly, living a cruciform life involves suffering in the life of a Christian. Cruciformity meant that Jesus lived a life of suffering not only in his death but also in his conflicts with and persecution by the authorities of his day. If the people of God forgo their comforts and live for the sake of proclaiming Christ and glorifying God, this will lead to difficulties. We not only see this in the life of Jesus but also of Paul. David Bosch says, “For Paul suffering is not just something that has to be endured passively because of the onslaughts and oppositions of the powers of this world but also, and perhaps primarily, as an expression of the church’s active engagement with the world for the sake of the world’s redemption. Suffering is therefore a mode of missionary involvement.”⁴⁴ This last statement is crucial in terms of understanding the paradigm of missional ecclesiology. To be missional is to endure suffering as Jesus did. This can clearly be seen in the theology of Paul in Galatians 6:17 where he speaks of having the marks of Christ and in 2 Corinthians 1:5 where he states that it is expected that all who follow Christ will share in the sufferings of Christ. This theology of suffering is seen in Colossians 1:24 where Paul mysteriously states that he is somehow “completing” the sufferings of Christ and he lives out his life as a cruciform Christian.

Thirdly, living a cruciform life means a redefining of the notion of power. In Philippians 2:6-7, it is clear that God is a God who, rather than exerting his power, manifests power through weakness. Cruciformity redefines power such that status, privilege and rights become questionable uses of power and notions such as weakness, humility and service are affirmed instead. Gorman states:

This opening verse (Philippians 2:6) sets up a contrast between normal expectations of deity and Christ’s actual actions, which are narrated in the following two verses (2:7-8) as a two stage self-emptying or kenosis in incarnation and obedient death by crucifixion.... although normal human expectations would be for a God to exercise power and privilege, to seek status and honour and to perpetually ‘climb upward’ as proofs of divinity, this ‘form of God’ did just the contrary.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 177.

⁴⁵ Gorman, *Inhabiting a Cruciform God*, 122.

In the unexpected actions of God through the incarnation and the crucifixion, the definitions of power according to the world are redefined within the framework of cruciformity. This redefinition of power has practical consequences for the way that Christians live their lives. If God has redefined power, every person must steward the power they have, then the Christian must practice this power in its redefined form.

Gorman points to three consequences of the experience of power as weakness in daily life.⁴⁶ He states firstly that the experience of power is no longer limited to the powerful. Normally, the view of power is that only powerful people can exert it. However, with power redefined through the cruciform God, any person can exert power since weakness is a trait of this redefined form of the concept. Secondly, he states that “normal” experiences of power prove to be something else, and thirdly, that experiences of weakness can in fact be experiences of God’s power. This latter point is crucial since it is the normative way that Christians must be thinking about and experiencing power. Power is characterised by weakness in a cruciform life. This subversive way of viewing power from a Christ perspective to be sure, is counter the culture and can be misinterpreted to function as a way to control or dominate. This occurrence is obviously a perversion of power that does not belong to a Christian framework. However, the concept of power through weakness as described here must not be watered down due to distortions of this theological truth.

It is clear then that God is a God who is cruciform by his nature. Not only is it the case that God is kenotic but Christians are challenged to become a kenotic community practicing cruciformity. This cruciformity will be practiced daily as a lifestyle, it will inevitably produce suffering in the life of the Christian, and will challenge the Christian to use power differently to the way that the world uses power. Cruciform power is seen through the incarnation and crucifixion of God. As the missional church orients itself around joining the *missio dei* rather

⁴⁶ Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 397.

than existing for itself, this manifests in a cruciform existence. A missional church will have a “*kenotic*, submissive character reflective of the King”.⁴⁷

The Characteristic of Incarnational in a Missional Church

The *missio dei* is expressed supremely through the act of God becoming human through the Son Jesus in the incarnation. The Son is sent by the Father into the world in order to redeem the world and bring restoration according to God’s mission. This has already been referred to through the exegesis of Philippians 2. In this passage it was clear that Jesus practiced *kenosis* through his incarnation and crucifixion. Therefore it could be said that because of God’s kenotic nature, this leads to his practice of incarnation as a missional strategy in order to redeem the world.

The incarnation is expressed most radically and succinctly in John 1:14: “the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.” The expression that the “Word became flesh” is uncompromising in its declaration about the strategy that God took in order to communicate with his world. In this act, God gave up the privilege that belonged to him and lowered himself to the status of a human being in order to connect with the world. D. A Carson points to the finality of the declaration of this verse and says, “If the evangelist had only said that the eternal Word assumed manhood or adopted the form of a body, the reader steeped in the popular dualism of the Hellenistic world might have missed the point. But John is unambiguous, almost shocking in the expression he uses: the Word became flesh.”⁴⁸ This incarnational act is made even more intimate and personal through the phrase “lived among us”. The Greek word here is *skenoō* which means ‘to pitch a tent’. This has connotations of the time that Israel was wandering in the desert and the place to meet God was in the tabernacle before the temple was built. In Exodus 25:8, God commands, “Then have them

⁴⁷ Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, Loc 4041, Kindle.

⁴⁸ Don Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: MI, Eerdmans, 1991), 126.

make a sanctuary for me and I will dwell among them”. In John 1:14, God is conveying that not only does he through *kenosis* engage in the act of incarnation, but he also engages with humanity in an even more personal way; that is, by ‘dwelling’ with humanity. Eugene Peterson puts this poetically in *The Message* translation: “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into our neighbourhood.” This act of God entering human existence is a central and crucial theme in Christianity which cannot be overstated. C. S. Lewis said, “The central miracle asserted by Christians is the incarnation. They say that God became man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this.”⁴⁹

Darrell Guder adds another dimension to the fact that God put on flesh through the act of incarnation. He states about John 1:14, “With this statement the evangelist created a powerful picture of God moving into the flesh... The thrust of this imagery is missional.”⁵⁰ For Guder, it is not only true that God put on flesh but that this act was a missional act in the sense that God was exhibiting his missional nature through it. Through the Father sending his Son into the world by incarnating, God’s missional nature and purposes in the world is revealed. This is a helpful thought because it conveys a rationale for (or at least an impulse behind) the incarnation and connects this with God’s missionary nature.

Guder builds on this and gives a rationale for the concept of “incarnational mission” which connects the act of God’s incarnation with the mission of the church. That is, if God practiced incarnation then so must his community the church. Guder explains, “By incarnational mission I mean the understanding and practice of Christian witness that is rooted in and shaped by the life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.”⁵¹ By understanding incarnational mission, the church can use this as a framework for understanding its missionary purpose. The people of God continually incarnate the gospel as

⁴⁹ C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 112.

⁵⁰ Darrell Guder, *Incarnation and the Church’s Witness* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 2.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, xii.

the gospel is lived out in the world and as they do this they witness to a world the evidence for God manifest through Jesus Christ's incarnation. Guder says, "... the entire community is defined as a witnessing community, its impact upon the world into which it is sent is observable witness, all its activities are in some way a form of witness-demonstration of the gracious rule of the risen Lord."⁵² For Guder, then, the link between God's incarnation and the church's practice of incarnation as a missional practice is clear.

There have however been critiques of this concept of incarnational mission. Some express concern that the term "incarnational mission" can have the effect of marginalising and sidelining the supreme incarnation of Jesus Christ. Incarnational mission could have the mistaken implication and connotation of a Christian becoming incarnate as God became incarnate. Graham Hill says:

[The term] runs the risk of diminishing the value and biblical appreciation of Christ's incarnation; it fails to see that the doctrine of the incarnation is as much about the union of the divine Jesus with human nature as it is about the mission of the Son; it does little more than the words contextual or inculturation but is more theologically fraught; it is sometimes used as a rhetorical device to suggest that people are doing mission 'in the way of Jesus' when they may well not be; and it underestimates the vast limitations to the analogy being drawn.⁵³

Nevertheless, if the term incarnational mission is qualified and explained then there does not need to be an issue with its usage. Michael Frost summarises these qualifications (borrowing from Ross Langmead) saying that incarnational mission means "1) being patterned on the incarnation, 2) being enabled by the continuing power of the incarnation, 3) joining the ongoing incarnational mission of God."⁵⁴ Incarnational mission does not mean that Christians can become incarnate as the Son uniquely became incarnate, but rather it is an invitation for the people of God to pattern their lives on the incarnation and participate in the mission of

⁵² *ibid.*, 6.

⁵³ Graham Hill, *Salt, Light and a City: Introducing Missional Ecclesiology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2012), Loc 7077, Kindle.

⁵⁴ Michael Frost, *Incarnate* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press), Loc 1130, Kindle.

God on earth. It is a call to imitate Christ's kenotic lifestyle on earth through witness and embodying the gospel.

Ross Hastings states that incarnational mission has several implications. Firstly, the gospel is justified as holistic therefore an unhealthy dualism between spirit and matter is nullified. Secondly, there must now be the "solidarity of the Christian with all humanity in light of the fact that through the incarnation God became a neighbour to all humanity".⁵⁵ Thirdly, contextualisation becomes a legitimate way of applying the gospel in different situations. Fourthly, the church must then be committed to being the church in a localised manner. As the people of God embody the gospel and incarnational mission is activated, the broader community sees the witness of the church as the hermeneutic of the gospel.

Therefore the people of God are to imitate the kenotic act of the incarnation of God in their daily lives by embodying the gospel. This sets a pattern of imitation and practice for the Christian so that the people of God become a witnessing community to the world. Here is where discipleship and mission merge. Guder states, "We are called to join the disciples in the school of Jesus as his apostolic community to witness to him throughout the world our calling is carried out as we 'embody', 'incarnate' this good news in our forgiveness, our hope, our openness to all people and our confidence in God's grace."⁵⁶ The gospel is not primarily convincing through doctrinal propositions. If this were the case then God would have come in the form of a set of statements written in a book. Rather, God came to the world in the form of a human being. In this sense, as the people of God act out their missionality, they convey the gospel through embodying that gospel. Guder puts it well:

The centrality of the community to the gospel means that the message is never disembodied. The word must always become flesh, embodied in the life of the called community. The gospel cannot be captured adequately in propositions, or creeds or theological systems...the gospel dwells in and shapes the people who are called to be its witness. The message is

⁵⁵ Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, Loc 2257, Kindle.

⁵⁶ Darrell Guder, *Incarnation*, 19.

inextricably linked with its messengers. If there is good news in the world, then it is demonstrably good in the way that it is lived out by the community called into its service. The early church in Jerusalem lived in such a way that they had ‘the goodwill of all the people’ (Acts 2:47).

The early church embodied the gospel of Jesus and as they did so this is how the community responded to the Christians of that day. Acts 2:43-47 states that the Christian community shared their possessions and sold their personal goods and distributed to the poor thus putting into practice Jesus’ caution about greed (Luke 18:24). They broke bread and praised God. Moreover, miracles took place as they gathered in community. As the early Christians gathered together and as they embodied the gospel proclaimed to them by Jesus, the broader community responded to them. In his ministry, Jesus paid attention especially to the poor and the marginalised. He encouraged his followers also to do the same (Luke 14:13). The early church practiced this also and embodied the gospel that was a gospel for the poor and the outcasts. Various specific examples of this can be shown in the New Testament. A unique example is the apostle Paul who in Acts 20:33-35 conveys that one of his practices was to help the weak. The reason that he did this was to embody the words of Jesus: “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (v35).⁵⁷

This witness practiced by the early Christians had the effect of being missional as people saw the gospel embodied and then came to also believe and belong to the people of God. Guder argues that the incarnational approach to church, which emphasises a missional paradigm, contrasts with the institutional church that tends to try to bring the gospel under its control.⁵⁸ Guder states that the incarnational life of Jesus was often misinterpreted in Christendom, which tended to tone down the radical message of Jesus (as seen, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount). Hill (quoting Guder) says this is why incarnational mission is so important for discipleship in post-Christendom and Guder believes that “the essential

⁵⁷ Johnson, Luke Timothy, *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), Loc 1681, Kindle.

⁵⁸ Guder, *Incarnation*, 25.

character of the incarnation as the definition of Christian existence was largely diluted for the majority of Christendom.”⁵⁹ Incarnational mission can highlight to the people of God that the imitation of Jesus’ life is crucial for the gospel to be conveyed. This is opposed to a more institutional approach that, as Guder states, tries to make the gospel more manageable.

Instead, Guder states that as missional Christians, the most important impulse that shapes the community of Christ is that of embodied love. Jesus embodied love through service and compassion towards humanity as he ministered on earth, and Christians are to do the same. Guder states, “The most comprehensive imperative in Jesus’ formation of the missional church is the command to love... as they (disciples of Jesus) learn to practice the love taught and demonstrated by Jesus, they begin the incarnational mission of the church.”⁶⁰ Jesus’ great commandment in Mark 12:29-31 focuses on the dual aims of loving God then loving others. As the people of God love God then orient themselves outwards and love others, the way in which the people of God can love others is the way of Christ, that is, by embodying that love. The way that the world will witness the love of Jesus is if they see a community; that is, God’s people embodying the love of God as they perform acts of kindness and justice in the world. If this does not occur then the world does not know in a fleshed-out way what the love of God ought to look like in practice.

This embodied love can be seen in various passages in scripture. In 1 Thessalonians 1, we see that the Apostles worked hard to build the church at Thessalonica. As they did this, the church became imitators of the apostles and engaged in a “labour of love” (v3, 6). Paul writes, “So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our very own selves, because you have become very dear to us” (2:8). In this way as the apostles shared their lives with the people at Thessalonica and embodied the love of God, the church imitated this and also incarnated the gospel. Guder says, “The apostolic

⁵⁹ Hill, *Salt, Light and a City*, Loc 6825, Kindle.

⁶⁰ Guder, *Incarnation*, 40.

witness was never a disembodied word, it was always the incarnation of the love that was uniquely and finally incarnated in Jesus Christ for the salvation of all”.⁶¹

This embodiment of the gospel can also be seen in 1 Peter. Peter exhorts the church that as “aliens” and “exiles” (2:11) they are to engage in the twofold act of abstaining from doing wrong but also living well among the people of the community (v12). As the people of God do this, the community will “glorify God” (v12). This letter is an example of the church being encouraged to live lives as God’s witnesses embodying the gospel. As they practice this discipleship they become missional and bear the love of God to the broader community. This kind of witness is not easy as it involves discipline (1:13) and suffering (2:21), however it is in accord with the incarnational ministry of Jesus as he was sent by the Father into this world.

As the kenotic God practices incarnation in order to redeem a lost humanity, the church can imitate this to some extent. As the people of God ‘embody’ or ‘incarnate’ the gospel, the world witnesses a community of embodied love and therefore is able to see what the gospel looks like in practice.

The Trinitarian Characteristic of a Missional Church

The notion of the *missio dei* is inherently Trinitarian. David Bosch has been quoted as saying that the doctrine of the *missio dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit, extends to include then the Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world. Another core characteristic, then, of missional theology that affects missional ecclesiology is that it is Trinitarian.

Even though the word “Trinity” does not appear in the Bible, the Triune nature of God can be seen in Scripture. The economic nature of the Trinity—that is, the various roles that each person in the Godhead plays which displays the acts of God in the world—can be seen in

⁶¹ Guder, *Incarnation*, 45.

passages such as John 20:21. Specifically, it can be seen here that God the Father sends the Son into the world and then God the Son sends the church into the world. In verse 22, the Son also sends the Spirit to his church to empower them for this mission.

In John 16, the various roles of the Trinity can be seen. Jesus says that he is going to the Father so that the Advocate will come (v. 10). Moreover, the Disciples will suffer persecution because the persecutors have not known the Father or the Son (v. 3). However, Jesus will ask the Father and he will give another helper that is the Spirit of truth (14:16-17). Evidence for the economic Trinity can also be seen in 1 Peter 1:2 which states that the people of God have been chosen by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus and to be sprinkled with his blood. There are roles within the Trinity and some of those roles seem to apply only to one person in the Trinity. For example, it was the Son who was sent into the world and crucified, not the Father or the Spirit. However, in other parts of scripture, the roles seem to merge and apply to various persons of the godhead. For example, Jesus is called our intercessor (e.g. Hebrews 7:25) yet in Romans 8:26 it is said that the Spirit intercedes for us. Ephesians 2:18 also implies Christ is the intercessor as the people of God can access the Father through Jesus “in one Spirit”. Even though the roles seem to merge somewhat, there are nevertheless defined roles stated in some instances and it is clear that God’s nature is not individualised but rather that there are three persons in the Godhead.

However, for missional theology, what is more interesting is the immanent Trinity which has been marginalised in missional ecclesiology due to the fact that the economic Trinity has been focused upon. This is due to the emphasis missional theology places on John 20:21 which explains the role of each person in the Trinity. Craig van Gelder, commenting on the view of the Trinity in typical missional literature, says, “This view of the Trinity... is rooted in the classic Western emphasis on the single divine substance of God and the separate

actions of the three persons in relation to the world.”⁶² According to Van Gelder, this has led to two problems. First, an inherent tendency towards modalism (God acting in three different modes) has occurred.. This has worked to marginalise the work of the Spirit. It was seen in most missional literature that the church was shaped by the message of Jesus and also that the church was empowered and shaped by the Spirit. However the integration of the two was not explained.⁶³ The second problem was that the economic Trinity was focused on, rather than the immanent Trinity, which draws attention to the inner life of the three persons. Once again this was due to an overly Western interpretation of the Trinity. However it is the immanent Trinity view that can contribute to the application of missional theology the most. Van Gelder explains: “The immanent Trinity is conceived as a relational community of equality and mutuality within which the distinctive identity of each person of the trinity is fully maintained as Father, Son and Spirit.”⁶⁴ The immanent Trinity has various helpful characteristics which can speak into a missional ecclesiology.

The immanent Trinity emphasises the dynamic and personality behind the three persons in the Godhead. That is, it interprets their relationship to one another and describes their interaction with one another. One way to describe the relationship of interdependence, mutuality and interpenetration within the Trinity is the term *perichoresis*. John Franke defines this term as

[the] mutual interdependence, even mutual interpenetration of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their Trinitarian relation with one another. It seeks to explain the nature of the divine life with the assertion that while the three members of the trinity remain wholly distinct from each other, they are also bound together, wholly interior to each other in such a way that the Father, Son and holy Spirit are dependent on each other for their very identities as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁶⁵

Miroslav Volf defines *perichoresis* as

⁶² Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Loc 1245, Kindle.

⁶³ *ibid.*, 1271.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 1283.

⁶⁵ John Franke, “God is Love” in *Trinitarian Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel Treier and David Lauber (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 116.

[referring to]... the reciprocal interiority of the Trinitarian persons. In every divine person as a subject, the other persons also indwell; all mutually permeate one another, though in so doing they do not cease to be distinct persons. In fact, the distinctions between them are precisely the presupposition of that interiority, since persons who have dissolved into one another cannot exist in one another. *Perichoresis* is ‘co- inherence in one another without any coalescence of commixture’⁶⁶

The perichoretic nature of the Godhead can be seen in various passages of Scripture. However one that stands out is Luke 10:21 in which Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit and gives thanks to the Father. Here is an example of the communication between the three persons resulting in the attribute and expression of joy within the Trinity. Mutuality, equality, and personal communication can be seen within the Godhead in this verse. Moreover, it can be seen in John’s Gospel that Jesus often refers to the interdependence and internality of the Trinity especially in John 10:38, 14:10-11 and 17:21. When Jesus says that “the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (10:38), the interdependence of the two persons, in this instance, can be seen.

If the perichoretic nature of the Godhead is true, then what must be identified is how this relates to the people of God and what relevance this has for ecclesiology. Leanne van Dyk says, “The Trinity *ad intra* is reflected not only by the Trinity *ad extra* in redemptive history but also by the embodied practices of the church.”⁶⁷ The economic Trinity and immanent are linked by the fact that God’s acts cannot contradict his nature. As God acts, so he is. The argument then flows that from the interiority of the Trinity based on mutuality, relationality and interdependence (*ad intra*), the Father sends the Son into the world who sends the Spirit (*ad extra*). This nature and act must be emulated in some way by the people of God.

It is clear from Scripture that not only is God a Triune God who displays a perichoretic nature, but also that God invites and welcomes his people to participate in the community between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Philippians 3:10, Paul states that he wants to know

⁶⁶ Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 209.

⁶⁷ Leanne van Dyk, “The Church’s Proclamation as a Participation in God’s Mission” in *Trinitarian Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel Treier and David Lauber (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 226.

Christ and the power of his sufferings and resurrection. This implies that participating with the acts of the second person of the Trinity is possible and even desirable for a person who knows Christ. Indeed, even knowing Christ implies a connectivity and a sense of sharing communion.

In 2 Corinthians 13:13, the blessing is that the love of God, the grace of Jesus and the communion of the Holy Spirit be present with the people of God. The idea that the Holy Spirit provides communion between the members of the Godhead and the members of the church is implied here as the church is seen to participate in this community. In 1 Corinthians 10:16, Paul says that as the people of God take the Lord's Supper, there is a "sharing in the blood of Christ". Once again, this active participation is described as sharing in the nature of Jesus. 1 Corinthians 1:9 also points to the "fellowship" that the people of God are called into with the Son. In John 17:21, Jesus not only speaks of the interpenetration between the Father and Son in the Godhead, but also states about those he is praying for that in the same way that the Father and Son are united that "they may be in us". Lastly, in Luke 10:21 in which we see the interaction between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, there is rejoicing in the Godhead not only based on the nature of the Godhead but also because the disciples have participated in the mission of God. The joy in within the Godhead seems to flow as the disciples participate in missional activity which stems from a missional God.

The fact that the Triune God welcomes his people to participate in the nature and acts of the Godhead is clear. The question, then, is: How does this participation with a perichoretic God affect ecclesiology? In other words, how must the people of God imitate the Triune nature of God? Colin Gunton asks the question in a more pertinent way: "Suppose, then, that we begin with the hypothesis that the sole proper ontological basis for the church is the being of God, who is what he is as the communion of Father, Son and Spirit. Where does that lead

us?”⁶⁸ Gunton’s complaint is that “the manifest inadequacy of the theology of the church derives from the fact that it has never seriously and consistently been rooted in a conception of the being of God as triune”.⁶⁹

If the nature of the triune God is taken seriously and then the people of God model their lives on this triune God then imitation of and participation in the life of the Trinity are crucial factors in this relationship. The people of God must be shaped by a triune God as opposed to a God who is alone and the people of God must also participate in the nature and activity of this God. This has some obvious limitations and cautions. Human beings cannot practice exactly the *perichoresis* occurring within the triune God. The relationship between the three persons moves in a perfect balance between self-definition and mutuality. Humans cannot model this perfectly. While Miroslav Volf agrees that the church can imitate and participate in the life of the triune God, he also points to several problems with applying this.⁷⁰

Volf reminds us that that the manner in which human beings conceive of God is not identical to God. Because God is essentially unknowable to the human, even though he has been revealed through Christ, this means that any human conceptions of the Trinity have their limitations. Volf says, “A certain doctrine of the Trinity is a model acquired from salvation history and formulated in analogy to our experience, a model with which we seek to approach the mystery of the triune God, not in order to comprehend God completely, but rather in order to worship God as the unfathomable and to imitate God in our own, creaturely way.”⁷¹ As a result it needs to be kept in mind that when words such as “person” or “community”, mutuality and relationality are used for the Trinity this is not the same as the manner in which these terms are used for describing the relationship between human beings. In short, there is a

⁶⁸ Colin Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 71.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 56. While Gunton’s comment here could be seen as extreme and overstated, the point that the West has marginalised the Triune aspect of God’s nature is a valid one.

⁷⁰ Miroslav Volf, *After our Likeness*, 198-22.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, 198.

serious limitation when applying the triune nature of God as a model for defining personhood in community.

Having given this qualification, this does not, however, mean that there is nothing that can be learnt from the Trinity in order to apply this knowledge to the people of God. As Gunton has said, Trinitarian theology has not been sufficiently applied to ecclesiology. This has impoverished the practices of the people of God. Ross Hastings has used the term '*missio trinitas*'⁷² to replace the word '*missio dei*' in order to highlight that it is the triune God who sends the church into the world on his mission. As the triune God, who is perichoretic in nature, sends the people of God into the world, this means that the church will be characterised by a relationality and missionality as they cooperate with God's purposes in the world. Gunton states that the main way in which the church can reflect the triune nature of God is through the practice of *koinonia*. He asks, "What then is it for the church to reflect, as part of the creation, the being of God? ... The answer lies in the word *koinonia*, perhaps best translated as community."⁷³

One characteristic of the Trinity is participation: the three persons participate in each other's lives. This is similar to Paul's view of the church as a body (1 Corinthians 12).⁷⁴ This practice of *koinonia* is most clearly seen in the early church through Acts. Acts 2:41-46 suggests the practice of *koinonia* was the norm for the early church. The church engaged in practices such as communion, praying together, sharing possessions and teaching. Bolsinger says,

Notice also that the first 'spiritual disciplines' were all communal ones. They did not race home, have a personal quiet time and give up smoking, but instead 'devoted themselves' to the 'apostles teaching' (shared beliefs),

⁷² Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, Loc 1134, Kindle.

⁷³ Gunton, *Trinitarian*, 72.

⁷⁴ David Cunningham, *These Three are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 168.

‘fellowship’ (shared relationships), ‘breaking of bread’ (shared meals), and ‘the prayers’ (shared spiritual life), all expressed in communal life together.⁷⁵

This kind of participation in the life of the Trinity counters the usual Western posture of individualism that permeates this culture. In this sense, living a Trinitarian life as the people of God is difficult as the culture in which we live is counter to this. David Cunningham says:

Modern individualism poses significant challenges for the Christian faith calling into question the ideal of mutual participation both within the believing community and within God. Christians have understood themselves as called into communion with each other because they bear the image of the triune God, consequently to raise doubts about the indispensability of the common life is to raise doubts about the Trinitarian conception of God.⁷⁶

Love cannot be displayed in isolation and God as three persons displays love. The people of God can imitate this by practicing *kenosis*, embodying love as they relate to one another and also to those outside the Christian community as missionaries.

It is in this sense that a Trinitarian theology redefines personhood as being relational and in community with others as opposed to the Western belief that the sole individual is the ultimate definition of personhood. Even though human beings cannot perfectly practice *perichoresis*, they can learn from this theological redefinition of personhood that must shape the missional practices of a church. Therefore it is the case that since God is Trinity and invites his people to participate with him in his nature and then on his mission, the people of God can imitate and participate in the life of the Trinity by practicing *koinonia*, and *koinonia* can be seen as a missional practice.

Pneumatology as a Characteristic of Missional Theology

⁷⁵ Tod Bolsinger, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian. How the Community of God Transforms Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 71.

⁷⁶ Cunningham, *These Three are One*, 171.

One factor that has been alluded to is that since missional theology did not focus adequately on the immanent Trinity and therefore had a tendency towards modalism, the emphasis on the Holy Spirit was marginalised or at least not well-defined. Even though missional theology attributes a role to the Holy Spirit in that the Son sends the Spirit into the world so that the Spirit can empower the people of God for mission, an inadequate emphasis on the Holy Spirit has occurred and instead a high Christology has been adopted at the expense of an adequate pneumatology. Hill states:

A worthwhile ecclesiology must integrate a theology of Christ and a theology of the Spirit. This is an important corrective for missional ecclesiology which often fails to systematically integrate Christological and pneumatological notions in its theology of the church and its mission. Ecclesiological conceptions of the church's community and mission must be shaped in the light of a theology of the Spirit.⁷⁷

Having said this, the emphasis in pneumatology as applied to missional theology has focused mostly on the Spirit at work in the church. This emphasis can also be seen in Craig Van Gelder's work *Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*. This book about developing a missional ecclesiology emphasises that the church is a creation of the Spirit and that the Spirit functions to recreate the church in order to guide it according to the purposes of God in the world. Van Gelder says, "The church is a creation of the Spirit. Every ecclesiology needs to account for the developmental character of the church as the ongoing creation of the Spirit."⁷⁸ He then emphasises that the Spirit is also responsible for the recreation of the church and that one way in which the people of God can keep attuned to this is through practicing discernment in order to see what God is doing by his Spirit in the church. He says, "The church can experience this constant renewal only by developing discipline in discerning the leading of the Spirit. Through such discernment, the church

⁷⁷ Hill, *Salt, Light and a City*, Loc 7567, Kindle.

⁷⁸ Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), Loc 658, Kindle.

becomes the primary means through which God answers its prayer that ‘thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven’ (Matthew 6:10).”⁷⁹

While it is certainly true that the church is a creation of the Spirit and is guided by, renewed and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be on God’s mission, it is also the case that the Spirit is active in the world and it is the responsibility of the people of God to discern the activity of the Holy Spirit in the world since they are carriers of the Spirit, and connect with what God is doing in the broader world. Van Gelder admits this inadequate doctrine of creation as applied to the missional church has led to a lack of emphasis on what the Holy Spirit is doing in the world. He points to the ambivalence that the church has toward creation:

Creation is viewed either as lacking God’s presence or as the mere object of missionary work. In either case, it is understood largely as being without God-given worth and agency. Most striking is the lack of imagination of the Spirit’s ongoing movement within creation, especially outside the church. A more robustly Trinitarian framework invites us into a deeper, more theological view of the world and God’s continuing work of creation within it.⁸⁰

And then he says, “The missional conversation would be well served by a more nuanced, fully Trinitarian doctrine of creation that stresses God’s presence through the Spirit.”⁸¹ Not only is a Trinitarian perspective needed, but a clearer pneumatology stemming from a foundational view of the Triune God.

If a doctrine of creation is applied to pneumatology then there are some consequences for the people of God who undertake a missional posture in the world. One implication is that it means that the work and activity of the Spirit is not simply to be found in the church but rather the whole world is a place in which to view the activity of the Spirit. If one takes a Trinitarian approach which focuses on the perichoretic nature of God, then it

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, loc 668, Kindle.

⁸⁰ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Loc 2404, Kindle.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, Loc 2410.

is clearly seen that God is continually in relationship with his created world. Discernment therefore

can no longer be merely an in house process when creation is understood to be infused with God's presence and activity. A much wider horizon of God's movement in and through so called secular space, people and culture is needed. The church does not have exclusive possession of God's presence and activity.⁸²

Therefore, the world is no longer a place where Christians simply 'go to' in order to engage in mission but rather a place where the people of God critically discern the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in order to join in with God's continuing work in the world.

The concern about a better missional pneumatology is also seen in Gary Tyra's work about the Holy Spirit on God's mission. In this work, Tyra focuses on the fact that it is the Spirit who sends and empowers people on the mission of God. As Christians are empowered by the Holy Spirit, they are then capable of working with God on his mission. This can be seen in John 20:22 when Jesus sends his disciples on mission but breathes the Holy Spirit on them for their enabling. Whether this is a foretaste of what is to come at Pentecost or not is not known, however it is clear that the Spirit is necessary for the disciples to receive if they are to be successful. Moreover, this is also seen in Acts 1:8 when Jesus tells his disciples to wait until they have received "power when the Holy Spirit [comes]" before they are to go into the world to be his witnesses. Tyra applies this biblical truth then to the paradigm of the missional church. He says, "Of special note is the fact that at the heart of the missional ministry impulse is the pneumatological question: What is the Holy Spirit up to in this or that ministry location and how might/should we cooperate with him?"⁸³

Tyra states that various missional theologians assume that the work of the Holy Spirit is important and crucial for a missional ecclesiology yet fail to describe what that missional pneumatology looks like. He mentions Alan Roxburgh: in *Introducing the Missional*

⁸² *ibid.*, Loc 2425.

⁸³ Gary Tyra, *The Holy Spirit in Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), Loc 162, Kindle.

Church, Roxburgh says, “We mean that the Spirit is actually at work in our ordinary, common lives”.⁸⁴ Tyra then asks for a more robust missional pneumatology to be developed in order for God’s people to discern the Spirit in order to be missionally faithful. He states that many authors speak of the Holy Spirit as active in Christian’s lives for mission, but then asks, “Does this not imply the need for a missional pneumatology – a theology of the Spirit in the West to respond to its increasingly post-Christian environment in a missionally faithful manner?”⁸⁵ While Tyra, focuses more on a pneumatology for the church, as many others also do, his view is helpful in that he sees that as the Holy Spirit empowers and guides the people of God, they can then better discern what the Holy Spirit is doing in the world. His view helps bridge the gap between Christians, who are carriers of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit who is active in our world. This is helpful because some missional theologians speak of discerning God’s Spirit in the world but do not convey how this is to happen.⁸⁶ However, Tyra says, “The process of ministry contextualisation should be said to involve a conversation with three entities not two: the biblical text, the cultural context and the Spirit of mission.”⁸⁷ If one applies this to a discernment process then it can be said that what is necessary for discerning the activity of God’s Spirit in the world is Scripture (or perhaps the Christian who is a carrier of the Spirit), the world, and the Holy Spirit.

This process of discernment is important for the scattered church. As the church gathers together regularly in the power of the Spirit, community is formed based on the nature of a triune God. Then when the people of God scatter, they practice discerning the activity of the Spirit in the world in order to connect with God’s mission. Two examples of the scattered church discerning the activity of God in the world from Scripture are Acts 8:26-40 and 10:1-33. In the first example, Philip notices that an unbeliever is reading

⁸⁴ Alan Roxburgh, *Introducing the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 122.

⁸⁵ Tyra, *Holy Spirit in Mission*, Loc 194, Kindle.

⁸⁶ See quote by van Gelder above, *The Missional Church in Perspective* Loc 2425, Kindle.

⁸⁷ Tyra, *Holy Spirit in Mission*, Loc 1424. Kindle.

Scripture (v. 28). It could be said therefore that the Spirit of God was already at work in some way in this unbeliever's life and Philip needed to discern that activity and connect. He does this when he approaches this person and engages in a conversation with him (v. 30). The second example tells the story of Cornelius who was a Gentile yet it can be seen that God was at work in his life (vv. 2, 4) to draw him into a relationship with Jesus. Peter the apostle needed to discern this activity of the Spirit and then act upon the promptings from God in order to convey the good news of the gospel. The Spirit is at work in the world drawing people to God and it is up to the people of God to discern that activity and join with God on his mission. Ross Hastings makes a good point in saying that Scripture reveals that God's Spirit is at work in every culture and says, based on Matthew 9:37-38, that the people of God are not to pray for the harvest since that is taken care of by God's constant activity in the world, but rather for workers in the harvest. Hastings says, "This has to do with the missions of the Son sent by the Father and of the Spirit, sent by the Father (and or through the Son)."⁸⁸ Since God is on mission in the world by his Spirit, Christians can assume that discerning that work and then engaging with it is a part of their missional identity. Hastings says, "The church and its members will work missionally in response to the leading and in participation with the preceding work of the Spirit in the world ahead of them."⁸⁹

The activity of the Spirit in the world is a focus for Patrick Oden who applies Jürgen Moltmann's pneumatology to the people of God. Interestingly, he links the mission of Christ with the mission of the Spirit which has the effect of highlighting the all-encompassing, continuing work of God in the world. He says, "The mission of the Spirit is the mission of Christ, which is the redemption and liberation of this whole world. Thus a holistic pneumatology has to, as Moltmann has shown, embrace all of life, in every sphere and in

⁸⁸ Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, Loc 684, Kindle.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, Loc 4255.

every direction”.⁹⁰ This link between the work of Jesus and the work of the Spirit is clear in Luke 4:18 where Jesus says that “the Spirit” has anointed him to be able to fulfil God’s purposes in the world such as bringing healing, release from oppression, and bringing good news to those who have not yet heard the good news. The all-encompassing work of Jesus occurs because of the Spirit who empowers him and is with him to engage in the mission of God.

A somewhat different approach than Oden is taken by Stephen Bevans who, while maintaining a Trinitarian focus regarding God’s activity in the world, highlights the primacy of the role of the Holy Spirit rather than emphasising Jesus over the activity of the Spirit. He refers to Elizabeth Johnson who believed that it is the Spirit whom the world knows first since he preceded Jesus. Then Bevans quotes John Taylor who said, “The Spirit needs to become ‘so central to our thoughts about God and about man that when the name ‘God’ is used our minds go first to the Spirit not last.”⁹¹ Bevans is not trying to place the work of the Spirit before the work of Christ as he does stay with a Trinitarian view of mission, however he is simply highlighting the importance of the Holy Spirit when applied to mission and the church. He says, “If the Spirit is the first way that God sends and is sent, the Spirit’s activity becomes the foundation of the church’s own missionary nature.”⁹²

He also makes an important point regarding the relationship between the Spirit and the church due to his emphasis on pneumatology, which perhaps other missional theologians do not identify. Instead of saying that the church is sent into the world, as others have stated, he says that the church is rather “God’s embrace of the world, an embrace made flesh in Jesus but accompanied already in the past, present and continuing presence of the Holy

⁹⁰ Patrick Oden, “Pneumatology; Jürgen Moltman and the Emerging Church in Conversation,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, no. 2 (2009): 276.

⁹¹ Stephen Bevans, “God Inside Out: Toward a Missionary Theology of the Holy Spirit,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22, no. 3 (1998): 102-5, 102.

⁹² *ibid.*

Spirit.”⁹³ Quoting Taylor again, he says, “Our theology would improve if we thought more of the church being given to the Spirit than of the Spirit being given to the church.”⁹⁴ It is therefore the case that the church’s role is to identify the pre-emptive work of the Spirit in the community of God’s people and in the world in order to cooperate with the redemptive purposes of God.

One last helpful contribution that Bevans makes in the discussion of a missional pneumatology is his focus on the ‘transcending immanence’ of God. According to Bevans, this means that “God is genuinely involved in the world and its history – ‘not existence over and against but with and for, not domination but mutual love emerges as the highest value as the Spirit of God dwells within and around the world with all its fragility, chaos, tragedy fertility and beauty’”.⁹⁵ This points to the relational nature of the Spirit and that he works in the world bringing God’s hope and life into it. The role of the people of God is to align with the imminent, edifying work of the Spirit and oppose anything that is contrary to the life-giving work of the Spirit.

A missional pneumatology is necessary for the people of God to participate in the mission of God in the world. While the Spirit is the creator of the church, he is also active in the world. As Christians are empowered and guided by the Spirit who is on the mission of the Father and Son, their role is to discern the relational and immanent activity of the Spirit in the world and then to engage with what God’s plan is in their particular contexts.

A Biblical and Theological basis for a Model of the Spiritual Formation of a Missional People of God

If a model for the spiritual formation of a missional people of God is to be designed then this model must emerge from Scripture and from a theological emphasis. The model according

⁹³ *ibid.*, 103.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 104.

to the above theological and biblical proofs, will have four elements. Firstly, the model will obviously display the characteristics of missional theology already outlined and found in Scripture. If the people of God are to be shaped into missionaries then they must be people who display *kenosis*, who are incarnational, and must model themselves after a God who is Triune in nature whose Spirit is active in the world. These characteristics have been discussed extensively above.

Secondly, the model will display practices for the formation of a missional people of God. The definition of spiritual formation by Greenman already quoted is that spiritual formation is “[our] continuing response to the reality of God’s grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world”.⁹⁶ Greenman emphasises that spiritual formation has a missional purpose—“for the sake of the world”. Greenman also states that this “involves a reciprocal dynamic between gathering and scattering, contemplation and action, silence and speech, being and doing, receiving and giving. Outward focused spiritual disciplines such as hospitality and works of mercy complement inward disciplines.”⁹⁷ This highlights that the people of God respond to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives by engaging in practices or disciplines that will shape them into God’s people. That is not to say that the practices form them into a people of God but that the practices are means that the Spirit can use in order to form God’s people. The notion of practices will be explored further in chapter four, however what needs to be shown in this chapter is a biblical basis for spiritual formation through intentional practices.

Greenman says that spiritual formation involves “our continuing response to the reality of God’s grace shaping us”. This means that there is some effort required on the part of the Christian to cooperate with God’s Spirit as he shapes us into the people of God. This

⁹⁶ Jeffrey Greenman, *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 24.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 27.

sense of effort or cooperation with God is a clear implication in Scripture if not an outright exhortation. Paul writes, “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God” (Romans 12:2). This implies a conscious, continual positioning of the Christian towards God’s ways. The word “mind” in the Greek is *nous* which means “mindset”, implying a system of beliefs and thoughts which affect practices. This implies that this renewing of the mind takes some effort on the part of the Christian so that the transformation towards God’s nature will take place.

This notion of intentional activity by the people of God in order for formation to happen is also seen in Colossians 3:5ff. Firstly, the people of God are to ‘put to death’ (v. 5) whatever is evil or against the nature of God in them. The illustration is that of a person who has taken off (and is taking off) old clothes that no longer fit the person due to having a new status (v. 9). Secondly, the exhortation is to then “clothe yourselves” (v. 12) with the practices that do belong to the kingdom of God and which are fit for a person that has been renewed in the image of God (v. 10). This is conveyed as an intentional and continual process for the people of God. It is implicit in this passage that the Spirit aids this process, however the passage actually points to the intentional, conscious cooperation of the people of God with the work of the Spirit. This is a usual way that spiritual formation is expressed in Scripture (and theology). Spiritual formation happens by “taking off the old” (*mortificatio*) and ‘putting on the new and making alive’ (*vivificatio*).

This intentional process of turning away from the old way of life, putting those practices to death, and then putting on new practices is also seen in 1 Peter 1:13ff. Peter calls the people of God to be ready for hard work and action (v. 13) when it comes to their growth into the character of God. Once again, the exhortation is to let go of a former way of living (v. 14) and instead become holy because God himself is holy (v. 15). Therefore the continued

transformation of the people of God to become people who reflect the nature of God is something that requires conscious activity, vigilance, and cooperation with God if any progress is to happen. This is not to say that the Christian must earn God's approval but rather that effort must be expended towards sanctification. The word "discipline" (v. 13) also implies effort. The image here is of a person rolling up their sleeves preparing themselves to do hard work. This process of ridding oneself of the old and putting on a new nature continues in 2:1-3 which focuses on getting rid of old practices such as envy and slander (v. 1) and instead craving for "spiritual milk" or the goodness of God "so that you may grow into salvation" (v. 2).

Scripture reveals that the people of God must engage in intentional and conscious practices that will allow the Holy Spirit to transform them into people who reflect the nature of God. If God is missional, then practices will need to be developed that help the people of God to be shaped and transformed into missional Christians.

The third element in a model of spiritual formation for a missional people is that the missional practices must cater to the scattered church perspective. Once again, this is not to say that gathered church practices are not important. One must keep in mind Greenman's explication that practices need to cater for the scattered church *and* gathered church for the spiritual formation of the people of God to occur. However, scattered church practices have been neglected in ecclesiology and are helpful in a missional church paradigm for forming missional Christians. Scattered church practices help to engage the Christian in the world, a place where the Spirit's activity is constant, and they help the people of God to embody or incarnate the gospel in their daily lives.

Scattered church practices are evident in 1 Peter and this is appropriate as he writes his letter to the *diaspora* (1:1) spread over the Asia Minor area. The best way to describe the practices of these Christians is that they embodied the gospel in their daily lives and, as they

did, they became witnesses in the community. As they practiced the values of the kingdom of God, the community took notice of them as people who lived in a way that was attractive to them. This can be seen primarily in 2:12 which makes a connection between good practices and witness. As the people of God conduct themselves well, the Gentiles “glorify God”. In fact, in verse 11 Peter encourages the people of God to “abstain from the desires of the flesh” (which is a similar theme to 1:13-15 and 2:1-3). This means that the intentional, conscious, spiritual formation that was encouraged had a missional purpose in that as the people of God reflected God, the outside community had an opportunity to turn to God. Hastings says, “It is this kind of life with integrity, this kind of evangelical moral formation and living that has missional impact.”⁹⁸ David Fitch applies this to the nature of the missional church today saying, “For post-modern evangelism, this means that truth is best communicated as it is lived in the life of a body of Christ out of its (his)story and its stories, not one on one combat via evidentiary apologetics. Instead the church itself becomes the apologetic.”⁹⁹ Scattered church practices which evidenced themselves as the people of God embodying the gospel, led to a missionary posture in the early church and has applications for witness today as the people of God become an apologetic of the gospel.

A last factor in a model for the spiritual formation of a missional people is that the model must form a people who see themselves as ‘sent’ into the world on God’s mission. As has been pointed out, this is a crucial element in the missional church paradigm. Disciples of Jesus must see themselves as sent into their local community where the Spirit of God is active and must participate in God’s mission with an attitude of *kenosis*. This connection between discipleship and mission is crucial and in light of Scripture was never disconnected. Stanley

⁹⁸ Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, Loc 4835, Kindle.

⁹⁹ David Fitch, *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 57.

Hauerwas in fact believes that the Gospels in their entirety are ‘training manuals’ for missional discipleship. He says,

To be a disciple is to be a part of a new community, a new polity, which is formed on Jesus’ obedience to the cross. The constitutions of this new polity are the Gospels. The Gospels are not just the depiction of a man, but they are manuals for the training necessary to be part of the new community. To be a disciple means to share Christ’s story, to participate in the reality of God’s rule.¹⁰⁰

Hauerwas is making a connection between the nature and acts of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels and that these Gospels in their entirety can be used for the purposes of discipleship and formation. This would include disciples seeing themselves as sent into the world since this was Jesus’ commission to them in Matthew 28:18-20 and John 20:21.

David Bosch points out this natural and unbroken connection between discipleship and mission in Acts and says,

Luke’s church may be said to have a bipolar orientation, ‘inward’ and ‘outward’. First it is a community which devotes itself to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayer... secondly the community also has an outward orientation. It refuses to understand itself as a sectarian group. It is actively engaged in a mission to those still outside the pale of the gospel. And the inner life of the church is connected to its outer life.¹⁰¹

This is clear in Acts 2:43-47 whereas the early church engaged in gathered church practices, they were a witness in their community earning “the goodwill of all the people”. Bosch also points to the fact that the Apostle Paul’s theology also made this connection between discipleship and mission. In 1 Thessalonians 1:8, the word of God “sounded forth” from the church as a witness; in 2 Corinthians 3:2, the church was a “letter of recommendation” (in other words a witness to the gospel), and in Romans 1:8 the faith of the church is “proclaimed throughout the world”.¹⁰² This does not mean that the church was necessarily engaging in evangelism but rather as faithful disciples who lived their lives in accord with the kingdom of

¹⁰⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Towards a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1981), 49.

¹⁰¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 120.

¹⁰² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 168.

God, their lives were a missional witness to the community. Bosch says, “These comments (by Paul) probably do not suggest that Thessalonian, Corinthian and Roman churches are actively involved in direct missionary outreach, but rather that they are ‘missionary by their very nature’, through their unity, mutual love, exemplary conduct and radiant joy”.¹⁰³ A model for the formation of a missional people must help the people of God see that they are sent into their local context as missionaries. This in effect means that discipleship and mission are the one and same thing and that they must never be separated. A disciple of Jesus and the church of Jesus must be defined by their missional nature.

Conclusion

A model for the spiritual formation of the members of a missional church requires a sound theological and biblical basis. It has been shown that the term church has various meanings that can be identified in Scripture however one meaning that does not frequently get used is that of the scattered church perspective. This is most commonly seen in 1 Peter which was written to the *diaspora* in Asia Minor. One term that Peter used to describe the church in this letter, taken from the Old Testament is the people of God which is a helpful way of viewing the church. This scattered church perspective connects well with the missional church paradigm which focuses on connecting discipleship with mission.

The missional church paradigm is a framework which has a rich theological history and is based on the view that since God is missional by nature then the church must reflect this. As the church sees itself as sent into the world to engage on the mission of God, God’s purposes for the church are realigned and the church loses its more institutional, inward-looking orientation, and recaptures its primary role of being missionary. Not only is this the

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

case, the church, moreover, must recover this notion if it is to engage with the world today and it must contextualise so that the community sees the gospel at work. This means that the people of God must stop seeing mission as something that happens in another place and rather happens in their locality as God works through the local church for his purposes.

A missional theology which is based in Scripture leads to a missional ecclesiology and, as a result, characteristics of a missional theology must be viewed more closely so that the people of God can be shaped according to this. Firstly, a missional theology specifically has the characteristic of *kenosis* which is an all-encompassing way of life for the people of God. *Kenosis* is a continual practice for God's people imitating the incarnation and death of Jesus. As the people of God let go of their old ways of being and engage in *kenosis*, they are shaped into a people who are on God's mission. Secondly, a missional theology has the characteristic of being incarnational. This is not to say that the people of God can ever incarnate the way that Jesus did, however they can embody the practices which are associated with a gospel led lifestyle and in this way they engage in their missionary nature. Thirdly, a missional theology is Trinitarian. The people of God follow a triune God and this is something not frequently highlighted in the life of the church. The missional Christian must ask; if God is triune, then what must I do in order to be shaped to reflect the nature of this triune God? This question can be partially answered by observing the immanent Trinity and the way that the three persons relate to one another in the practice of *perichoresis*. This influences the manner in which Christians must relate to one another. Lastly, missional theology has a missional pneumatology, which is to say that the Holy Spirit must be recognised as the one who sends the church on mission into the world. Authors have therefore said that the Holy Spirit can be seen as the Spirit of mission. However, even though the Spirit is responsible for creating and empowering the church, he is also active in the world. Christians must engage with and discern the activity of the Spirit in order to reject the things

that are not in line with the gospel and engage with what the Spirit of God is doing to redeem and bring life to a fallen world. If, as Bevans says, the church can see that it has been given to the Spirit then the people of God can see the activity of God inside and outside the church.

A model for the spiritual formation of a missional church will contain these theological characteristics so that theology informs ecclesiology. This model will also develop practices that the church can engage in for the transformation process to occur. There are several portions of Scripture which point to the expectation that God has that his people will engage in intentional, conscious practices which will help Christians to reflect his nature. This model will also develop practices that are more appropriate for a scattered church perspective. This is not to say that gathered church practices are not valid, however for the formation of a missional people, scattered church practices are crucial. The letter of 1 Peter once again is helpful revealing that the early Christians engaged in practices which meant that they embodied the gospel. As they did this, they became witnesses in the community of a contrast life through Christ that was better than the one that this world had to offer. Finally, a model for the formation of missional people will encourage the church to see itself as sent into a local community as missionaries. It can be seen in Scripture that being a disciple of Jesus meant that the disciple saw themselves as on God's mission. In other words, discipleship and mission were unified and not separated which helped the follower of Jesus to see themselves as sent into the community for God's purposes.

The missional church paradigm has a solid biblical and theological basis and also that a model for the formation of a missional church has credible evidence biblically and theologically. As the people of God are formed into missional Christians the church can return to its original purpose of being sent into the world rather than retaining more of an institutional and inward orientation which only serves to increase its marginalisation in this post-Christendom season in which we live in the West.

CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

Overview

It has been argued that the Church in the West is experiencing a season of marginalisation and liminality that is causing a tendency towards an inward posture among the people of God. Even though some churches might be experiencing growth, the indications are that the Church in the West is losing its influence. Missional theology critiques this inwardness and contends that the church is sent into the world by God to join with God on his mission. Missional theology shapes a missional ecclesiology and therefore a missional church orients itself towards the world. In a missional church, the people of God see themselves as missionaries in their local context. The theological review in Chapter Three showed that missional theology and ecclesiology is based on reading of Scripture that discerns that God calls his people to be missional.

How can a church become more missional? Even though various missional theologians focus on methodology for this change to occur in a congregation, this dissertation argues that it is spiritual formation which ultimately will help the people of God to see themselves as missionaries. What constitutes a spiritual formation model which will help the people of God to become missional? The literature review in Chapter Two analysed the thoughts of various authors who express a missional spirituality that can contribute to and inform a missional spiritual formation model. This chapter outlines such a spiritual formation model which has the purpose to transform the people of God into a missional people.

This chapter will begin with an overall description of the design of the project including its purpose and then will detail the specifics of the missional spiritual formation model. The model has four characteristics:

- engages the people of God in missional practices,
- reveals an integrated view of spiritual disciplines of engagement,
- encourages behavioural change in the participants of the project, and
- activates communal discernment.

The context of the field and sample group will be described. Several participants from CLCC engaged in the ministry project. After the ministry project was undertaken, indications were sought as to whether any transformational change had occurred in the participants and whether and to what extent missional formation had occurred. Finally, the process for gathering data to identify this change process will be explained and the instruments used for data collection will be described.

Broad Description of the Overall Project Design

The purpose of this project was to design a missional spiritual formation model that could be implemented in CLCC through several participants who agreed to be part of this intervention. The intention of this model is that it will produce transformational change in the lives of the participants such that they will become more missional. After the intervention was implemented, the sample group of participants were assessed in terms of changes that occurred. Measuring change in the lives of the participants was therefore a crucial determining factor as to whether the spiritual formation model was effective in producing missional Christians.

One issue that needs to be taken into account is to identify exactly what transformation entails. Transformation, to be effective, needs to include aspects such as changes in attitude, intention, desire and behaviour within a person. In Romans 12:1-2, (which has already been examined in Chapter Three) the term for “transformation” implies that change involves various aspects of the human make-up. The Apostle Paul says,

“[P]resent your bodies as a living sacrifice... which is your spiritual worship”. He continues:

“Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”

These verses reveal that transformation involves the mind: that is, belief or attitudinal change, and intention, in that Christians are to purposefully present themselves to God. Tom Wright offers helpful insight into this text:

First, offering your body (by which he here means your whole self) to God is the utterly fitting thing to do, since God has redeemed you and will transform that body to be like the risen body of Jesus Christ, a transformation which you must anticipate in appropriate behaviour here and now. Second, this self-offering is not merely of your body, but of your body as directed by your reasoning...¹

Transformation involves changed thinking *and* changed behaviour.

Ideally therefore, measuring missional formation involves discerning whether there has been change in behaviour, belief or thinking and desire. The difficulties in measuring each of these several components in the space of the duration of this project will be discussed in this chapter further, however it is sufficient to state here that what constitutes change in a person needs to be identified for valid measurement to occur.

The purpose of the project was to design a model for the formation of Christians which, when implemented, would produce transformation such that participants became more missional. Following implementation, any changes in the lives of the participants would need to be measured in order to determine the success of the model. These changes involve behavioural and attitudinal change as well as changes in desire regarding becoming missional.

The project will be undertaken with nine participants from CLCC. CLCC is a church that is becoming a missional church however, the participants were not chosen due to their missional ability or inability. Instead, a broad range of people was chosen based on age,

¹ N. T. Wright, *Virtue Reborn* (London: SPCK, 2010), 129.

gender and socio-economic status. Availability was also a factor. An email was sent out to over twenty people in the church and nine responded that they were interested in doing the project and volunteered to participate. Therefore, the choice of participants was random. The missional formation model was based on the biblical foundation as evidenced in Chapter Three and based on the four characteristics found in missional theology: incarnational, kenotic, pneumatological and Trinitarian. The four characteristics of this model based on the biblical foundations and the literature review as well as the author's personal input were:

- 1) Four missional practices based on missional theology
- 2) Spiritual practices which encourage engagement
- 3) Based on theories of habit formation with the intention of producing behavioural change.
- 4) Engaging in group spiritual discernment.

These will be further explained later in this chapter.

The four missional practices were:

- Engaging in radical acts of hospitality at least once a week.
- Reading Scripture reflectively in a public place in a *Lectio Divina* format.
- Praying with eyes open every day, if possible, in the participant's local context.
- Meeting as a group once a week for spiritual discernment and spiritual formation to occur.

The first missional practice was an exercise in being *kenotic*. When the participant engaged in an act of hospitality, this encouraged him or her to think of others rather than themselves. The second practiced being *incarnational* because when the participants read Scripture in a public place, they were put in a position where they must engage with their context and connect with their environment. In other words they must engage with their context as God engaged with

humanity by putting on flesh. The third practiced the characteristic of *pneumatology*, as the participants while they prayed with their eyes open and watched the events in their local context, were able to discern what the Holy Spirit was saying to them about their environment. The last practiced *pneumatology* and being *Trinitarian*. As the participants gathered to debrief their experiences they were able to practise communal discernment of the Spirit and learning from each other which developed a mutuality and interdependence between the participants. This occurred for the seven week duration of the project. The purpose of the project was explained to the participants so that they were informed about the rationale behind their engagement. The participants were open and enthusiastic about the project and treated it as a spiritual formation experience even though it was known that it was part of a research project and measurement would be involved. It was also explained that prayer and hospitality were a part of the project so that it was conveyed clearly that the participants should be expectant that God would be present as they engaged in the missional practices and especially as the group met together to experience communal formation.

Ethics protocol was followed in the implementation of this project and the author followed the training and procedures required by the Human Subjects Review. The research was approved by that committee. The author, who was the conductor of this project, agreed to the care and ethical treatment of the participants of the project including stating to each participant that they were able to leave the project at any time if they chose. The participants agreed to engage with the project under these terms.

The instruments to be used for the measurement of missional formation in the participants of the project were twofold. Firstly, a quantitative survey was conducted and secondly, qualitative measurement was used in the form of interviews based on a phenomenological research approach.

The quantitative study involved designing and administering a survey to determine how missional the participants were in their beliefs and in their behaviour. The participants were asked to do the survey before engaging with the project and give answers in accord with what they felt was the best representation of their current status. The answers to the statements were placed on a simple Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The participants were then individually scored. This score was a baseline used to determine any changes after engagement with the project. The survey makes statements based on the four characteristics of missional theology and described missional attitudes (whether people are thinking missionally), desires (whether people are engaging within their heart regarding being missional), and some behaviours (embodied habits that are missional) based on these characteristics.

The same survey was taken by the participants one month after the project to see whether any missional formation had occurred after the engaging in the practices. The one month post-project period was designated in order to see if any real change occurred after engaging with the missional practices for seven weeks. The survey measured attitudinal change, change in desires, and behavioural change. These three characteristics are components of transformational change. Each participant was given an average score after undertaking this second survey and this score compared with the individual’s first score.

The second form of measurement for change is a qualitative study based on a phenomenological research approach. Each participant from the group underwent an in-depth interview to discern whether any change had occurred after the engagement with the project. The limitations of a quantitative approach could be offset by a qualitative approach to measurement. It could also discern how successful the project was in terms of participant engagement. Moreover, future changes could be made based on difficulties encountered in the project and successes could be reinforced in future implementations. The interviews were

based on a phenomenological study in order to discern the participants' lived experience of engaging with the practices. The participants were each asked to describe in their own words what it was like for them to engage in the project.

The interviews lasted for approximately an hour for each participant. They were unstructured and followed the train of thought of the individual participant in order to avoid the conductor's bias. The conductor, who also led the project, attempted to avoid steering the participant in any particular direction and rather allowed the participant to talk freely about their experience of the project. Occasionally, clarifying questions were asked along with broad, open questions that instigated responses about their experience of the project. The purpose of this research approach was to connect with the subjective experience of the participant of the project and to note whether the engagement with the project was positive and led to change or whether various difficulties were encountered. If various difficulties were encountered, it would highlight improvements that needed to be made if the project were to be implemented again in the future. Further elaboration of the instruments for gathering data will be described below.

This hybrid qualitative and quantitative research approach will inform measurement for missional formation after the project is implemented for the purpose of seeing whether transformation in any of the individuals occurred. The nine participants engaged in the quantitative study and therefore any change in missional beliefs, desires and intention for behavioural change will be seen and this is to be reinforced by the interviews with the participants from the project who will give subjective insight on what it is like to experience engaging with the project. This will enable the conductor of the project to gain an insight into the validity of the actual project and to see more clearly its flaws and successes. Due to the nature of qualitative research, the results of the interviews could also yield information that is unanticipated by the conductor of the project.

The Model for Missional Spiritual Formation

The core aspect of the design of this project was a model for missional spiritual formation. This model was informed by the literature review which analysed several missional theology practitioners and theologians who pointed to a missional spirituality. Moreover, this model was informed by a solid, biblical foundation which was elaborated on in Chapter Three. This showed that the biblical evidence is positive towards missional theology, ecclesiology and also for the formation of a missional spirituality model for the people of God. This chapter will now seek to give detailed information about the components of the spiritual formation model that was used in the activation of the project. The four characteristics of the model are:

- 1) Four missional practices based on missional theology;
- 2) Spiritual practices which encourage engagement;
- 3) Based on theories of habit formation through engaging in practices with the intention of producing change; and
- 4) Engaging in communal discernment and formation.

Four Missional Practices based on Missional Theology

The four missional practices that were chosen for the project stemmed from the four characteristics of missional theology that were explained in Chapter Three. Those four characteristics were that missional theology is incarnational, pneumatological, Trinitarian and kenotic. As the participants of the project engage with the four practices based on missional theology, it is suggested that missional formation will happen.

The term “practices” was chosen rather than disciplines or habits although each could be defined in similar ways. Practices in a Christian context, however, are defined as “things Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God’s active

presence for the life of the world (in Jesus Christ).”² Moreover, the purpose of practices is to create a context for the Holy Spirit to bring transformation to believers as they are engaged in them, whether change of behaviour, desire or belief. Practices “are understood to be ‘arenas’ that put us where life in Christ may be made known, recognised, experienced, and participated in. They are the means of grace by which the presence of God is palpably experienced.”³

While Christian practices should always be viewed as missional, it is the opinion and experience of this author that they have not always been engaged in with this goal in mind. In *Practicing Witness*, Benjamin Connor seeks to correct this. He states:

Missional theology is a kind of practical theology that explores in every aspect of the theological curriculum and praxis of the church the implications of the missionary nature of God with the purpose of forming congregations to better articulate the gospel and to live faithfully their vocation to participate in the ongoing redemptive mission of God in a particular context.⁴

The emphasis is on the formation of a congregation into a people who are on God’s mission in a particular context. Connor states that missional theology critiques the engagement of Christian practices that lead to an inwardness in the church. If practices are linked to the missional purpose of a congregation, they can shape people according to that purpose.⁵ The missional practices in this project therefore had an intention to help people see themselves as God’s missionaries in the world on his mission and participating with him in his redemptive purposes.

The practices in the project were also defined in a way that sees them as vehicles for the grace of God to move. The practices were not conveyed to the participants in such a way as to allow them to think that by engaging in the practices they were somehow themselves producing transformation. The project was explained in the light of the fact that the Holy

² Benjamin T. Connor, *Practicing Witness: A Missional Vision of Christian Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), Loc 548, Kindle.

³ *ibid.*, Loc 583.

⁴ *ibid.*, Loc 122.

⁵ *ibid.*, Loc 538.

Spirit was responsible for moving through the practices to bring change. As Bass and Dykstra affirm, “Christian practices are not activities we do to make something spiritual happen in our lives... Nor are they duties we undertake to be obedient to God. Rather, they are patterns of communal action that create openings in our lives where the grace, mercy and presence of God may be made known to us and, through us, to others.”⁶

Therefore, in this project, “missional practices” were explained as regular activities that Christians do together in order to allow the Holy Spirit to shape them into missional Christians who are on God’s mission in the world to continue his work of redemption. The four missional practices will now be elaborated on further.

One missional practice used in this project is the practice of reading Scripture in a public place in a *lectio Divina* format. Participants were asked to do this twice per week if possible. They were given two passages of Scripture per week, usually from the Gospels, and asked to read that passage during the day in a public place. The ideal situation was for participants to take ten minutes of their lunch break and go to a park, café, or somewhere where they could be in the midst of “life happening”. Guidance was given to the participants to engage with God in the Bible reading. The concept here was to link with the incarnational characteristic of missional theology which focuses on connecting with God’s activity in the world in an embodied way. Often when Christians practice the discipline of daily Bible reading, they do so privately in a quiet room removed from the bustle of life. However, this practice had a purpose to encourage the participant to apply the passage of Scripture to the world and context that they could see before their eyes. The hope was to foster a deeper connectedness to God’s world and an ability to link God’s word with his world so that the participant could see what God might be doing before their eyes.

⁶ Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass, “A Way of Thinking about a Way of Life” in *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), Loc 3793, Kindle.

The reading of Scripture was to be done in a *lectio Divina* manner however the term that can be used here is *missio Divina*⁷ due to the emphasis on a missional intent. Therefore a slow reading of the passage was encouraged along with waiting to hear what God was saying to them through the passage and then relating that passage to the world they could see before their eyes at that moment.

This approach to reading the Bible assumes that when we come to the text we hear the world of God addressed to us personally. A word that summons us to a response, even if that response is angry questioning! The goal is to come out of such an encounter with the text, changed and equipped for the ongoing journey of becoming more Christlike.⁸

The participants were encouraged to hear God speak to them personally through the passage of Scripture yet to extend that to how that passage applied to their immediate environment and way of being in the world. Hopefully this would shift their perspective from inward to outward oriented.

Another practice engaged in by the participants was to pray with their eyes open every day. Instead of praying with eyes closed in order to internalise any encounters with God, praying with eyes open could help to make the participants aware of what was happening around them and what the Spirit of God was doing in their midst. This does not mean that a Christian cannot engage with God's mission as they pray with their eyes shut. However, praying with eyes open, since the Christian is observing what is occurring before them, can enable him or her to be prompted by God's Spirit in order to engage with what is happening before their eyes. They were thus encouraged to connect with their local context once again and discern what God was doing in their regular places of activity such as their workplace or their local suburb. During certain times of the day, they were encouraged to pray with their eyes open whether that was driving past local landmarks in their suburb or in their place of work where most spend so many hours each week.

⁷ Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmanson, *Missional Spirituality: Embodying God's Love from the Inside Out* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), Loc 1145, Kindle.

⁸ Lloyd Pietersen, *Reading the Bible After Christendom* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2011), Loc 3258, Kindle.

This practice focused on being incarnational but also engaging with the pneumatological characteristic of missional theology. By praying with eyes open, it was hoped the participant might discern the activity of the Spirit in the world as it happened right before their eyes. This of course is also possible when praying with one's eyes shut however, praying with open eyes meant that the participant was watchful of the daily interactions of people going about their daily life which could prompt them to pray for things that they might not have thought of if praying with eyes shut. It was explained to the participants that all they needed to do was pray. However, if they felt prompted to act on that prayer because God had spoken to them, they were encouraged to do whatever the Spirit was leading them to do.

This is reminiscent of the practice described by McNeal in *Missional Renaissance*. McNeal once encouraged his staff to “go to a coffee shop, sit on a park bench, or stand in a mall parking lot and pray a simple prayer: ‘Lord let me see what you see’. They were to listen for an hour to the voice of God...”⁹ It is hoped that the person might better connect with what God's Spirit is doing in their local neighbourhood and be able to join with God on his mission in that context. The participants were also encouraged, if possible, to undertake a ‘prayer walk’ around their neighbourhood or workplace with the same intentions in mind.

Another practice engaged in by the group was a ‘radical act of hospitality’ once a week. Radical acts of hospitality connected with the kenotic characteristic of missional theology—that the Christian is to live a life of servanthood, self-surrender and giving up of power. It was explained that *kenosis* is the act of self surrender, especially in order to help those who are struggling. Participants were asked to see those people who they interact with daily—perhaps as they went to work, in the workplace, or their social settings—and notice who among those people might be marginalised by society, whether due to their physical

⁹ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), Loc 1250, Kindle.

attributes, inabilities, or isolation. Then the participants were to reach out to those people in some way and show welcome and hospitality.

This practice required the participants to step out of their comfort zones in order to engage with people with whom they might not normally associate. Examples were suggested such as offering a homeless person a cup of coffee, talking with someone in the office who others avoid, or connecting with strangers in a café who might be struggling. They were to show hospitality to someone who was marginalised and this could include many things, some of which were more challenging than others. For example, inviting a homeless person to dinner would be seen as very challenging, however buying a coffee for a workmate who is ostracised is less threatening. Christine Pohl notes the subversive element in practicing hospitality which points to the values of a greater kingdom:

Although we often think of hospitality as a tame and pleasant practice, Christian hospitality has always had a subversive countercultural dimension. 'Hospitality is resistance'. Especially when the larger society disregards or dishonours certain persons, small acts of respect and welcome are potent far beyond themselves. They point to a different system of values and an alternate model of relationships.¹⁰

Subverting established norms even in small acts such as offering a stranger a cup of coffee are powerful ways that Christians can practice kenosis, surrendering themselves to God in order to show welcome to those that the world would disregard. The participants were told that this could make them feel uncomfortable and might even have an element of danger to it. They were therefore encouraged to use discernment in this practice.

The remaining practice was for the group to meet weekly for the seven weeks in order to discern what God had been saying to them as they engaged in the practices. This practice connected with the Trinitarian characteristic of missional theology. If Christians are to be formed as missional Christians then this would also need to take place in a communal setting

¹⁰ Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 61.

and this is why the weekly meetings were designed. The group was asked to meet weekly with the conductor of the project in her home in order to debrief what had been happening to them in the week and also to listen to each other's stories, particularly as to what God had been saying to them during the week. The intention here was to engage in communal formation since the other practices were engaged in individually during the week. One point made in the previous chapters was that spiritual formation and the practice of spiritual disciplines can often be very individualistic. However, Christians worship a Trinitarian God and spiritual formation must be fashioned according to that image. This purpose for meeting was explained to the group. This practice will be elaborated on further in this chapter.

Spiritual Practices which encourage Engagement

Another aspect of the missional spiritual formation model is that the practices are integrated practices that encourage engagement with the world. As was shown in Chapter Two, some traditional interpretations of spiritual formation tend toward inwardness. Even though this should not be the case, the connotations still persist. This was clarified in Chapter Two. Mark Scandrette agrees with this misperception of Spiritual formation that exists today:

The term spiritual formation, as it is often used, connotes the practice of solitary introspection, the reading of classic books on prayer or monthly visits to a spiritual director. Interest in these activities... tends to focus, whether intentionally or not, primarily on the interior life of the individual. While the "inner journey" aspects of spiritual formation are obviously important, they must be held in tension with the need for an active, communal pursuit of the way of Jesus.¹¹

The spiritual practices focused on in this project aim for engagement with the world rather than retreat from the world. As has been said in previous chapters, this does not mean that withdrawal from the world is not needed in order to connect with God. However, the focus for this project was to develop practices that engaged with the world. The one practice that could possibly be interpreted as retreat is the practice of meeting once a week to engage in spiritual

¹¹ Mark Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011), Loc 901, Kindle.

discernment. However, this was only one practice out of four and its purpose was to engage in communal discernment and formation reflecting the Trinitarian nature of God. This was also to counter the reality that sometimes the spiritual formation process is engaged with individualistically. The author's opinion and experience is that Christians sometimes hesitate to realise that spiritual formation and transformation happen more effectively in community through the process of discernment as Christians hear what the Spirit of God is saying to them through one another.

The participants were told about this aspect of the design of the model. The idea was conveyed that the spiritual formation model was spiritual formation "on the go" which meant that engagement with God and the world happens daily as life is lived, as opposed to only happening in the quietness of retreating from the world. It is the observation of the author that many Christians struggle with integrating their 'spiritual lives' with their practical activities in their daily lives.¹² When Christians separate their lives in such a manner, it makes it more difficult for them to experience the presence of God in their everyday existence. This can encourage the view that God is present when disciplines such as going to church and praying are practiced, but ostensibly absent when the Christian is at work or in social settings. This makes it less likely that a Christian will engage with the world and have a missional view.

The participants were told that the practices could be engaged in during their busy lives as opposed to needing to carve out more time in order to make room for them. Stating that the spiritual formation model is designed to be "on the go" in no way minimises the importance of the practices. They are no less spiritual than spending time alone with God in retreat. Moreover, "on the go" spirituality could be criticised for seemingly bowing to the culture of distraction and consumerism. However, this is not the case. The practices were not conceived with the thought that they would be easier to "fit in" with the busy schedules of the

¹² This was discussed in the previous chapters in relation to dualism and the separation of sacred and secular space.

participants. Rather, the practices were designed to be “on the go” so that the participants could be engaged with God in their daily lives in order to shape them as missional Christians.

Dorothy Bass points to how daily routines and activities that people engage in can be turned into encounters with God:

When we see some of our ordinary activities as Christian practices, we come to perceive how our daily lives are all tangled up with the things God is doing in the world. Now we want to figure out how to pattern our practices after God’s, and it becomes our deepest hope to become partners in God’s reconciling love for the world.¹³

This fits well with the concept behind this project: a spirituality which can be practiced daily as people engage with the world doing ‘normal’ things that they do such as work, play, cook, clean, or drive. Bass concludes, “[W]hen we set ordinary daily activities in this context, they are transformed, and so are we.”¹⁴ This was the hope for the participants engaging in the project. A drive to work would be transformed into an encounter with God; greeting a homeless person would be a revelation of the face of Jesus, or a lunch break reading scripture would be a revelation of God’s love for the world. This, of course, still requires discernment and the participants were encouraged to practice discernment during their daily engagement with the practices as well as when the group met together. Discernment was defined as “the intentional practice by which a community or an individual seeks, recognises and intentionally takes part in the activity of God in concrete situations.”¹⁵

Connor extends this notion of encountering God in everyday activities. He states that after practices are engaged in for a period of time, they become vehicles where it is not so much that the Christian engages in them, but rather they become opportunities for God to engage with the Christian. He says,

After a time, the primary point about the practices is no longer that they are something that we do. Instead, they become arenas in which something is done

¹³ Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass, “Times of Yearning, Practices of Faith” in *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), Loc 604, Kindle.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*, Loc 2151, Kindle.

to us, in us, and through us that we could not of ourselves do, that is beyond what we do.¹⁶

It was a hope for this project that even in the short space of time in which the project was undertaken, the participants would be able to move away from simply engaging in the practices but rather see the practices as vehicles for God to engage with the individual participant in the everyday, mundane aspects of life.

The practices were therefore designed with the *scattered church* in view rather than the *gathered church*. Three of the practices were scattered church practices. Only meeting weekly together for communal spiritual formation could be considered a gathered church practice, though even this was for the purpose of discerning what God had been doing in the world and shaping them as missional Christians. Many spiritual formation disciplines have a gathered church element. This is not to say they are wrong; but if only gathered church practices are engaged with, it can become difficult for Christians to see themselves as sent into the world as God's missionaries. As stated in Chapter Two, the goal of spiritual formation is always missional, however the problem is that this goal is not always an outcome of spiritual formation.

Brian Edgar argues that there is "a need today for a stronger sense of the scattered church and the importance of the life and ministry of the people of God when they are in the world."¹⁷ This has been the argument in Chapter Three with its special reference to 1 Peter 1:1-2 where the apostle writes to the scattered church in Asia Minor. Edgar also looks at this passage with the view that 'scattered' should be included alongside the various images of the church. He adds: "The implications of this for the mission of the church are considerable. This image presents a picture of a church that genuinely permeates society".¹⁸

¹⁶ Connor, *Practicing Witness*, Loc 589, Kindle.

¹⁷ Brian Edgar, *God is Friendship: A Theology of Spirituality, Community, and Society* (Wilmore, KY: Seedbed Publishing, 2013), Loc 3379, Kindle.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, loc 3392, Kindle.

The participants of this project were encouraged to consider themselves as the church scattered and engaged with society, rather than simply as individuals practicing several activities. This would possibly be a shift for various participants who mostly see church as a place that Christians attend in order to worship God together.

With respect to missional formation, it is the author's opinion that a church must have more weight placed on scattered church practices rather than gathered church practices in order to correct the inwardness that has been growing in many churches in the West. In her experience as a leader at CLCC, the author observed that this church placed more weight on gathered church practices and this could be a reason for its tendency towards inwardness. This is the intention behind having three practices in this project that are scattered church practices and only one which is a gathered church practice. If missional formation is to occur, scattered church practices are needed in a missional church. Edgar suggests that if church members strongly emphasise the gathered church then "the greater their success in providing programs and activities" but "the less chance there is that the members will have any non-church friends at all."¹⁹ However if a church emphasises the scattered church image, "it is likely that the believers will be more involved with the culture outside the church and more likely to have a greater number of friendships and other social relationships with non-Christians."²⁰

This project has sought to remedy this problem by emphasising scattered church practices in order to enable the formation of missional Christians. The practices were practices of engagement with rather than withdrawal from the world. It is true however, that practices associated with withdrawing from the world can also be missional as in when a Christian engages in intercessory prayer for the world. The practices for the project however, were conceived such that they could be engaged in "on the go" during the mundane events of daily life. The hope was that the participants would encounter God in these common events

¹⁹ *ibid.*, loc 3403, Kindle.

²⁰ *ibid.*, loc 3409, Kindle.

and therefore be able to see that God is continually present and active in their daily lives and in the world.

Based on theories of habit formation through engaging in practices with the intention of producing change.

The spiritual formation model can draw from theories of change through habit formation. The model was based on participants engaging in missional practices for seven weeks in order to bring change in terms of missional formation in the lives of the participants. What needed to be defined was the kind of change being sought. The model intended to produce change in three ways: thinking, behavior and desire. So the hope was that participants would become more missional in their thinking and attitudes, that they would engage in more missional behaviour and that their desire for being missional would increase.

In *Virtue Reborn*, Tom Wright refers to Aristotle's pattern for character transformation: that there must be a goal, steps for transformation towards that goal, and the process of moral training to turn those steps into habits.²¹ While not exactly the same pattern, this can be applied to a missional spiritual formation model: the goal is that the participants become missional. The steps to that goal are the missional characteristics stated previously; Trinitarian, pneumatology, incarnational and kenotic, and the process is engaging in the missional practices. Consequently, missional habits are formed. Additionally, from a Christian perspective, the Holy Spirit would be the key person involved in working within the person through missional practices in order for transformation to occur, otherwise the formation is simply based on human effort.

²¹ N. T. Wright, *Virtue Reborn* (London: SPCK, 2010), 30.

Wright also points to current neuroscience research that shows that as people engage in practicing certain behaviours, changes in the brain can occur.²² This is in effect how learning occurs as old habits are changed and new habits are embraced. This change includes new thinking, new attitudes and new desires as behavioural change is not for its own sake. As behaviour changes, this exposes people to new ways of thinking and new attitudes due to the new behaviour. It is true that transformation “happens through establishing new patterns of thought and action.”²³ As people engage in new habits, transformation occurs. The hope with this model is that as people engage in new behaviour regularly practiced for a period of time, desire, attitudes, thinking and behaviour might change and that missional formation would occur.

The assurance that the Christian has in this process is that God has already renewed the heart of the Christian giving him or her a disposition towards moving in the direction of change towards Christlikeness. Wright says, “[the Holy Spirit renews] the individual heart and mind so that we can freely and consciously choose to practice those habits of behaviour which, awkward and clumsy at first, will gradually become ‘second nature’.”²⁴ The Holy Spirit is involved in initiating renewal in the Christian and also acts as the power behind Christians engaging in practices that produce change towards Christlikeness. The truth is, however, that the Christian must intentionally engage in these practices and work with the Holy Spirit in this process.

This was an important matter in the design of this model. In the author’s opinion, Christians are polarised into two camps when it comes to transformation and discipleship. On one extreme are Christians who feel that transformation is all the work of the Holy Spirit, which is interpreted to mean that the Christian does not need to necessarily practice any disciplines in order for growth to occur. Other Christians emphasise disciplines but frequently

²² *ibid.*, 33.

²³ Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, Loc 1005, Kindle.

²⁴ Wright, *Virtue Reborn*, 222.

fall into a self-effort, works-based view leaving the powerful work of the Spirit to the side. Instead one must view that the Holy Spirit initiates change and is responsible for continuing change yet the Christian must work with the Spirit and give him space to transform the person through the practices.

One focus of the project was engaging in practices in order for new missional habits or behaviours to develop. Even though from the Christian perspective, the Holy Spirit gives power for this and works through this process, there is still a very real human intention that is required for habit formation to occur. A concern was that the participants would not continue with the practices for the seven weeks in order for the formation to occur since forming new habits is a difficult process. The difficulty of habit formation is outlined by basic theories of change in neuroscience and psychology. The research shows that it takes sixty-six days to form a fairly simple habit yet it may take almost a year to form a more complex habit.²⁵

The time frame of the project falls short of both of these figures. What is particularly relevant here is the difficulty of habit formation and the link between habit formation and intentionality.

In order for the spiritual formation model to be successful, these insights around habit formation were taken into consideration. Firstly, one of the best ways for habits to be formed, according to some research, is to engage in the habit as a part of a regular daily routine rather than something that has to be done outside of that routine:

Researchers have found that the best cue for a new habit is something that happens every day at a regular time. Participants in one study were trying to eat more healthily found that the cues of arriving at work and lunchtime worked well. Effectively, they were adding on a new habit after one that was already operating. This kind of linkage is likely to work much better than using timing cues.²⁶

²⁵ Jeremy Dean, *Making Habits Breaking Habits: How to Make Changes that Stick* (London: Oneworld, 2013), Loc 2513, Kindle.

²⁶ *ibid.*, Loc 1621, Kindle.

The habits or practices that were chosen for this model were designed not only to be theologically reflective of a non-dualistic interpretation of spiritual formation, but also to fit into daily routines. Indeed, one of the reasons that participants agreed to being a part of the project is that it did not involve a lot more of their time, even though it might take them outside their comfort zones. The participants were encouraged to pray with their eyes open as they went to work, read scripture during a lunch break, or engage in practices of hospitality depending on what they were experiencing that particular day based on the social interactions occurring. This would make the formation of the habit more successful over the seven weeks.

Another helpful insight from research is that habits are better formed when notice is taken of the actual habits that are being engaged in and which need to change. Habits are normally performed automatically in life, without thinking. In fact, the goal of habit formation is to get to the point of automation where one does not need to think about what one is doing but the habit is engaged in without self-consciousness. One way of forming a new habit is to take notice of old habits and new habits that need to be formed. “The first step is simply to notice our own habitual behaviour... for those who want to change how they travel, the first step is to stop and think about the choices rather than follow the same old routine.”²⁷ Part of the intention behind this project is that people will notice their habitual thinking and behaving through the practice of gathering together weekly, to discern what is not missional, and, as this happens, to seek new missional habits. This stems from an action-reflection style of learning that will be outlined below. The hope is that “sooner or later, the behaviour [becomes] unconscious and ... over time these habits, [take] hold of sections of our lives. When making habits, we are trying to do something similar but with conscious planning.”²⁸

²⁷ *ibid.*, Loc 881, Kindle.

²⁸ *ibid.*, Loc 1720, Kindle.

In *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, James K. A. Smith states that humans gravitate towards what they desire. In other words, whatever a human being at his or her core finds desirable will affect consequent behaviour. Smith argues that rather than beliefs principally shaping our behaviour, it is our desires that move us towards action:

It's not so much that we're intellectually convinced and then muster the willpower to pursue what we ought; rather, at a precognitive level, we are attracted to a vision of the good life that has been painted for us in stores and myths, images and icons. It is not primarily our minds that are captivated but rather our imaginations that are captured, and when our imagination is hooked, then we are hooked.²⁹

Our practices shape our desires and make them stronger. Smith argues that the more that certain “cultural liturgies” such as shopping are performed by people, the more that this shapes their desires. As this practice is engaged in more regularly, the desire for consumption grows.

Habits are inscribed in our hearts through bodily practices and rituals that train the heart, as it were, to desire certain ends. This is a non-cognitive sort of training, a kind of education that is shaping us often without our realisation. Different kinds of material practices infuse non-cognitive dispositions and skills in us through ritual and repetition precisely because our hearts (site of habits) are so closely tethered to our bodies. The senses are the portals to the heart, and thus the body is a channel to our core dispositions and identity. Over time, rituals and practices—often in tandem with aesthetic phenomena like pictures and stories—mold and shape our precognitive disposition to the world by training our desires.³⁰

With this in mind, it could be said that as the Holy Spirit has transformed the heart of the believer, and as the believer engages in certain embodied practices which are life-giving, then the desire of the Christian is fanned into flame. As the project participants engage in the missional practices, their desire to be missional will increase by the end of the project. If Smith is correct that changing the desires of a person ultimately influences their behaviour,

²⁹ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 54.

³⁰ *ibid.*, 58-9.

then increasing the missional desire of the participants would be more likely to produce missional behaviour in the longer term.

One caution in the area of habit formation previously mentioned comes from Dallas Willard. He states that the point of behavioural change is not as an end to itself but rather that attitudinal formation is key. Willard states that the Pharisees engaged in right behaviour in many respects. In order to try to manage that behaviour, however, the key is that the attitude comes from the heart.³¹ Willard also believes that as disciplines are engaged in, transformation occurs. All of this, of course, happens as the Christian follows the welcome of Jesus.

The central teachings of Jesus about the good heart, given in Matthew 5:21-48, deal with all those day to day attitudes that keep the pot of human evil boiling... these, Jesus tells us, can all be replaced with genuine compassions, purity and goodwill as we grow new “insides”... Then he invites us to follow him to his practices, such as solitude, silence, study, service, worship etc... There, with him, the readiness to do evil that inhabit our bodily members through long practice are gradually removed, to an ever increasing degree.³²

Transformation occurs as Christians follow Jesus engaging in practices that are not aimed solely at behavioural modification but rather attitudinal change that stems from a renewed heart. Even though the spiritual formation model relies on habit formation or behavioural change, the purpose is for the heart to be renewed as the Holy Spirit works through the model to bring missional formation and renewal.

Communal Discernment and Formation Process

A key aspect of this spiritual formation model is the fourth practice where participants meet together weekly for communal discernment and formation. An expectation was that the Holy Spirit would be present to guide the meetings as the participants shared how God had engaged with them during the week. It was therefore very important that the participants understood that the meetings are not a part of the assessment of change for the research

³¹ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teaching on Discipleship* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 15.

³² *ibid.*, 21.

project but that they should have a sense that it was a gathering for formation and discernment the way that a small group might work in a church. Therefore, the meetings were held in a home and included supper in order to practice hospitality. Prayer was a very important part of the process. Before the meetings started, there were prayers that the Holy Spirit would be present with the group to guide it and would bring transformation as the participants shared their experiences from the week.

This emphasis is important so that the participants' hearts are engaged with in the weekly meetings as opposed to seeing the meetings as merely a time of reporting back to the trainer of the project. Dallas Willard's "Vision, Intention, Means" pattern was helpful here.³³ This pattern was important because the focus on vision helps the participants remember the overall purpose of the weekly gathering and the intention of the project which was that the vision of God's mission in the world was the inspiration for the project and practices. Willard states that the overall vision for the Christian is that of the Kingdom of God. This vision is placed before the Christian as a focus for inspiration and modelling. Being missional Christians is a part of that vision of the kingdom of God as all things are reconciled to Christ and placed within the will of God for the purposes of his kingdom. The intention is the will to want to be the kind of person who matches the vision. For Christians it is to be Christlike and this involves being missional. The participants of the group had this intention because they all agreed to be part of the project and followed through on their desire to become missional. The means were the missional practices.

This was broadly explained to the group in order to encourage them that the project was a spiritual formation process and not simply a research project. As a result, the participants could expect real transformation to occur as God's Spirit worked through the

³³ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 59.

practices they intended to engage in so that the vision of being missional Christians in the kingdom of God was put into practice.

With this focus on prayer and hospitality, vision for transformation as well as the awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the hope was that an experience of *communitas* would occur in the group. *Communitas* is defined by Alan Hirsch as a view of community building with the intention to:

overcome [the Christian community's] instincts to 'huddle and cuddle', and to instead form themselves around a common missions that calls them onto a dangerous journey to unknown places, a mission that calls the church to shake off its collective securities and to plunge in to the world of action. There they will experience disorientation and marginalisation but also encounter God and one another in a new way. *Communitas* is therefore always linked with the experience of liminality.³⁴

The participants were experiencing liminality because they were being asked to engage in new practices that will bring transformation. Since the Holy Spirit is involved, these simple practices could lead to following God on his mission as the participants engage in them for this project. As the participants return to gather and share what God has been doing in the weekly meetings, the Holy Spirit can build community that is not for the purpose of making the participants feel more comfortable, but rather for the purpose of opening their eyes to the mission that they are on with God in his world. Change occurs when people experience new things. Scandrette says,

Action brings true understanding of what it means to practice the way of Jesus. When we risk going new places, meeting new people and risking new activities, the resulting disequilibrium can create space for change. New experiences change our assumptions and beliefs, help us face our fears and surprise us with resources and strength we didn't know we had.³⁵

It was the hope of this project that, as the participants experienced a new context, this might leave room for God's Spirit to do something new in terms of formation.

³⁴ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 205.

³⁵ Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, Loc, 997, Kindle.

This kind of community-building brings transformation that has more impact than if the participants were left to engage in the practices alone without communal debrief.

“Transformation happens through group encounter and reflection. We are much more likely to take steps to change in solidarity with others.”³⁶ Even though the first three practices were to be done alone, the last was to be a support for the participants. As each person told their stories and their struggles, there would be encouragement to face the next week engaging in the practices. According to Scandrette, “The time we spend in small group reflection is an important aspect of the process that provides accountability and support for the new choices and risks [taken]. We integrate what we learn more fully by reflecting on the shifts happening internally.”³⁷

Some helpful questions that Scandrette asks during the group formation process are:

- What makes it difficult for you to follow through on your commitments?
- How do you hope God can help you face your fears?
- What is my Creator inviting me to?
- What is my next immediate step toward practicing the way of Jesus?³⁸

Some of these questions were used in the group formation process.

The communal formation process is also a discernment process. The leader had to carefully discern the presence of God in the meetings and guide the meeting according to what she discerned God was saying in and through the participants. Discernment is “the intentional practice by which a community or an individual seeks, recognises, and intentionally takes part in the activity of God in concrete situations.”³⁹ The meetings were led in a way that allowed each person to share their experiences and then permitted others to comment. As this happened, the practice of discerning the Spirit was engaged in so that the

³⁶ *ibid.*, Loc 1013, Kindle.

³⁷ *ibid.*, Loc 1013.

³⁸ *ibid.*, Loc 1021, 1029.

³⁹ Frank Rogers Jr, “Discernment” in *Practicing Our Faith*, ed. Dorothy Bass, Loc 2151, Kindle.

group could discern what God was saying through the experiences being shared. This kind of discernment happens through the use of silence, the leader's questions, room for the participants to ask any questions of their own, the expression of struggle, and discerning where God is in the unplanned, spontaneous moments.

This process of discernment for formation could also be loosely based on the model of action-reflection. The action-reflection model is based on the following steps:

- 1) an issue is diagnosed;
- 2) practices are designed to counter the issue;
- 3) the practices are implemented; and
- 4) reflection occurs after the practices are engaged in.⁴⁰

This basic outline was used for the weekly meetings for the duration of the project. The issue diagnosed and explained to the participants was that spiritual formation practices are often not intentionally missional and therefore Christians are being shaped more towards retreat and inwardness. It will be explained that this is not always true of all disciplines, but it is the opinion of the author that Christians often think of spiritual formation as a private matter to do with them and their private relationship with God. Therefore practices were established by the project leader that were more scattered church practices which would engage the people of God with the world as they practiced spiritual disciplines.

The participants were then asked to engage with these practices and then meet together each week to share and reflect on how the practices had been experienced. The model was open to corrections during this process. If several of the participants struggle with engaging in certain practices, this could be shared in the group and various alterations in the practices could be made, depending on how the group felt about these changes. The model therefore was very open to change if this was overall a felt need by the group.

⁴⁰ Charles Ringma, Action Research/Ministry Research Project, Asian Theological Seminary, Seminar 2013.

Population

A general email was sent to twenty-five random people at CLCC asking if they would be interested in participating in the project. The project was described to them as a spiritual formation course that had the potential to help them become more missional. It was made clear that it was a part of a doctoral program but also that it would be an opportunity for God to be at work for transformation in people's lives. A sample of nine people responded from CLCC, conveying that they were interested in participating in the project. CLCC has been on a journey for some years now to become a more missional church and so the participants knew to some extent what the term missional meant and that the project was to help them toward the church's goal. The participants were not chosen due to their level of missional engagement. The aim was to have participants from various ages, genders and cultural backgrounds in the group. CLCC is full of busy people so the project leader could only offer the idea of the missional formation model and pray that those who were open would respond. The project relied on people's desire to want change and transformation in their lives so the choice to participate needed to be totally the responsibility of the participants.

The final number of people that engaged in the project was eight as one of the participants due to personal circumstances had to leave the project. She was regretful that she could not continue to participate in the project. The eight remaining individuals were given notes explaining the four practices (see Appendix A).

The participants all came from CLCC, a church in a middle-class suburb in Sydney. All the participants live in the area or the surroundings and they could therefore, to some extent, be broadly described as middle-class, well-educated, and Western. All the participants were Anglo-Saxon and two were from South Africa. The participants had a variety of white collar professions. Only two of the participants were male and this was a limitation of the project. Ideally, there would have been a balance in the group but many men who were asked

to participate said that they would not have time to engage in the project. The main stumbling block seemed to have been the notion of meeting up every week for seven weeks: however, the other participants seemed to have a positive reaction.

All of the participants had been Christians for several years. Only two came from a non-Christian family and background. Three participants were in their twenties, two were in their forties and three were in their fifties. All the participants stated that they were open to change in their lives and also that they wanted to do this project to allow God to work in their lives so that they might draw closer to him.

Method and Analysis of Data Collection

Quantitative Research

A survey was given to each of the participants before the start of the missional formation course. The survey had twenty five questions that the participants had to answer based on a Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. (The survey can be found in Appendix B.) The questions were designed by the project leader based on the readings engaged with in Chapter Two and Chapter Three which explained missional spirituality. The questions were used to help the participants discern whether people were engaging with the four missional characteristics: Trinitarian, pneumatological, kenotic and incarnational. Questions a, e, i, and r on the survey related to the Trinitarian characteristic. Questions d, l, p, u, v, and y on the survey related to the pneumatology characteristic. Questions c, g, k, m, o, and w related to the kenotic characteristic, and questions b, f, h, j, n, q, s, t, and x related to the incarnational characteristic. Some of the questions could also be interpreted to relate to a broader missional characteristic and could also relate to more than the one particular characteristic appropriated to the question. The survey questions also reflected the readings mentioned in this chapter regarding what constitutes change. The questions were phrased

around measuring missional attitudes, behaviour and desire. In order for real change to occur, changes needed to be seen in missional desire, attitude and behaviour.

A code-name was randomly chosen by each participant that was unknown to the project leader, written on the survey and then given to the leader. This was so that the leader was not able to identify the participants in order for the participants to respond more freely to the questions, knowing that the project leader would not be able to identify them. The scores were then averaged and each participant given a score to provide a baseline for measurement in order to see whether any change occurred after project implementation. A group score was also given.

After the project implementation, the same survey was undertaken again by each participant one month after the end of the last meeting using the same codename. A one month period was given in order to allow for any unstructured change to occur. That is, after the project implementation which prescribed behaviour, thinking and desires in order for habits to develop, it remained to be seen whether that same behaviour, thinking and desire would be freely engaged in when the behaviour was not prescribed. One month was chosen due to the time limitations of the participants and the project limitations. After the same survey was undertaken by the participants, a score was given to each participant as well as a group score. These scores were compared with the pre-project scores. The hope was to discover an increase in score due to the project implementation. Obviously, this cannot be known with certainty as it may be difficult to correlate an exact link between the project and the change in participants, due to a lack of a control group and the small sample size. However, the claim of this project is not that the results are technically and statistically valid, but that a change in some way will be discerned in the participants in order to be able to state that the project influenced the transformation of the participants individually and as a group.

Qualitative Research

One month after the project and after the post-project surveys were collected, one-on-one interviews were conducted by the project leader with the seven individual participants. One of the individuals was not able to participate due to personal reasons. The interviews were held at a mutually agreed-upon place and were recorded and transcribed with the knowledge of the participants. (The transcriptions are in Appendix C.) They went for approximately half an hour to one hour and were informal. The interviews were based on a phenomenological approach in order to discern the participants lived experience of the project. The hope was that the research would display the manner in which the participant experienced the project. Questions were asked concerning the experience of the participant as they engaged with the spiritual formation model in order to measure whether the project was helpful in terms of transformational change towards becoming more missional. It was hoped that through the informal, semi-structured interviews, the participants' answers might help the researcher discern whether the spiritual formation model was successful, but also illuminate any struggles in order for the model to be improved in the future. Some questions asked were:

- What was your experience of the course?
- What effect did the course have on you?
- What did you find enjoyable about the course?
- What did you struggle with in the course?
- What would you do differently if you could do the course again?
- How did the course help you to become more missional?
- How was the course unhelpful regarding shaping you missionally?
- What would you change about the course?
- What would you keep the same?
- How did your relationship with God change during the course?
- Did you feel more connected to God during the course? Explain?

After the interviews were undertaken and transcribed, they were analysed to discern any common themes. Firstly, the transcriptions were read and notes taken around any observations that the project leader found relevant. Exploratory comments were written around those observations. Secondly, emerging themes were noted based on the individual

participant's descriptions. This consisted of using concise phrases to describe some of the experiences of the participants. These chosen phrases were grounded in the text yet conceptualised the experiences sufficiently for qualifying the results. Thirdly, the emerging themes were clustered according to conceptual similarities. This was so that converging ideas could be identified. Fourthly, a list of themes and sub-themes emerging from the transcript analysis was produced. This four-step process was repeated for every participant. Finally, a list was produced of all themes that have emerged after analysing each participant transcript. A narrative was written to summarise the results in order to gauge what kind of experience the participants had of the course and also whether they felt that any missional transformation had occurred.

Notations around the weekly gatherings

Each week after the gatherings the project leader took notes in order to personally reflect on the gatherings and record whether she felt that missional transformation was occurring as participants engaged in the various practices. Particular attention was paid to any difficult experiences as well as successful experiences regarding missional transformation. (These notations were made weekly and are provided in Appendix D.)

Conclusion

A spiritual formation model must be designed in order to help Christians at CLCC to become more missional. The model described in this chapter has four essential characteristics:

- engages the people of God in missional practices,
- reveals a view that encourages spiritual disciplines of engagement,
- encourages behavioural change in the participants of the project, and
- activates communal discernment.

This model was implemented among a sample group of CLCC members and then qualitative and quantitative measurements were taken to observe if any change occurred as a result, in the participants regarding their behavior, beliefs and desires concerning being missional Christians.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

Overview

The thesis presented in this work is that due to the marginalisation of the church in the West, one of the consequences has been that the church has grown increasingly insular in its practice. The Church has lost its sense of identity in the West and is struggling with not being at the centre of the culture as it was in Christendom. Often this has led to the Church relying heavily on an attractional way of functioning, which has had the effect of further isolation as the culture in the West grows increasingly distrustful and blasé towards the Church.

Missional theology applied to the church reorients God's people towards their correct posture: they are people who are sent into the world on the mission of God to accomplish his purposes. The term "missionary" therefore applies to all of God's people, no matter their context, rather than only describing some Christians who are called to go to another nation to share the gospel of Christ. Chapter Three argued for the validity of a missional ecclesiology which needs to emerge in the Church as a corrective to its somewhat insular posture.

The challenge is to help the people of God to become more missional. This work has presented the notion that this occurs best through a spiritual formation process rather than by any methodological or primarily strategic solution. Chapter Two reviewed various authors and models that can contribute to such a spiritual formation model that might help the people of God to become more missional. Chapter Four gleaned from the spiritual formation focus in Chapter Two in order to design a missional spiritual formation model that would be implemented at CLCC through eight participants from that church. That Chapter described

the design of the project and the research tools that would be used to determine the effectiveness of this spiritual formation model.

This Chapter is a report of the results of the implemented project. It outlines the results and evaluates those results in terms of how they apply to the initial intention of the model and analyses the degree of its success. The ministry implications of this model are discussed along with reflections on future directions for such a model.

Results of Project Implementation

Quantitative

Eight participants from CLCC were given a survey to complete before the project implementation in order to estimate their level of missional involvement. Each of the 25 questions tried to help the participants reflect on the four aspects of missional theology outlined in the previous chapters. These four characteristics were not conveyed to the participants; rather, questions centred on those characteristics were asked in a random format. The scores of each participant were averaged in order to determine a baseline for missional behaviour, attitudes and desires. One month after the seven week project ended, the participants were asked to do the same survey again. Once again, the participant scores were averaged and the pre-project scores and post-project scores were compared in order to see what kind of change occurred. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the results.

Table 1.1 Average scores of each participant pre-project and post-project

Participants	Pre-project	Post-project	Change
1	3.08	3.76	0.68
2	3.56	4.48	0.92
3	3.6	4.2	0.6

4	3.16	3.96	0.8
5	3.08	4.12	1.04
6	3.88	4.16	0.28
7	2.96	3.48	0.52
8	3.56	4.04	0.48
Source: See Appendix B			

Table 1.2 Average score of total group pre-project and post-project

Pre-project	26.88
Post-project	32.2
Change	5.32

Several points need to be taken into account regarding this quantitative study. First, the conductor of the project did not know which scores were associated with each participant. Code names were chosen by each person. This was done in order for the participants to give more accurate answers to the survey and not feel pressured to appear more “successful” to the project leader. (In the table above, the participants have only been identified by number.)

Second, due to the small sample size of the group, the project used the method of descriptive statistics in order to analyse the results rather than try to validate the results in a strictly scientific manner. Validation, in this respect, is not possible with such a small sample size though the nature of the project required a small sample. The results of this project are applicable and limited to a specific context for a specific group of people. However, possible implications for broader ministry will be drawn from the results.

Qualitative

The qualitative method for analysing the results of the project was a phenomenological study through the use of interviews with the participants and the project leader's own observations and notations from the weekly meetings. Seven of the participants were interviewed. (One person was overseas at the time). The raw data results for these measurements are in Appendices C and D. Several points need to be taken into account in the use of these methods for measuring the project's impact. First, it is clear that since the interviews in the qualitative study were conducted by the same person who implemented the project (and is the author of this work), conductor bias needs to be taken into account. The author considered finding a person external to the project to conduct the interviews but the difficulty was in finding a person who knew the dynamics of the project well enough in order to ask the discernment questions. While potential problems associated with bias such as asking leading questions or subconsciously altering the results towards the author's projection were taken into consideration and kept to a minimum, obviously this is a limitation that still needs to be taken into account.

Second, participant bias also needs to be taken into account. This is relevant for the quantitative study but more so for the qualitative research. Participants possibly wanted to please the project leader and ensure her success in the implementation of the project. This may have led the participants to skew their answers in a more positive light. Third, on the other hand, it also needs to be taken into account that due to the participants' knowledge of and relationship with the project leader, there was a high level of trust in the group. Thus it could be that participants shared aspects of their lives that they otherwise might not have shared with an external facilitator.

Evaluation of Results

Quantitative

The quantitative results of the pre-project and post-project scores (Tables 1.1 and 1.2), show an increase in missional behaviour, attitudes and desire after the project was implemented. Each participant showed an increase in their average scores through the post-project survey and this led to an overall increase in the average score of the group. It could tentatively be said, therefore, that the missional spiritual formation model helped to increase the overall missional behaviour, attitudes and desires of the sample group.

Several factors need to be taken into account stemming from this positive result. First, it needs to be acknowledged that the correlation between an increase in missional perspective and the project is not definite since the increase of a missional perspective in a particular case may have been the result of other factors such as messages listened to, books read, or courses attended by the participants during the seven weeks. Nevertheless, the fact that there was an increase in the scores of each of the participants suggests that the project contributed to an increased missional perspective in the group.

Second, the degree of change has been calculated and is identified in Table 1.1 and 1.2. However, the levels of change were not the focus of this project but rather whether any change would occur at all. As can be seen from the results, change in each participant and the group overall did occur. The degree of change has been calculated simply to affirm and reinforce the clarity of the overall change and increase in missional perspective. Third, the survey questions were designed to be as clear as possible in terms of identifying missional behaviour, attitudes and desires, based on the four characteristics of missional theology. However, misinterpretation of questions is always a factor that can affect results. Clarification of the terms was made at the beginning of the survey (see Appendix B).

Moreover, in the first weekly gathering there was a question and answer time provided in case participants needed further clarification of the terms.

Qualitative

Qualitative analysis took the form of a phenomenological study through interviews with each participant. Appendix C shows the raw data of the results including interview transcriptions and organisation of data according to themes and sub-themes. Appendix D contains the notations and reflections of the course leader that will also be evaluated.

First, the interviews were analysed and a narrative account was given of the raw data based on themes and sub-themes emerging through the interviews in order to analyse the results of the implementation of the spiritual formation model. The point of the interviews was to discover the perspective of each participant on their experience of the course or project. Interviews were semi-structured and allowed the participants to reflect on their personal experience of having completed the project and whether they felt as though missional formation had occurred. Second, the project leader's notations of the weekly meetings will also be reflected upon.

Results of Interviews of the Participants Based on Phenomenological Study in

Narrative Form

Six themes emerged during the interview process:

- Spiritual Growth
- Increase Awareness and Practice of being Missional
- Personal Future Hopes
- Improvements for the Course
- Struggles During the Course
- Support of the Group Community.

Each theme will now be explored along with converging sub-themes.

Spiritual Growth

The interviews revealed that all of the participants experienced spiritual growth to some extent. Two participants used the term “growth” or “spiritual growth” to describe the effect that the course had on them. P5 said, “And what an adventure it was and where that leads and a time of spiritual growth for myself.” P7 said, “It’s almost like a real growing period. With the course and doing those things, family relationships. It was full on.”

Others used terms like “awakening” to describe what they had been through on the course. Spiritual growth was also characterised as the sub-theme, “Moving from an insular posture to an outward orientation” as the participants engaged in practices that were designed to help them engage with others rather than simply think about their own relationship with God and how this might benefit them only. This was a goal of the missional formation model: that is, that the practices would help people move from an internal focus to more of a focus on the people around them. The shift from self-focus towards focus on others was evident in the reflections of some of the participants.

Another sub-theme that came through for several participants was a sense of an “increased connection to God” or more focus on God throughout the course. P1 said, “I don’t think my overall relationship or the way that I view God has changed but just in terms of personally connecting with him.” P7 said, “Just a lot more conscious in the things I do in my thinking and having God in my life a lot more.” Various participants stated that they felt closer to God or more aware of him in their lives. One also stated that they felt positive because of the fact that they felt that a relationship with God was building. Another participant said that they felt that they had a need to grow their relationship with God further. Even though this was expressed as a negative, the

existence of an awareness for a need of more of God, in this author's opinion, is a sign of spiritual growth. Another significant sub-theme that emerged was that various participants felt that the course was very "practical" and that this was beneficial. An intentional goal of the spiritual formation course was to balance action and reflection rather than simply focus on spiritual reflection. P1 said, "Sometimes it's overwhelming, whereas when you do something more practical and there are easy steps along the way, you can find your own feet better." P2 said, "What are you going to do with this? I suppose making it... more practical and it's there, I can do it." Finally, P7 said, "This is a lot more practical and I get a lot out of it."

Some other realisations that people had which emerged as sub-themes were that they realised the "need for intentionality" in growing a relationship with God, rather than assuming the process would happen automatically. This also was an aim of the missional spiritual formation model as outlined in Chapter Four, which stated that spiritual formation must be an intentional process as the Christian works with God for growth. One person said they there were also aware of a "process behind the process" and this was also an intention of the course. That is, the practices should not only be viewed as forming habits but acknowledged as the Holy Spirit at work. This was clear in one participant's life who went through a lot of personal and family difficulty during the course and yet felt that this was also a part of the "journey" on which God had placed them during the course of the project.

Lastly, the sub-theme of "longer term behavioural change" emerged as a significant notion. Two participants stated that they were still practicing the discipline of hospitality. Two others stated that they were regularly practicing the reading of scripture, which was a change as they had always struggled to form a regular pattern of Bible reading. The project had this intention of producing longer term behavioural change. Therefore, overall, it could

be said that there was significant spiritual growth which occurred during the course of the project.

Increase of Awareness and Practice of being Missional

The course seemed to “increase missional awareness and practice” for all the participants. Some of those participants would already have described themselves as missional. Others felt that ‘missional’ was not a new idea but that there was a sense in which they had forgotten about being missional. So the course essentially helped the participants to bring the notion of being missional to the front of their minds. This sub-theme was clear and connects with the thesis in this work. P2 said, “It wasn’t at the forefront and it wasn’t in my thinking as much I suppose. So I think the project brought those thoughts closer to my thinking.” And P3 said, “I think it was a good reminder. I don’t think there was anything new besides the Scripture idea, but other than that there was not anything new to me”.

Some participants felt more ‘connected to their local context’ for the first time. P1 said, “So it was a bit of a pull back and just focus on what’s happening in your area and who are these people that you are living so closely with and working so closely with.” P4 said, “Eyes to be open to see what God is saying to us in your context... I think that was useful... and have made me have other times where all this stuff is going on around me and what is God saying to me about how I am as a Christian in light of the Scripture and how that flows out into mission in the world.”

The missional characteristic of practicing being incarnational has evidently grown in these participants as they become aware of God in their daily contexts rather than simply God in the church. This led one participant to reflect on and question the missional purpose of not only themselves, but also of the role of the broader church and the fact that the church tends to focus on “Christian things”: but what of its missional purpose?

The sub-theme of “missional listening” also emerged from the conversations with the participants as they explained their sense of an increase of awareness of the presence of God in their lives and trying to discern what God was saying. P1 said, “I maybe developed my missional listening a bit more. And try and identify where God was at work and where I could connect with him already at work in the community.” And P2 stated, “I was trying to work out—Is it me, is it God?” P6 said, “I suppose being more open to that... and when we were sitting around praying once, just the thoughts of the dates came to me... and listening to that. Whether that is a spiritual maturity thing... and listening more.” P6, during a group prayer time, shared about receiving a thought from God to give some dates (i.e. fruit) to a local Muslim group to bless them as part of her practice of “radical act of hospitality” that week.

As with the spiritual growth theme, the sub-theme of “thinking about the needs of others” needs to be mentioned under this theme. This was the *kenotic* characteristic of missional theology. P2 said, “I don’t think I’d looked at the people I’m close to and thought what is it they need and what can I give to them?”

P5 said, “[I became] aware of being an open channel of God’s love that we don’t just pour into ourselves but it is a channel pouring in and pouring out. I became aware that it has to be conscious.” There was an increasing awareness of being God’s “hands and feet” in the world.

There were other minor sub-themes that were manifest during the interviews that were related to an increase in being missional: “seeing God in the everyday”, learning that “missional is a mindset”, “stepping out of the comfort zone” in order to practice being missional. One person said that they now see their ‘quiet time’ with God differently. This participant described that quiet time were usually a time where he would focus on his relationship with God. The course has made him think about connecting with his context

during his quiet time. As a result, it can be concluded that overall, the participants' awareness and practice of missional changed and grew during the course.

Personal Future Hopes

The theme of "personal future hopes" emerged during the interviews. This was a sense that participants had of wanting to continue with the practices engaged with on the course, or wanting to in some way develop themselves further due to the course.

Several participants stated that they wanted to maintain doing the practices and also hoped that their behaviour would have been altered long-term. This was a sub-theme as was the "intention to focus on particular practices". Two participants changed their behaviour regarding Bible reading and two showed an intention to explore the practice of hospitality further. P1 said, "And with all the conversations that I've been having with people, [they] will lead to acts of hospitality. Definitely". P5 also said that there was an intention to continue with the acts of hospitality saying, "I'm trying to. It hasn't been as good as when we were meeting but I have been able to keep it up a little bit."

This participant then told a story of a random act of hospitality that occurred after the project, making this participant "feel good" and that it was wonderful that it "came to her".

Another sub-theme that emerged was that some participants wanted to make sure that their spiritual focus that was attained during the course was kept. P3 says, "I hope the experience won't just fizzle into nothing. I hope it will keep me spiritually aware and focused." Along with this, two other sub-themes emerged. One participant stated the need for follow-ups with some people with whom she had instigated contact but who would need further interaction if the connection was to be kept. Another said that he wanted to continue his practices but also made the comment that he would need to have an "openness" to God so that he would not get stuck in routines that would keep him in a comfort zone. He was realising the need to keep continually aware of the presence of God and open to opportunities

for connection due to the spontaneous nature of the Holy Spirit's work. Again, this theme points to the fact that there is a desire among most participants, if not all, that the behavioural change would be lasting. Some have already exhibited longer term behavioural change.

Improvements for the Course

Participants gave their opinions on how they would do the course differently if they could do it again and also what changes they would like to see in the course if it was run again. Some participants stated that they would think about how to organise their weekly routines a bit better in order to have more success on the course. They described this as being a “bit more disciplined” or to “sit down and nut out when I was going to do everything.”

Connected to this, the sub-theme of “intentionality” emerged. Participants suggested that if they were to do the course again, they would be more intentional with the practices. P4 said, “Maybe if I was to try again I'd work more on the intentionality and allow time to think and reflect on the process on the individual level and a group level. I want to be doing these practices so how am I going to fit them in, tackle them especially the hospitality brainstorming, what can I do?”

In terms of changes in the course, one person said that they would like more “group accountability” or “connectivity”. These could be seen as one sub-theme or two, however it was clear from many of the participants that further interaction during the week would improve their ability to keep engaging in the practices. P2 gave a clear example of how accountability could have helped her achieve the weekly hospitality practice:

I think that was my problem with hospitality. In my head I thought I knew what I wanted to do but because no one else knew, I could not push myself as much because people didn't know what I was thinking. Which I think doing this has made me realise that I do want to have more people that I tell what I'm working on with God and getting them to ask me how I'm going.

Others mentioned the need for more connection in order for an increase of support (or accountability). P1 said, “[Having] communication with the people that you are going through the journey with during the week—that would be good I think”.

And P2 stated, “I think having the meeting once a week was good and sharing what happened, but, I suppose, I would like more of that sort of stuff... more sharing... but maybe in different way, like emails...”

Another person showed frustration about doing the course due to many distractions in daily life. Her sense was that if she had fewer distractions, she might have been more successful in the course. This could mean that the course structure did not suit the lifestyle of that particular participant. However, this comment may have been due to personality temperament or a failure to understand the goals of the course which were to creatively weave the practices into the rhythms of life rather than to clear away “distractions”.

A final sub-theme that emerged was the length of the course. Some participants stated that the course could have been “longer” so that relationships could grow and there could be longer term effects. P4 says that a longer timeframe would be “for the purpose of encouraging those practices over a long period of time. So that allows greater room to work on that and to be encouraged.”

This theme of improvements for the course was helpful in terms of gauging the effectiveness of the course from the participants’ perspective which would speak into whether any changes should happen if this course or the practices are implemented in the future.

Struggles during the Course

It was clear that every participant had various struggles as they did the course for the seven weeks. One participant felt “rushed” as they did the practices because they felt that life was so busy that they did not have time to fully integrate the practices into daily life. Another sub-theme that emerged was an “ambiguity around hospitality”. Various people found the

hospitality difficult to practice for several reasons, such as wondering what a ‘marginalised’ person was, and also having the courage to engage with such people. One participant stated that the term “radical” acts of hospitality should be changed because it was confusing.

There was also one participant who honestly stated that she “struggled to obey God” in some circumstances. There was a case of her sensing that God was telling her to practice hospitality towards a person who she did not like very much and she struggled with that. P2 states about this person, “She doesn’t care much about her job, just doing it. She sort of isolates herself and doesn’t come to staff meetings and stays up the library and I felt all term God was saying, ‘Just get her flowers’”. However, P2 struggled to obey God in this case. The awareness of this struggle was a very positive thing, in the opinion of this author.

Others struggled with continuing to be intentional in the course and found it difficult to fit the practices into the weekly routine. This sense only came from three of the participants, however, and the others found fitting the practices into weekly routines fairly easy. In the author’s opinion, more creativity could possibly have been exercised by the participants who struggled, along with a willingness to change established routines. This would have helped engaging with the practices more successfully.

Another sub-theme that emerged within struggles on the course was “negative feelings” that emerged due to some practices not being achieved. This was felt by many of the participants. It seems as though some could work through these feelings without letting it affect them, but others struggled more. Perhaps this was to do with personality temperament or due to being strategic about a situation. However, it was clear that some managed to work through these feelings and others felt a little disappointed with themselves after the course. P2 said, “At the start I felt excited and happy to do it. I felt like it was timely and good for me. I think I got discouraged and disappointed in myself at the start because I felt like I wasn’t doing the practices very well or consistently.” P3 said, “Trying to be a good girl and

doing all the things for you...” P6 said, “Then there is guilt when you don’t do what you are supposed to [do]. But as Christian guilt is a big thing... it’s not meant to be, but it is... ‘I’m not doing this and I should be’.” P4 stated that he wanted to be achieving more: “And also that initial feeling of not achieving the acts of hospitality, you want to be kicking those goals but you just have to wait for those opportunities or be bold to take them when they come. That is a challenge”. However, as can be heard from these reflections, the realisation came to P4 that he would need to “wait” on God rather than push through in order to gain a sense of “achievement”. In the author’s opinion, those who had this realisation and came to terms with this need to wait on God were more successful on the course. Clearly, there needed to be a balance between intentionality to engage with the practices and waiting on God for the opportunities and the growth to occur. This need was explained in Chapter Four.

Along with this thought came the sub-theme of sensing that sometimes the practices were “too forced”. P3 says, “Sometimes I felt it was too forced. I was doing it because I had to. I think you’ve just got to be prepared for the unexpected and you can’t put the Holy Spirit into a box and you can’t manufacture something. Sometimes I felt that we were asked to do things rather than just doing something because it was Spirit-led”. And P5 said, somewhat more moderately, “I found that the radical acts of hospitality forced but I think it’s only forced when you feel like you have to do it and you feel pressured to do it but when I relaxed about it and the opportunities came then I saw how I could get involved.”

This participant’s comments are an example of having a sense of feeling “forced”, yet working through that feeling and realising that when this happens, it is a sign that the Christian is striving and the problem is not with the practices but the attitude of heart that needs to be checked. However it is true that some participants were not able find acts of hospitality to engage in and therefore the exercise may have felt forced. One last sub-theme

which emerged from one person is that they felt that they were “already missional” and that the course did not necessarily help them to increase in their missional perspective.

To summarise this theme, it could be said that struggle was expected to occur during the course but some struggles took participants by surprise. The project leader expected the sense of pressure that would occur in order for participants to engage in the weekly practices, particularly when weekly meetings were to be held for the purpose of accountability. The project leader sought to bring grace into the group so that guilt and pressure were relieved. The mentality of the participants was also important, and particularly whether they could work through, with God’s help the feelings of condemnation, underachievement and/or guilt. Overall, however, this did not inhibit the spiritual growth that occurred and even contributed to it somewhat, forming *communitas* as people shared vulnerably about their struggles.

Support of the Group Community

One clear sub-theme which emerged was that each participant shared that they felt “supported by the group” during the weekly gatherings. This was encouraging as one aspect of the spiritual formation model was that it had a goal to produce community and build relationships.

Another sub-theme was that “relationships were built up” during these weeks together. One participant said that ‘close relationships’ were formed and another that ‘deeper relationships’ were forming. Another said that it was “good to get to know people” and another said, “You don’t get that on a Sunday.” There was also a comment about how vulnerability helped to connect people. P6 said, “We were all vulnerable and broke down those barriers so now we are more approachable when we see each other outside the group.” P7 said along the same lines, “It’s good to scratch below the surface and understand them more and the things that they struggle with or what their strengths are. It humanises it all. Just with dealing with other people.” This relationality was a notion that was commented on by

most of the participants and there was a sense that when a person was away, that connection was missed. In other words, the necessity for people to be present at the gatherings was crucial.

Moreover, there was also a sense that the group coming together regularly was helpful for “group motivation”. P1 said, “I think the group was very important, because if I just had that course and was going through it by myself, I don’t think I would have stuck to it or would have pushed as hard either necessarily.”

P4 said,

I think it was pretty positive... just that regular catch up with the group was a big part of it. Having that chance to check in and see how others are doing... that was encouraging... to keep at it and thinking around things as well. Think through how we tackle the practices. So that was good experience. Fitting those experiences into life and seeing that you can make the time to do those things.

One person described the meetings as “lifting” her in terms of her listening to what others had to say and contribute. This person, in one week, did not do any of the practices, yet, when she came to the group, she felt encouraged afterwards.

This was also described under the sub-theme of “accountability” and several participants stated that they felt that the group made them more accountable and that this was beneficial. The group was becoming more accountable to each other rather than the project leader. P5 said, “The whole thing of being accountable to other people... I know that I have to check in every Thursday night and say how I went. It forced me to be disciplined in Bible reading and prayer and the more you do that, the more you grow; you reap more than what you sow.” P6 said, “I really enjoyed it. It made me accountable.” P7 stated, “I got a lot out of that and within the group, I felt I was accountable to the group. So my motivation level was higher than what it normally is.”

Finally a sub-theme emerged of the “mix of people” in the group that was helpful. P2 said,

It was good for me because I didn't know everyone that well... and talking to new people and hearing what they were going through. I liked the fact that there were younger and older people and found it shocking that these people had been Christians for decades [and] still struggled with the things that I did. I found that encouraging. I found it good. I would love to keep doing it.

P4 stated, "I liked the diversity of the group. People had different life experiences which was good to draw from." Overall, this theme was very clearly one that the participants identified as a successful outcome regarding their experiences of the course.

Conclusion Based on Phenomenologically Based Interviews

In summary, the interviews show that the participants experienced medium to high levels of spiritual growth and an increase in missional awareness and behaviour. Participants became more aware of God and the course ignited a desire to keep pursuing him and engaging in the practices for longer term change. The group support and relationships built were a highlight according to the participants' sharing of experiences. Even though there were some struggles on the course and certainly there would be room for improvement with respect to course participation and course structure development, participants' experience of the course was a positive one. The missional practices were able to be practiced and worked into the daily rhythms of life by most of the participants fairly well. Moreover, even the struggles produced spiritual growth as can be seen from the evidence in the transcripts.

Field notes on Weekly Meetings

As I conducted the weekly meetings and facilitated the discussions, I took time at the end of every meeting to take reflection notes about that particular meeting and how I felt that the project was going. (The reflections are in Appendix D and this is a brief descriptive narrative of those reflections.)

At the start of the course, each participant was asked about the hopes and fears of engaging in the seven week course. Various people reflected the thoughts that later emerged during the interviews. The main thoughts were that people were wondering if they could

achieve what they had set out to do. Others were concerned about how busy they were and whether they could do the course. Some also stated that the group would be good for accountability. The second meeting was encouraging in that people engaged with the practices. Some had a sense of success yet others felt they failed at practicing them well enough. Various people stepped out of their comfort zone and I was very encouraged by that. My overall sense was that growth was already occurring and that God was very much involved in the daily lives of these participants as they had committed themselves to faithfully carry out the practices.

I also thought that people were still at the stage of doing the practices with effort and that the practices were not yet natural to people. This, however, was expected so early on in the course. One of the course participants started what would turn out to be a long-term relationship with the “trolley guys” at the local shopping centre. This participant felt that God had told her to show radical acts of hospitality through prayer and buying coffee and bread for the “trolley guys” at the local shopping centre. (There were times in the course where God revealed his sense of humour such as one particular narrative labelled “the trolley guys”.)

By the third meeting there was a substantial amount of movement and encouragement. Course participants were engaging in the practices, stepping outside their comfort zones and hearing God speak. This latter point led to some group teaching as the topic of discerning God came up. We also learned that one of the participants received a word during the previous week’s prayer time and acted upon that prompting. This led to her buying some fruit (dates) for some Muslims in our community. Later on, this led to these Muslims gifting the church with some cakes. All of this was happening at a time where our world was experiencing tension with the Muslim community so I felt that this message of loving one another and showing hospitality was extending well beyond the confines of this small project.

At the stage of the fourth meeting, which was halfway, three things occurred. Firstly, people began to be more aware of those around them in their contexts and the practices were clearly producing fruit. Secondly, people were beginning to try to incorporate the practices in their daily rhythms yet were struggling to do so due to distractions in life. It seemed as though when distractions happened, it was harder to focus on God rather than drawing closer to him. However, secondly, I had a feeling that people were putting too much pressure on themselves regarding following the practices. I needed to tell people that God was working through the practices and that they must allow God to give them opportunities. I said that it was no problem if nothing occurred that week and that they could be more patient. We prayed at the end of that meeting for more opportunities and grace over ourselves as the practices were engaged with. It reminded me of the usual tension that exists between balancing our intentionality and the work of the Holy Spirit as we Christians practice the spiritual disciplines.

It was in this gathering, however, that two participants experienced God in a very moving way. One bought food vouchers for homeless people near his work and had opportunity to give them out. He said that he felt God's presence with him as he did that and as he looked into the faces of the two homeless people. Another bought some bread for the "trolley guys" and as she watched them eat from afar, she had a revelation that they were "breaking bread" which made her feel that God was with them, no matter their religion or background.

In the fifth meeting, it was clear that the group was beginning to bond and less direction was needed from me as the group took more ownership of the gatherings. More people asked each other questions and prayed for each other. Generally speaking, even though various people were away due to sickness and work, this was an encouraging meeting and there were opportunities for the group to open up to each other to share at a more

intimate level. One person had the realisation that she was “forcing” the hospitality practice and that she needed to let go of that. As she did this, she found that she was able to practice it more freely and wait for God’s provided opportunities.

One overwhelming feeling that came to me in the sixth meeting was that there is a great need for Christians to find God in the everyday since we are such a distracted people. It is true that we need to take time out of our busy schedules to spend time away with God, but it is equally true that we better need to find God in the everyday busyness of life. One example emerged in the group very clearly. One participant became sick during the week and spent some time in hospital. He would have been perfectly right to take a break from the practices, however he kept doing them in the hospital. He especially engaged with other patients whom he would not normally engage with and he prayed with his eyes open for the people in the hospital. It made me realise that we can find God anywhere: all we need to do is be aware and open. It is indeed a habit that we need to intentionally form.

At the stage of the seventh meeting, there was still a sense of growth although I felt like I saw the growth more clearly than the participants saw it within themselves. That made me realise how important encouragement is and also perhaps what a misinterpretation we have of what constitutes spiritual growth. I felt that spiritual growth happens slowly and incrementally within a context of continual “wins” and “misses”. I saw that in the group. However, I had a feeling that the group clearly wanted to experience more of the “wins” than anything else. This feeling of wanting “success” is an opportunity to humbly lean on God for growth rather than desiring our own success.

What also surfaced during this week were some genuine struggles around connecting in the neighbourhood. This led to some real discussions about how it is that we as Christians can be incarnational in our contexts even though our community seems so busy and closed to connectivity. This is a hard conversation for the church today, especially in middle class

suburbia where people seem hesitant to open up their lives to one another. Another struggle that I perceived was the struggle for real change to occur. In reality, it is very difficult to change behaviour and, once a routine is in place, it takes effort, creativity and desire from a person in order to change that routine. This is a real concern for Christians who must incorporate disciplines for spiritual formation in our lives.

At the end of the course, I asked people to share their feelings about the course and, generally speaking, the thoughts were positive. There was a sense of change, however. Perhaps more spectacular results were sought and there was a slight sense of disappointment in the group. In a culture of success-orientation, this could perhaps be an expected end result—a sense of disappointment if the spiritual growth was incremental. I am convinced, however, after this project, that it is through this kind of growth that God shapes and forms us.

Synthesis

The quantitative and qualitative evaluation indicates that missional formation did occur for the eight participants of the course from CLCC. The quantitative survey shows that an increase of missional attitudes, behaviour and desire occurred for each participant even though some increased more than others. Overall, therefore, the group grew in their missional perspective. The qualitative phenomenological studies also show that there was a sense of spiritual growth, an increase in missional perspective, and group formation that occurred. Even though it is the case that people experienced struggle on the course, this did not inhibit spiritual growth and instead aided it. The themes and sub-themes mentioned in the evaluation of the qualitative results show that the goals of behavioural change, communal formation, engaging in the practices and missional formation occurred. Amidst all of this, there was a

sense also that the practices were not merely habit-forming but rather that the Spirit of God was at work for change to occur.

The presence of God's Spirit was clear in the weekly meetings as has been observed by the author and the participants. The overwhelming sense was that formation was occurring by God's Spirit in small, quiet ways and only occasionally did bigger experiences become manifest. Moreover the love, compassion, and grace of God were present for this formation to occur. This was essential to this project otherwise the spiritual formation model could be accused of simply being a habit formation project.

Ministry Implications

This project was intended to form a spiritual formation model that is missional in order for the church to regain its outward focus. In the experience of the author, it appears that many Churches in the West have relied on highly attractional paradigms for ecclesiology and these, coupled with an increased marginality in society, have encouraged the church to turn inward, meaning it has forgotten its missional purpose. The project aimed to show that, as God's people engage in missional practices, they can be formed into missionaries in their particular context therefore becoming less insular and more connected to God's mission. The results of the project have been described and have several implications for ministry.

Firstly, the results show that implementing such a project within CLCC—a church that is on the journey to becoming a missional church—could be a positive step in transitioning that church into a missional church. The sample size of the project group from CLCC was small and yet positive results were still shown, revealing that each participant did move towards becoming more missional. This means that the participants, by the end of this course, moved towards being increasingly Trinitarian, incarnational, kenotic and pneumatological. This spiritual formation model has shown that a formational approach is

effective in order to help God's people become missional. Even though this project did not have the intention to measure the influence that the sample group would have on the broader congregation, it is not unreasonable to suspect that the sample group will have some kind of positive influence on the broader CLCC congregation due to their experience of the course. If this is the case, then others in the church who did not engage with the project might want to engage in a similar project or course themselves. Another possibility that was referred to by one of the project participants, is that the model could be implemented in the small group structure of the church so that broader implementation could occur, thus increasing the amount of people engaging in missional formation. Alternatively, the increased missional behaviour and attitudes of the sample group could affect the other members of the congregation who observe them.

Even though the project was run on a sample group in CLCC, it could also be inferred from this research that other churches in similar positions would be able to engage with the spiritual formation model. If this is the case, then it may also prove to be helpful in increasing missional behaviour and attitudes within other church congregations. While the results stemming from a sample group from CLCC cannot be transferred automatically onto other congregations, with a contextual approach, they do yield to the possibility for implementation in other churches with potentially positive results.

Secondly, the results show that the spiritual formation model can also be applied to a church plant if, once again, a contextual approach is taken. Since the sample size from the church was small and many church planting teams start small in size, the missional practices could be engaged in by the initial team in order to create a missional culture to prepare a foundation for the culture of the broader church that is to emerge.

A church plant that has an intention to be a missional church needs to prioritise the formation of its members so that a missional culture is created and preserved regardless of the

guidance of the leadership. This spiritual formation model empowers each of God's people to take responsibility for their own missional growth through regularly engaging in missional practices and keeping each person accountable to those practices. Missional growth in each member of the church ought to occur through this spiritual formation model regardless of the leaders within the church. This helps to inhibit an over-dependency on the leadership of a church.

Thirdly, the results show that spiritual formation models are a medium that the Spirit of God can work through in order to produce growth in participants towards being missional. This has implications for CLCC ministry. If it is sceptical about spiritual formation models, the church can see evidence that God can work through them in order to produce change and transformation. As argued in Chapter Four, some Christians interpret that spiritual growth happens without structure or intentionality, apart from effort, due to the Holy Spirit within them. However, this missional spiritual formation model revealed that God worked through the Christian's intention towards growth. Moreover, when steps are put in place for that growth to happen, God can use this in order to produce transformation. The spiritual formation model showed that God's Spirit can work through regular, habitual practices in order to change attitudes and behaviour. An interdisciplinary approach between spirituality, theology and psychology can reveal that God's Spirit is able to work through each field for the transformation of the Christian. This avoids a certain dualism in ministry which sees that only 'spiritual' options are viable for effective ministry.

However, caution needed to be taken regarding engaging in the missional practices routinely so that a sense of pressure did not occur on the participants. The participants did feel some pressure coming from within, regarding accomplishing the weekly practices. When a spiritual formation model is employed, a careful balance between participant intentionality and God's grace by his Spirit must be held. If this is not done, legalism, guilt and

condemnation can be experienced by the participants. This is an important implication for ministry since the church operates and grows by the power of God's Spirit, not self-effort.

The spiritual formation model was atypical in that it focused on practices of engagement rather than withdrawal (as described in Chapter Four). CLCC is a church that is accustomed to hearing that spiritual disciplines are a necessary part of the Christian life however those spiritual disciplines are normally interpreted as disciplines of withdrawal. This work has not argued that disciplines of withdrawal are unnecessary but only that Christians often interpret spiritual disciplines to mean practices of withdrawal. This has the effect of turning the attention of the Christian towards themselves and their personal relationship with God rather than towards the needs of the world. Disciplines of withdrawal are needed, however, practices of engagement are also needed in order to help the Christian become more outward-focused, missional and balanced in approach to formation. The missional spiritual formation model helps CLCC to see that regular spiritual practices are not only about inner retreat but also about engagement with our world and that this is equally important for the formation of a Christian.

Fourthly, the results show that overall spiritual growth occurred in the sample group. This was an unintended result to some extent in this project, yet it was clear from the qualitative research in particular that overall spiritual growth in the lives of the participants did occur through the project implementation. This has ministry implications for the broader congregation at CLCC and consequently for each of the participants who engaged in the spiritual formation model.

Many of the participants described the course as being a part of a growth process for them; they sensed that they were on a form of "journey" regarding their relationship with God. Some of the participants realised that they were "dry" in their relationship with God and also that they needed to grow in that relationship. Moreover, many described that they had

been focused on themselves rather than on other people and that this is not the way that they wanted to live their life in Christ. An implication of the course, then, is that as spiritual growth happens in the lives of the participants and this contributes to the life of the broader church, the “spiritual temperature” of the church is raised. If the participants experienced growth in their lives during the course then this will be reflected in the broader church contributing to its overall growth as those in the sample group influence others in the congregation towards deepening their relationship with God. This may, of course, not necessarily happen as the momentum of growth gained in the sample group might be overwhelmed by the spiritual lethargy of the broader church, yet it is still the case that a segment of the church that has been experiencing growth will certainly contribute positively to the church overall.

Fifth, the results show that the spiritual formation model had the consequence of drawing people together and forming community. This was essential to the Trinitarian characteristic of being missional. Since God is Trinity, his people must to some extent emulate the relationality that exists within the Trinity. Therefore the mutuality, hospitality and relationships that can be seen in the internal dynamics of the Trinity must be a model for missional engagement for the people of God.

The group from CLCC that formed the sample for this project showed hospitality and connected relationships with each other and this spilled over to their practices during the week, encouraging them to connect with people in their localities. Various people in the sample group said that they felt strengthened to engage in the practices during the week because of the encouragement and mutual discernment they felt and practiced when they interacted with the group. In other words, the hospitality shown within the group was a help for the group members to show hospitality towards those outside the group during the week. Many mentioned the fact that group accountability was a helpful factor for the participants to

commit to engaging with the practices weekly. This accountability among group members did not seem forced but rather displayed a flexible mutuality that showed grace in the midst of spurring each other on. The ministry implication is that the sample group learned that missional engagement requires team work, relationships to be built and a genuine sense of trust to emerge in a group for effectiveness. This need for genuine relationships to emerge in a missional church is something that can be modelled to the broader church.

Various participants said that they felt that the variety of people within the group was a helpful part of them getting to know different people in the CLCC congregation. This is beneficial for the overall church as people form relationships with each other. This may not have happened had the spiritual formation model not been put into place. The model had the effect of growing new relationships within CLCC as well as outside the church.

Sixth, the results show that the spiritual formation model helped participants to understand the meaning of being missional in a clearer way. Participants realised that missional does not necessarily mean evangelistic, event-based or necessitate an overly structured program. They learned that being missional can happen in everyday life and that every Christian can practice it, not only those with a special inclination or evangelistic gift. It is something that can be woven into daily life in a simple manner that just requires intentionality on the part of the Christian. This reorientation is helpful to the overall church as it is in the process of moving towards being a missional church. One of the difficulties at CLCC has been to explain the meaning of missional: this can occasionally become very theoretical. The ministry project helped the sample group understand the simplicity, accessibility and normality of being missional. Moreover in a church that prefers large events when it comes to evangelism and connecting with the community, the spiritual formation model showed participants that missional does not need to be event-driven. The ministry

implication is that the project helped the continuing transformation of the church culture at CLCC as the sample group began to understand missional with greater clarity.

Therefore, the project in the form of a missional spiritual formation model had implications for the current context of CLCC and also has implications for broader ministry operations. In effect, the model formed a sample group of the people of God at CLCC into missionaries in their local context to can engage in the mission of God. This can essentially orient the church towards an outward focus rather than an internal orientation.

New Contributions

This research makes a number of new contributions in the field of missiology in the Western Christian Church context. Firstly, it shows that spiritual formation can be framed so that missional Christians are developed. Spiritual formation practices traditionally have simultaneous withdrawal and engagement aspects. However, the spiritual formation model in this project frames practices according to a missional theology and therefore within a missional paradigm. There is a growing field of research and work around missional theology and ecclesiology and this project aims to develop a missional spirituality based on a solid, missional, theological framework. While other spiritual formation models certainly have aspects of promoting practices of engagement, this work focuses on the unique contribution that missional theology makes to those practices of engagement as they are applied to the people of God in order for a missional perspective to be developed in the church.

Secondly, the research in this work indicates that missional formation does in fact occur as Christians regularly engage in missional spiritual formation practices. It is clear from the evidence that the sample group from CLCC showed an increase in their missional behaviour, attitudes and desires as they engaged in the project. Even though measuring long-term spiritual growth is difficult, the evidence suggests that some kind of increase in a

missional perspective certainly occurred. This is therefore an encouragement to other spiritual formation models regarding implementation and more so for missional spiritual formation models that focus on the formation of the scattered church. If a church is intent on orientation towards a missional paradigm, it can be somewhat confident that implementing a missional spiritual formation model will increase the missional perspective of the participants.

Personal Growth

The author experienced personal growth during the course of the project regarding an understanding of missional spirituality. Firstly, the realisation that spiritual growth occurs slowly was reaffirmed. In a society which values busyness, instant production and a fast-paced life, the project was a reminder that spiritual growth happens very slowly and in God's timing as Christians move forwards and backwards in their rate of transformation.

Regardless, it is true that spiritual formation happens; however, the pace may be slower than most Christians might realise or desire. Secondly, and alternatively, the realisation that missional growth actually does occur was an encouraging one. Often it is hard to see actual growth in people as a minister and one wonders if Christians are growing at all. However, the project revealed that people do grow spiritually even though this rate of growth could be considered slow and the growth is sometimes clandestine.

Thirdly, the author realised that a sense of routine is needed for missional spirituality to have any effect. Too often in Christian circles, it is thought that spiritual growth happens naturally, however the truth that emerged in this project is that missional formation occurs as the Spirit works through intentional regular habits that are practiced and become part of automated behaviour. This, in the author's opinion, is the Spirit of God working through the benefits of information discovered in fields such as behavioural psychology. These fields are

often relegated to a supposed secular realm by Christians; however, the Spirit of God can work through these insights, theories and practices to transform people.

Fourthly, the realisation was that spiritual formation practices can easily become legalistic if not practiced with the right attitude. Many of the participants did feel an internal pressure to perform well in the course and to achieve the goals of engaging in each practice weekly. Often this hinders people from engaging in spiritual practices; that is, they have a resistance towards practicing them. As a result, some might adopt a more free approach of practicing disciplines in a more random format, picking and choosing spiritual practices based on personal convenience. Spiritual practices do need to be engaged in regularly, however care must be taken that a legalistic approach does not subconsciously invade the process. The solution, then, is not to stop engaging with the practices but to become aware of any feeling of heaviness, discern why this is happening, and then pray that God would remove that. Alternatively, one can press through and continue to practice the disciplines leading to overcoming that resistance. A reminder that spiritual practices are vehicles that God uses to form us rather than a means for approval is also necessary. This required some coaching for some participants yet others made the transition to grace on their own as they realised that the guilt, heaviness and difficulty was not from God.

Fifth, it was also realised that change is very difficult and that it is only by a Christian cooperating with the Spirit of God that true transformation is realised. Ingrained behaviour takes time to change and true desire and intentionality is a crucial issue for that change to occur. Some participants struggled with changing long-practiced, established routines. Changing human behaviour is difficult; however, it is possible with the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, it was clear that even though the practices were given to the participants and they engaged in those practices, coaching needed to happen in terms of how those practices

would be merged with daily and weekly routines. The author thought that this structuring would happen naturally as each participant planned their weeks, however only some did this. What was needed for a more successful outcome was coaching regarding how to incorporate the practices into each individual's life: in other words, a more planned approach was necessary. This is an important realisation for such a model as this, which sought to integrate the missional practices with daily routines rather than separating them for engagement in separate blocks of time in private withdrawal.

Future Directions

This project has focused on implementing a spiritual formation model in order for a sample group from CLCC to become more missional. The results show that the model had some success with this goal. However, to further the work of the project, there are directions that this work could move towards in order for this area to be further researched and developed in the future.

Due to time restrictions, the project was limited to eight weeks; however, it would have benefitted from a longer time frame. A longer time frame of approximately three months could have seen further results in two areas. Firstly, stronger group formation would have possibly occurred. Even though one of the successes of the project was that there was significant bonding in the group, further time was needed for deeper relationships to form, trust to develop, and for the group to lead itself without dependency on the facilitator. Secondly, missional formation might have been clearer as habits would be more ingrained. As pointed out in Chapter Four, behavioural change is a complex process that takes time to happen and a longer time frame suits the change of more complex behaviour. Since the change of behaviour needed in this project was quite significant, a longer time frame would have been more suitable. The difficulty with a longer time frame however is securing commitment from participants who lead busy lives.

Another direction for future implementation of this project could be to reflect on other practices which connect with the four characteristics of missional theology. This project connected the practice of praying with eyes open to the missional characteristic of pneumatology; the practice of reading Scripture in a public place with the missional characteristic of incarnational life, the practice of radical acts of hospitality with the characteristic of *kenosis* and the practice of meeting together with the characteristic of practicing Trinitarian community. However, if one was to start from the basis of the four missional characteristics outlined, other practices could be designed in order for missional formation to occur. What would some other practices reflecting these four missional characteristics be? The qualitative results showed that some participants struggled with some of the practices therefore others might be thought of for future implementation.

For the effectiveness of the project to increase, another alteration could be to encourage and even to structure interaction with group members during the week. Several of the course participants mentioned that they would have benefitted from interaction with group members during the week for increased motivation. This was not structured into the spiritual formation course; however, it was the hope of the author that this interaction and support would happen spontaneously. Perhaps the fact that it did not happen spontaneously indicates that structure around mutual accountability and support during the week is necessary. A system could be developed where each course participant teams up with another and they agree to connect with each other during the week either face to face, on the phone, or through social media in order to spur each other on for growth. Moreover, goals needing to be accomplished could be passed on from one to another so that a mutual accountability occurs between the two participants. This would certainly be a positive contribution to the course, however, again, the increase in time needed may prove to be difficult for some participants.

Connected with this direction of increased connectivity among group members during the week is the coaching that could happen within the group regarding planning the execution of the practices. The model would be improved by some time spent either at the beginning or during the course discussing how participants are implementing the practices during the week and what they are finding helpful or not. It is one thing to ask the participants to engage in the practices but it is another step to think through how those practices need to be merged into the daily and weekly rhythms of the participants. This step was needed on the course. This could involve coaching and planning done by the facilitator or it could happen as the group members share about their experiences, whereby a group coaching or learning occurs.

The role and function of the facilitator needs more careful thought for future project implementations. The role is crucial. If future courses are run then the facilitator needs training in how to ask discerning questions and in leaving a balance between being directive and allowing the group to decide for themselves a course of action. The group leader should not be seen as the teacher but rather a guide for the group. This was a difficulty as the facilitator of the group was the pastor/teacher of CLCC and occasionally the facilitator did move towards a teacher role. This could have been helped by the facilitator doing the weekly practices alongside of the participants. This may have given the group facilitator a more egalitarian posture in the group meetings. This is a possibility for future implementations. Another option could be to remove the need for the facilitator altogether which would make the structure noticeably different. This would require the group to be trained in how to ask questions of one another and to guide the group processes so that mutual discernment, sharing and communication occur.

Another possibility for future directions for the project is for the course to be run in church groups that already meet weekly. This would mean that instead of implementing the course on one group that is put together for the sole purpose of completing the project,

guidance and instruction could be given to existing small group leaders in the church. In this way, more people in that context are engaging in the spiritual practices. However, an experience that would be missed in this development is the formation of new relationships which occurs when new groups are formed with a cross section of people from that particular context.

Looking at the project from a broader perspective than the dynamics of the spiritual formation model, one benefit of having multiple groups engaging in the practices is that a larger sample size could be attained for research purposes. However, the sample size would still need to be quite large so perhaps this is an idea for a larger church to consider. This would not only increase the sample size for better research results but would also go a long way to potentially changing the culture of a large church if it is overly dependent on weekly services rather than weekday discipleship practices—that is, if the church is more emphatic regarding gathered rather than scattered church practices.

This leads to thinking about the next steps that need to be taken in a particular church once the project is implemented. If such a project is implemented in a church and it is effective in terms of reorienting participants toward being missional, consequences will flow from this. During the project, even though the length of the course was short, the participants experienced God at work stirring hearts as well as challenging them to engage in their contexts at a deeper level. God was challenging them to be incarnational. Once participants of this course start to hear God and act on his promptings, activities will emerge that are missional. If this is the case then the church leadership needs to consider how this influence might affect and change the current structure of the overall church. The missional, spiritual formation model has potential to alter the structure of the church from the ground up thus making the structure of the church more missional. Structures within the church, therefore, need to be able to further missional activities initiated by individuals but also by groups

within the context and ministry of the church. How can an existing church organise itself around a missional paradigm once a missional mindset has been established among some of its members?

Further to this thought, it would be beneficial to the project if there was a development in terms of measuring the effect that the participants from the sample group have on the broader church culture. This might be a difficult effect to measure but worthwhile if the project is being used in order to stimulate a missional mindset in the broader congregation. Through the project participants discovered that they did, in fact, increase in a missional perspective. The expected outcome is that as the participants engage with the broader church they will be modelling missional behaviour, sharing missional attitudes and encouraging others to increasingly understand the concept of missional. This is an expected outcome of the course since the participants had an overwhelmingly positive experience of the project. The extent to which this model could be used to stimulate a whole church towards a missional identity could be verified by measuring the impact that the sample group has on the broader church culture.

Finally, a development for future direction of this work is that it could be applied to a church plant context rather than to an established church. The project would need to be altered yet would remain useful for establishing a missional culture. The church planting team could engage in the missional practices to emphasise the importance of scattered church practices rather than primarily a gathered church emphasis. Another advantage is that this could empower the team rather than making the success of the plant dependent on a leader. This engagement would also develop the group dynamics and relationships. As a result of the team engaging in these practices, structures could form from this base in order to establish the church as missional rather than attractional.

Questions for Further Research into the Problem

This research into missional spirituality has prompted various questions in the author's mind that may contribute to further work in this field. The focus on spirituality and discipleship has raised the concern around the lack of discipleship processes in the church, particularly in the area of scattered church practices. A church culture has been allowed to develop that focuses on church attendance rather than weekly interaction with God and God's people for the purpose of engaging with the mission of God. Moreover, a culture of success has emerged in the church, perhaps following the world's obsession with success, distraction and busyness. In such a culture, how is a missional spiritual formation model such as the one designed in this project able to measure success? If the expectations are for fast growth and manifest success then a model such as this is countercultural and it necessitates a reorganisation of expectations for implementation. Further research into the area of spiritual formation in the midst of a success-oriented and fast-paced culture would be helpful to the development of this area.

In regard to implementing a spiritual formation model in a success-oriented culture, the area of discipleship must be further explored. What does it look like to be a disciple of Jesus today in the West? The answer in the minds of many Christians would perhaps be that church attendance, prayer, Bible reading and telling friends about Jesus is the answer. Yet the model of Jesus as seen in Scripture is more penetrating than this watered down view of discipleship. The question of Western Christians regaining a discipleship posture that more adequately reflects the life of Jesus is necessary and is an area of research that can be explored so that the church in the West experiences renewal.

Complementing this question would be research to explore the blocks and impediments to discipleship in the West. If Christians are engaging in spiritual formation practices yet not being formed into disciples who reflect the lifestyle of Jesus, then what are

the impediments? Perhaps further exploration into the various worldviews which produce a syncretistic practice of faith in Christians is necessary. Worldviews such as consumerism, individualism, hedonism, pragmatism, and narcissism could function as impediments to the growth of Christians as faithful disciples of Jesus. If these could be identified in the life of a Christian and then separated and contrasted to a Christian worldview, this may help Christians develop and form a lifestyle that is more in line with the practices of Jesus. Here, the knowledge of the difference between spiritual formation and discipleship is needed. Formation is the work of God to conform a person into the image of Jesus and Discipleship is the response towards God's work in a person's life. The two are connected yet distinct and both require further research to investigate the process of transformation in the lives of Christians.

The topic of transformation also emerged in this work as an area which needs investigation in order to analyse how change happens and what are the factors that instigate change. The difficulty of transformation was clear in this spiritual formation model and the fact is that most people found it hard to step out of their comfort zone to engage with the practices. They also struggled to change their weekly routines in order to incorporate them. What would be some factors that would help people process transformation? How is the Spirit of God involved in this? To what extent does the Spirit take people out of their comfort zone contrary to natural inclinations? These are questions for another research paper to address that, if explored, might shed more light on the problem addressed in this work.

If this occurs then a more interdisciplinary approach is needed which also raises some interesting questions for further research. To what extent is the Spirit of God at work, for example, through habit formation and behavioural change? This is a question that can integrate the field of theology with that of psychology or perhaps even neuroscience. Since this project took into consideration theories of habit formation and the evidence was that the

Spirit of God worked through this for formation, research could be further done in exploring the intersection between the Spirit and human behaviour. This would be helpful in avoiding the dualism that is evident in some forms of Christianity which tends to separate the secular from the sacred. The question here, however, is to what extent the Spirit is at work in non-Christian or secular people, contexts and processes. If a principle from secular psychology is utilised such as behavioural modification and this is practiced in a context where prayer for the Holy Spirit's work is encouraged, then the merging of the spiritual with the secular occurs. This is potentially a fruitful field for further research and investigation of the connection between the two.

Another area for further research and investigation is the interesting topic of embodied Christianity as a witness to the world. This work has noted the missional characteristic of being incarnational which is translated into a practice of incarnating the gospel in a particular locality. If God became human, then the Christian's strategy for connection with the world is also to be incarnational in that the Christian person embodies the gospel in daily life. It seems that this is a crucial way in which the marginalised church will regain favour with the society in which it is placed. Is this a better strategy for evangelism in the liminal position in which the church finds itself? What are some further explorations for engagement regarding embodying the gospel as a strategy for witness?

An important contribution to further the work of this study would be to hear from non-Western voices and how they speak into the four missional characteristics which are mentioned in previous chapters. Voices that speak into missional ecclesiology from the majority world as well as a wider range of Christian traditions need to be heard. Care needs to be taken to contextualise these voices. This work has intentionally concentrated on the Church in Western contexts that share numerous similarities though obviously every nation

and subculture within each nation in the West has different experiences of Christianity. How do non-Western voices speak to the missional characteristics mentioned in this work?

Finally, an interesting and fruitful exploration would be to investigate the extent to which this spiritual formation model engaged in by few in the church influences the broader congregation. This could be a contribution to change management particularly in the area of the revitalisation of established institutions. Can a small group of people who have experienced change make a difference to the overall culture and practices of the organisation?

This current work in the area of missional spirituality has made contributions in this field and it is hoped that this research will be used for the development of other appropriately contextualised spiritual formation models. Yet there is additional research that can be done in this field so that the various dimensions of missional spirituality are explored and developed further for the benefit of the church in the West.

Conclusory Remarks

The Church in the West is in a vulnerable position having experienced a shift from existing in a position of privilege and power in the culture of Christendom to the fringes of society. In a position of power, the Church could afford to employ an attractional paradigm as an ecclesiological model which had the expectation in a Christianized culture that most people would come to church if church was made attractive. Not only does this strategy not function in a post-Christendom climate, but the attractional paradigm has its theological flaws which have been examined in Chapter One.

A missional paradigm, it has been argued, is a more theologically robust paradigm for the Church in a post-Christendom culture. This perspective views that the Church is sent into the world by God on his mission and therefore sees that each member is a missionary in their context. A missional perspective counters one of the consequences of the Church in Christendom, namely, that it became comfortable and therefore insular in its posture.

Christians in the West must adopt a missional perspective if the church is to function in this post-Christendom climate. This does not mean that the church must try to regain its central position in society again, but only that it must adopt a posture which has been informed by theological reflection around the identity of the Church.

In order for the people of God to develop a missional perspective, it has been argued that a formational approach must be taken rather than a methodological strategy. If the people of God could be formed and transformed into people with a missional mindset, the Church would turn from its insular posture, reorient outwards and be better able to meet the challenges of contemporary society. What is needed then to be developed is a spiritual formation model which can be employed by churches desiring to move toward a missional posture. Chapter Two reviewed literature that explores missional spirituality and presents and advocates the development of such spiritual formation models. Chapter Three provided a theological warrant for this model.

CLCC is a church that is moving towards a missional paradigm. A sample group of people from this church volunteered to engage in the implementation of a missional spiritual formation model which was designed to reflect four missional theology characteristics; Incarnational, Trinitarian, Pneumatological and Kenotic. The results of the project implementation, show clearly that missional formation did occur in the participants of the project. Through the quantitative and qualitative research, the evidence shows that participants increased in missional behaviour, attitudes and desires. This was reinforced through a pre-project and post-project survey as well as a phenomenological study in the form of interviews with the participants. Even though participants struggled on the project and encountered some difficulty, there was spiritual growth that occurred even through that struggle.

More research is needed in order to further this project and validate the claims with a larger sample size. Moreover, further research around the topic of missional spirituality could be done which would contribute to this work. However, through the research in this work, it can be confidently stated that the missional spiritual formation model designed has the potential to increase the missional perspective of Christians in a church and form them into missionaries who are on God's mission in this world.

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Appendix A

Introduction

Thank you very much for being available to be part of this research that I am doing. Even though it is research for a project I am treating it very much as a season for you and me that God, by his Spirit, will bring change into our lives so that we become more the people that he wants us to be. So I am praying during this time that you and I will experience that.

My assumption is that you are all followers of Jesus who want to become more like him and that you believe that God will work through this time to draw you closer to him and to the world that he loves.

The focus of my project, as you know, is about the formation of missional Christians and exploring how that happens. **A missional Christian is a person who sees himself or herself as being on God's mission in this world.** My question is: how do we become people like? That is, people who are outwardly rather than inwardly oriented. For me, being missional is not just about being more evangelistic, it is more about a way of being, a lifestyle if you like. So I have looked into the area of spiritual disciplines (traditionally, this includes Bible reading, prayer, fasting, going to church, etc) and how these can shape us into missional Christians. I have adapted these disciplines so they are more outwardly oriented. So there are four practices (disciplines) which you can engage in for 8 weeks. I pray God will work through these practices in order to bring change. The idea is not that we do these practices through our own efforts to get God's approval but rather these practices are vehicles that God's Spirit can use to shape us into missional Christians. So you can see that prayer is a big part of this!

The practices are designed to be done during your day, so while they will take some time, they are basically meant to be done during your daily, normal rhythms of life. If you feel

these practices are too forced or time heavy then something is wrong. So even though they will certainly stretch you, they are not meant to be laborious.

Also, please don't be worried if you, for whatever reason don't get through all the practices each week. God works through all things so just do the best you can without feeling pressure or guilt.

As you know, we will meet together weekly for the eight weeks beginning at 7:30pm at my home each Thursday night. We start on the July 3 and our last meeting is August 21. It is important for the success of the project that you attend each meeting. I also need to say that if you would like to opt out of the project at any stage, for whatever reason, you are free to do that.

Here are the four practices to engage in weekly

1. Reading the Bible in a public place. Take 10 minutes during your day twice a week to do this.

- Find a public place during your day e.g. cafe, park, office. Perhaps during your lunch break.
- Open the Bible to the passage.
- Pray that God would speak to you.
- Read the passage slowly once for understanding.
- Read again and notice the things that stand out to you.
- Look up and around. How does this passage apply to your environment? Think of the people, the suburb, and the context in a broad sense.
- Note anything that you feel comes to your mind in a notebook very briefly.
- Thank God for what you have just received and ask him to help you to know what to do with what you have reflected upon. (if you don't feel like you heard anything, that is fine leave it with God and ask him to help you notice later on in the day/week if he wants to say anything to you about the application of that passage.)

Bible passages

1. Matthew 5:1-12

2. Luke 4:16-22
3. Luke 10:1-12
4. Luke 10:25-37
5. 1 Peter 2:11-17
6. 1 Peter 2:1-10
7. Philippians 2:1-11
8. Romans 12:1-8
9. John 8:1-11
10. Matthew 5:13-16
11. Mark 10:35-45
12. John 20:19-23
13. Jeremiah 29:1-13
14. Psalm 97
15. Micah 6:6-8
16. Mark 15:33-16:8

2. Practice an act of radical hospitality once a week

Radical hospitality is showing invitation, welcome, acceptance, compassion to those who desperately need it. So usually this would include hospitality to the poor, the marginalised, the broken or the outcast. It could range from saying “hello” to that downtrodden person that you walk past every day; inviting a work colleague over to dinner who, perhaps, is a little isolated from others. This practice is meant to challenge us to step out of our usual comfort zones and see the need of others to be Christ to them.

3. Once everyday pray with eyes open in your workplace or suburb where you live.

This is to help us connect with God in the place that we usually work, play and socialize. Where do you spend most of your time? In the office? In the home? Shopping in your local suburb where you live? Driving to work? On the train? The idea is to ‘see’ the people and things in your locality and just pray about whatever you see. God might prompt you to do something as you pray or he may not. The goal is just to pray.

Discernment can be defined as the intentional practice by which a community of an individual seeks, recognises and intentionally takes part in the activity of God in concrete situations.

4. Meet up as a group once a week for 8 weeks to discuss our experiences.

This is an important part of the project as spiritual formation happens in community. A part of the formation process happens while you are engaging in the practices as God's Spirit works. However another part happens as we gather in community and listen to what the Spirit has been doing. God is with us when we meet and he will be guiding our time together so that the formation process will continue as we learn from one another. In this safe place we can share the joys and struggles we have had during the week as we have engaged in the practices.

Appendix B

Please take a few moments to complete this survey which has 25 questions. The idea is that you do this survey before the start of our weekly gatherings and then do the same survey again a month after. The idea is not so much to identify where you are at now as that is not as relevant to the focus of this project, but rather to see if any changes occur after our gatherings. However a basis is needed from which to start, in order to identify any changes that occur after our gatherings.

Please answer accurately in terms of what your feelings/actions/thoughts are currently rather than what you think they should be. If you can, try to avoid the N (neither agree nor disagree) answer.

Please do not put your name on the survey (see instructions in other attachment). Please print and bring with you to our first meeting.

Here are definitions of some terms for clarification if you need them.

- Spiritual disciplines- Practical acts (practices) that Christians engage in so that God can work through these acts to bring transformation in the life of a Christian. Traditional spiritual disciplines are, among others: Bible reading, prayer, fasting, silence, church attendance.
- Missional- A missional Christian is a person who sees him or herself as sent into the world by God to engage on God's mission.
- Formation- the process undertaken by God of developing a Christian into the image of Jesus
- God's Mission- God sent his Son into the world to reconcile the world to himself. He now works in our world to continue this purpose of healing, reconciliation, restoration and asks us to join with him.
- Discern- identify and notice.
- Hospitality- having a welcoming, generous attitude and then expressing that welcome through some kind of action, for example, sharing a meal, speaking a kind word, acknowledging a marginalised person.
- Marginalised person- a person that is considered to be on the margins of society due to their physical, mental, financial or social impairment, or cultural issues such as religion, race, etc.

Please circle the answer that is the most accurate for you;

- a) Relationship with someone is the most important element in displaying my faith.
 - 1. Strongly disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Agree
 - 5. Strongly agree

- b) I feel very connected to my local community.
 - 1. Strongly disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Agree
 - 5. Strongly agree

- c) I have had opportunities to engage with marginalised people and have done so.
 - 1. Strongly disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Agree
 - 5. Strongly agree

- d) It is easy for me to discern God's Spirit in my daily surroundings .
 - 1. Strongly disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Agree
 - 5. Strongly agree

- e) The formation of Christians into missional Christians requires community.
 - 1. Strongly disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Agree
 - 5. Strongly agree

- f) I see the church primarily as a people of God on God's mission in our world.
 - 1. Strongly disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Agree
 - 5. Strongly agree

- g) I have a strong desire to regularly serve the poor.
 - 1. Strongly disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- h) I believe the church (the people of God) operating when they are not gathered together (e.g. during the week), is just as important as when they gather (e.g. a Sunday service).
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- i) Spiritual disciplines should be practiced in relationship with other Christians and in community.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- j) The spiritual disciplines which I practice in my life help me to be more missional.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- k) I am currently practicing the discipline of sacrifice (giving up my comfort, power or resources) in one or more ways in my daily life.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- l) I believe it is important to pray for people (whether they notice or not) as I encounter them during my day to day activities.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- m) I believe that practicing hospitality is a spiritual discipline.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

- n) When I read my Bible I easily see how the passage connects with my world outside the church.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- o) There are times where I have practiced stepping out of my comfort zone so that I could join God in his mission.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- p) I pray for people (either noticeable or silently) as I encounter them and as God prompts me.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- q) I am very aware of the broader mission of God in my circumstances and surroundings.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- r) Being in relationship with other people helps me to know the friendship and love of God.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- s) I feel like my spiritual life and my day to day activities are well integrated.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- t) I see myself as being a person who is on God's mission every day.
1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- u) When I discern God's Spirit in a situation I know how to take action in order to join with God on his mission.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- v) I am very aware that God is with me during the day.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- w) I practice hospitality regularly.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- x) I often interact and engage with people in my community.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
- y) I frequently discern the Spirit's activity and promptings in my daily surroundings.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

Appendix C

Interview transcriptions

(Interviewer's notes establishing themes and sub themes are in italics)

Participant One (P1)

Interviewer: You had four practices to do, praying with your eyes open, reading Scripture in a public place, practicing a radical act of hospitality and meeting up weekly. How did you structure these practices into the rhythm of your week?

(1) P1: I found the prayer the easiest to do. Just because as you are walking around during the

(2) day you can pray with your eyes open all the time so that was very easy to do whenever I

(3) remembered and especially on my walk to work because it was such a short commute. I

(4) found it hard to fit in my Bible reading into the week, that was probably the harder thing

(5) because I was in the habit of coming home for lunch so that was not exactly a public space

(6) so I ended up having to stay at work or at the shops at lunch times.

Interviewer: Which you wouldn't normally do?

(7) P1: No. That made it expensive but it then meant that I could read scripture in a cafe or

(8) just in the middle of Westfield or something. But I did find that probably, that and the

(9) hospitality the hardest out of everything. The gathering was really great and I enjoyed it.

(10) But with work that was also hard because I was out every second week so I think I

(11) missed that connection on the weeks when I wasn't there. *(Missing weekly gatherings)*

Interviewer: So the hardest was...

(12) P1: I'd say out of everything, the hospitality. It was easy to start talking to people, but

(13) figuring out where to do a radical act of hospitality that was hard. And figuring out where

(14) to read the Scripture.

Interviewer: So just generally speaking what was your experience of the course? How would you describe it?

(15) P1: That's a tricky one. I really enjoyed it. I think it was a bit of an awakening.

(awakening)

(16) Just to...because you can get so busy with life and you just sort of forget what's going on

(17) around you so it was a bit of a pull back and just focus on what's happening in your area

(18) and who are these people that you are living so closely with and working so closely with

(connection to context)

(19) so I enjoyed it in terms of just taking a different viewpoint that I normally would and

(20) trying to keep that viewpoint as my everyday viewpoint not go back to the way that I

was

(21) which was a bit insular. *(shift from inwards orientation)* I still find that if I don't

regularly practice those things, I think

(22) my viewpoint does turn inward again so I think it's healthy...especially the prayer for

(23) your surroundings. I think that one really helps too.

Interviewer: So it sounds like you enjoyed it overall, was there anything that you particularly struggled with that you found difficult?

(24) P1: Sometimes I felt a bit like I rushed things because I needed to get them done. Like

(25) didn't have the time to actually fit everything in and all of a sudden Im like ahh..I have a

(26) meeting and I've got to have all this done by tomorrow and I didn't want to feel like

(27) that going through the process but that's probably my umm sorting out of my routine,

(feeling rushed to do practices)

(28) my time issues there instead of ..probably.. because the Bible reading were ten minutes

(29) each so they weren't arduous or anything like that and prayer is easy when you just fit it

(30) into whatever you are doing, figuring out the hospitality was tricky I think I'm still

(31) wrestling with that one to some extent. I think overall if I practice those things more
(32) they'll come more easily, so just maybe because it was a shorter time period I didn't get
(33) into the swing of things because I was doing every second week instead of every week. I
(34) found it harder to fit into the rhythm of things.

Interviewer: So what would you do differently if you could do the course again?

(35) P1: Really sit down and nut out when I was going to do everything. (*need to organise
routine into daily life*)Because otherwise

(36) you know you get through a week and you realise that you have missed things on certain
(37) days or whatever and also make sure that I'm free every week to meet up I think that's
an

(38) important thing too. Just to hear how everyone else is going and to be able to share.

Interviewer: can you identify and particular feelings that you had while doing the course?

(39) P1: umm...sounds bit funny but I feel like I had more energy (*more energy doing the
course*)when I was doing it. I didn't

(40) feel as tired. Which I guess that connects spiritually and emotionally those things are
(41) connected. So I guess I was getting back to being in tune with my spiritual life and that
(42) just made me feel better in total.

Interviewer: Can you give examples of that?

(43) P1: umm...especially starting a new job I was just tired all the time. I just felt the days
(44) and weeks where I was more successful in praying everyday and doing the readings and
(45) talking to people and listening, I just felt like I had more energy. I was also I had a sort
(46) of, it sounds a bit funny but I had a sort of a peaceful feeling. (*Peaceful feeling*)Umm..it
was kind of like I

(47) took a step back and I was watching all the craziness surrounding me instead of being a
(48) part of all the craziness round me which working in a department store is pretty crazy.

(49) So that was kind of interesting as well. Didn't get caught up in it as I normally would get
(50) caught up in those feelings.

Interviewer: What about in terms of the effect that the course had on you?

(51) P1: I think it has made me value my time with God more. Because I've been through a
(52) pretty dry season. And then doing the course has me go hang on that's why I've been
(53) feeling so crap recently is because I just haven't been connecting properly with God,
(*sense of increasing need to connect with God*) So
(54) it's really made me reassess I guess the things I do in the day and week and that I really
(55) need to make more time to spend with God. And listen to him as well. Because you can
(56) get really good at praying but not at listening.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you became more missional on the course?

(57) P1: I think so in the sense that I said before that it made me kind of listen to people and
(58) try and understand where they were at instead of just having a chat to someone you
really
(59) kind of had to stop and listen which I think sometimes I think I'm a good listener and
(60) sometimes I think I'm not.
(61) So I think in terms of missional I maybe developed my missional listening a bit more.
(62) And try and indentify where God was at work and where I could connect with him
(63) already at work in the community. (*increase in ability to listen to God- Missional
listening*)

Interviewer: Any behaviours that you would describe as missional?

(64) P1: I guess being open, trying to be open, I still struggle with this one, with whatever
(65) God throws at you. Like if you need to invite someone over. I find it easier to if a friend
(66) is struggling buy them a coffee make them feel better, but that kind of opening up your
(67) house, if I have people coming over generally it's on my terms. So I think Im beginning

(68) to be a bit more open in that but I think it's still a work in progress. (*being open to spontaneous engagement with God*)

Interviewer: What do you mean on my terms?

(69) P1: Ummm like saying let's have such and such over on this date and this is what I'm

(70) going to cook and this is what we will do, so instead of going seeing someone in need

(71) and saying why don't you come over for dinner tonight. And the house is a mess and I

(72) haven't planned what we are going to cook.

Interviewer: From your experience how helpful was it in shaping you missionally?

(73) P1: No think it was helpful because it pushed me out of my comfort zone and I wouldn't

(74) do that unless it's very hard to go out of your comfort zone without a push you don't

(*pushed out of comfort zone*)

(75) necessarily willingly do it all the time, and if you've got a group supporting you it makes

(76) it easier, so I think it was good. It was definitely helpful not unhelpful. I think the group

(77) was very important, because if I just had that course and was going through it by myself,

(78) I don't think I would have stuck to it or would have pushed as hard either necessarily.

(*group support helped motivation*)

Interviewer: So you found the meeting up important?

(79) P1: Yeah. Just being able to talk about the readings and what God had been saying and

(80) what you had been seeing in your area.

Interviewer: Was your favourite practice the prayerful one because that was the easiest, or because that's who you are?

(81) P1: I find it easy to pray like that so I enjoyed that and I enjoyed thinking about praying

(82) for other things than I normally do as well. And even some days when I would forget,

(83) something would trigger me to do it. And you'd just pick up different things, every time

(84) I walked to work there was something different, that I would think of to pray for so I did
(85) really enjoy that. The hospitality, I love but I did find that one really difficult, I think I
(86) don't know whether I was looking in the right place for that hospitality, I had some great
(87) conversations with people but I don't know whether I could classify as radical
(88) hospitality. And I literally didn't see any homeless people. Or even thought of things like
(89) Nina giving the figs which was a great idea. But my whole life at the moment is
(90) consumed with work and getting used to that so I didn't get out of the (suburb) bubble at
all. *(ambiguity around hospitality)*

Interviewer: Is there anything that you would change about the course?

(91) P1: I think if anything it would be trying to meet more regularly and I know I'm coming
(92) from the perspective of only doing it every fortnight but even catching up on a Sunday
(93) with the people in your group, maybe doing it twice not so intense just leaving a really in
(94) depth one but having communication with the people that you are going through the
(95) journey with during the week, that would be good I think. *(need for more group connection during the week)*

Interviewer: So more regular meetings

(96) P1: I think so or even just umm, setting up a system where you text someone and you
ask
(97) "how are you going with such and such this week?" Like a reminder or a reconnect mid
week.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your relationship with God changed during the course and how
so?

(98) P1: Yes. In terms of I don't think I had been listening to God for a little while. I'd sort of
(99) been switched off. So it was a good switching back on and really trying to focus on what

(100) God was saying. I don't think my overall relationship or the way that I view God has changed but just in terms of personally connecting with him. (*Increase sense of connection to God*)

Interviewer: So how has it not changed?

(101) P1: I think I kind of went in to the course with that sort of missional perspective I've got

(102) anyway, because of team meetings and everything leading up to it. So I think my view
(103) changed, it was a slower process leading up to that course. It's still challenging though.

Interviewer: What do you find challenging?

(104) P1: I still struggle with doing daily Bible reading and I know I would have a much
(105) better relationship with God and be so much more on his page, if I was consistent and
(106) disciplined in doing those things but I still really struggle with that. And just sort of
also

(107) realising how radical some of God's actions actually are in terms of hospitality. Like
(108) often when I read the Bible I read it from the perspective of this happened years and
(109) years ago but when you bring it into today's context it make it a lot more radical. So I
(110) guess in some ways my view did change in having that perspective, and going well no
we can still do this toady. (*realisation of need to apply faith today*)

Interviewer: Do you think the course will affect your long term behaviour?

(111) P1: I think so. Because I really enjoyed it and it's something that I'm going to strive to
(112) keep doing. Even though I'm not always going to get there. But I do...I miss that
weekly

(113) contact with a group so that is definitely something that we do want to have that
regular

(114) meeting but striving to continue to pray for the community and the people that you meet

(115) day to day we want to continue that. And the radical hospitality when the opportunities arise. (*Intention to keep behavioural change*)

Interviewer: It sound like the hospitality was a challenge but it's something that you want to investigate?

(116) P1: I think so I still feel like I haven't achieved it so I don't want to just achieve it once
(117) but I want to strive to be more open to do that sort of thing and with all the
(118) conversations that I've been having with people that will lead to acts of hospitality.
Definitely. (*Desire to explore one of the practices further*)

Interviewer: So what is the main block for you in terms of practicing that?

(119) P1 I think cause I said I wasn't sure if I practiced it in the right area, because I was
(120) starting a new job at the same time I was sort of, still getting to know people so I don't
(121) know if it was I was getting to know people or listening for that act of hospitality, so
(122) now I have been in the job for a little longer I can better identify when I have
(123) conversations with people and I have more of a change to have conversations with
(124) customers, which I was starting the job I didn't have a chance to do because I was so
(125) worried about learning the job. So you can listen in to a different set of people.

Interviewer: Other thoughts about the course?

(126) P1: umm...I think everyone should do it. Everyone should practice those things. Those
(127) are the sorts of things that should come naturally to Christians and I don't know why
(128) it's so hard, so if every life group looked a bit like that and was encouraging each other
(129) to do those things I think it would be a good thing. It's good to have some control there
(130) and you could have some people running off doing crazy things if they weren't in a net

(131) work of people. I think it's interesting to do something so practical and not just sit back
(132) and discuss and listen to something so it's kind of "hands on" church.

Interviewer: Did you find God in that practicality?

(133) P1: Yeah. Sometimes I find it...I'm not a theory based person I'm a hands on person so
(134) sometimes I find it hard to sit and listen and take in everything that has been said.

(135) Sometimes it's overwhelming whereas when you do something more practical and
there

(136) are easy steps along the way you can find your own feet better. (*Practical "hands on"*
church)

Participant Two (P2)

Interviewer: You had four practices to do, praying with your eyes open, reading Scripture in a
public place, practicing a radical act of hospitality and meeting up weekly. How did you
structure these practices into the rhythm of your week?

(137) P2: The praying with my open was usually when I was driving because that seemed
like

(138) a good time to do it. I kind of have gotten sick of the radio. I put it on and I think no,
it's

(139) more productive to talk to God so I did that and tried to look at people and whatever

(140) was going on around me. Sometimes I put and listen to ABC radio which has news and

(141) I tried to do that at the start of my drive and turn it off and pray about what I'd heard.

(142) Because I find that news more informative so I did that most days. Sometimes I'd pray

(143) while I was on playground duty, looking at my kids and school. Reading the Bible I

(144) tried to do during recess or lunch time breaks so then I could sit in the staff room or

(145) outside when the kids are playing and that worked ok. I didn't always get time to do
that

(146) because teaching you don't always get the time. But that was good. I feel like I did more

(147) stuff based around my school than where I live. I did sometimes go for a walk around

(148) the area but I felt like I'm more connected to my schools community than where I live,

(149) It felt more meaningful to do it at school or that area. And then the hospitality again was

(150) more work colleagues and people that I met in the school context because (suburb)

(151) is hard to stop people or engage with people maybe because of the sort of people that

(152) live there, young business couples. But maybe that's something I need to work on a bit

(153) more, it just felt harder to engage people in that community rather than (suburb of School).

(154) Obviously coming to the meetings and that was really good. (*Ease incorporating practices into routine*)

Interviewer: Which were the practices that were the most difficult and which came naturally?

(155) P2: So the hospitality I found really hard and I think it was also because in the first

(156) weeks I was trying to work to what was a marginalised person I suppose there were

(157) some people I looked and I thought maybe you are marginalised but then I felt bad

(158) putting that label on them because I wasn't sure if they were. (*Ambiguity around hospitality*) So there is a lady that

(159) works in Coles in (suburb) and I saw her working , she starts early so she was there

(160) early everyday and I see here sometimes she had that look, I don't know what it was

(161) about her. But I thought maybe she is a bit marginalized and isolated and I kind of

(162) tried to talk with her a bit if I got anything from Coles but maybe I'm putting this

(163) judgment on her. Because obviously there is not the homeless people that are really

(164) clearly marginalised so I found that a little bit hard but then I kept thinking is this God

(165) saying Is this person marginalised. I was trying to work out “Is it me, is it God?”

(Increasing attempts to try to discern God)

(166) Because I believe God can show you things that you don't know about. And the people

(167) that I did feel God said there is someone I want you to reach out to, were the people that

(168) I found really hard to do something nice for. I felt like God was really challenging me

(169) “I know you don't like this person but they are marginalised”. Like our librarian at school

(170) she's a nice enough person but she puts the very minimum in with her job and I've have

(171) lots of chats with her about what she's doing in the class and she just annoys me when

(172) I talk to her. She doesn't care much about her job just doing it. She sort of isolates

(173) herself and doesn't come to staff meetings and stays up the library and I felt all term

(174) God was saying “just get her flowers” *(Struggle to obey God)*

(175) Or chocolates or something and at the end of the term I got the class to make a thank

(176) you card. So I didn't give it to her. That's my next step next term. She seemed to

(177) appreciate it. I wanted to let her know that I appreciate what she does. I found it easy,

(178) there were a lot of people I found easy to help but I don't necessarily think they were

(179) marginalised. But there were a few people that God pushed me even though I didn't

(180) want to do this. It was really challenging but good at the same time. *(Challenging but good)* The praying one I

(181) found the easiest to do I felt like once I really got into the pattern I started to see a lot

(182) more the first couple of weeks like by the end I thought this felt meaningful

(Meaningful) and was

(183) seeing what was around me which was good. Then the Bible reading, I liked reading
the

(184) Bible then looking around you, I don't think I've ever really done that before. So it
was

(185) interesting to see what you noticed. But I did find that hard to do regularly things kept

(186) getting in the way.

Interviewer: Are you someone that is used to reading scripture every day?

(187) P2: Sometimes. I have season where I do well and times where I don't I think at the

(188) moment this whole year I found it hard to read Scripture. So it was good having that

(189) structure, having the verses to read I think I have let myself get out of the habit so much

(190) that it was hard to do.

Interviewer: What would be your overall experience of the course?

(191) P2: I think the main thing I realised was that I had let my life become too much about

(192) myself. getting engaged and married obviously it's good to put in time into that, but I

(193) think I allowed myself to become the focus of my life, obviously I never want that to

be

(194) how I'm living. So I think the project was good to shift my focus and confronted me

(195) with what my life had become and it just happened and I didn't want it to be like that.

(Movement away from self absorption)

(196) And I suppose changing churches has knocked me around a bit. I suppose the project

(197) was good to focus me back on what I want my life to be like in a simple way not huge

(198) changes or huge things I had to do but in little ways which was good. I think I have

(199) become more aware of God in the everyday which is good. *(God in the everyday)* My

job caters for allowing

(200) God to come in a little bit because if I don't pray before I start the day that makes a
(201) difference and being able to pray for children during the day and thinking about the
(202) things I say to them and what that means and how it affects them just values stuff that
(203) goes on. It's easy then to separate it because you don't want to get in trouble by saying
(204) too much because obviously there are regulations in terms of what teachers can say. So
(205) it was good that I can do it without others realising it. Other teachers wouldn't realise it
(206) what I was doing but I can have that impact without causing problems. (*Being God's
agent in quiet ways*)

Interviewer: Is there anything that you struggled with on the course?

(207) P2: I think at first I struggled to understand the point of praying with your eyes open. I
(208) thought would that change things very much but when I started doing it I thought oh
(209) yeah I can see why. So I think it was just in the start, reading the practices and asking
(210) why would Karina be asking us to do these exact things. But once I started doing them
I had no issues with it.

Interviewer: What feelings did you have on the course?

(211) P2: At the start I felt excited and happy to do it. I felt like it was timely and good for
(212) me. I think I got discouraged and disappointed in myself at the start because I felt like I
(213) wasn't doing the practices very well or consistently and I remember you saying in (*shift
of feelings positive/negative during the course*)
(214) week 2 don't beat yourself up or if you are not doing the practices well or if you are not
(215) feeling like it's coming together yet and I think after hearing that I realised that I could
(216) lose the whole point of this if I focus on the fact that I'm not being consistent, that's not
(217) the whole point of it, it's not meant to be tick, tick, tick every day. (*Not just ticking the
box*) So I think once I let

(218) myself not do it perfectly then it started to feel much better and I started to feel more
(219) accomplished in what I was doing. I suppose it made me feel much more connected to
(220) God and meaningful for my life because coming from my old church where I was
doing
(221) so much in leadership and coming here where I'm not doing anything, it was nice to
(222) have something to do but it felt good to do it. I felt, there were a couple of weeks when
(223) I started to do the assistant principal at school and I didn't do any of the practices like I
(224) did it one day or something and I came to the meeting but I felt really encouraged by
(225) everything else everyone was saying. And it helped to make me feel better and just to
(226) hear what God was doing in everyone else even though nothing happened in my life so I
(227) think the meetings were really good for that aspect. Then I felt like it sort of lifted me
(228) and encouraged me yep keep trying and going. (*Encouragement in meetings- "Lifted me"*)

Interviewer: What would you do differently if you could do the course again?

(229) P2: I think after doing now I realised how good it was that I would be more intentional
(230) and make it more of a priority because I started to see what God could do in it then I
(231) would want to do it even more and commit more time to it but I suppose, being more
(232) intentional about when I was going to do the practices. (*More intentionality*) Because I
took a relaxed
(233) approach in that I will get to it when I get to it. Like I tried to do the Bible readings in
(234) recess or lunch and did the prayer usually when I was driving to work but..I think
(235) maybe making myself a bit more accountable, saying this is what I feel like God is
(236) asking me to do in the hospitality can you ask me next week if I do it. I think that was
(237) my problem with hospitality. In my head I thought I knew what I wanted to do but
(238) because no one else knew I could not push myself as much because people didn't know

(239) what I was thinking. Which I think doing this has made me realise that I do want to
(240) have more people that I tell what I'm working on with God and getting them to ask me
(241) how I'm going. I miss that in my life at the moment and that is making things harder
(242) because I've not got that person that keeps asking me which I need. (*Need for more
group accountability*)

Interviewer: In terms of being missional what were the ways that the course helped you to become more missional?

(243) P2: The Bible readings, prayer and looking and having your eyes open really did make
(244) me think about what are the needs of the people I'm around and what can I actually do
(245) for them. I don't think I'd looked at the people I'm close to and thought what is it they
(246) need and what can I give to them. (*Thinking about needs of others*)

Interviewer: Did your thinking around being missional changed?

(247) P2: I don't think my thinking itself changed. But I definitely I think if I had been asked
(248) those questions about what missional is I think I would still have similar answers. But I
(249) wasn't really thinking about it months ago. It wasn't at the forefront and it wasn't in my
(250) thinking as much I suppose. So I think the project brought those thoughts closer to my
thinking. (*Missional thinking brought to fore*)

Interviewer: What about your missional behaviour? Do you think your behaviour will change in a long term sense?

(251) P2: Yeah I think so. I think all of them really made me think. I made me think it's
easier
(252) than you think it is. (*Missional easier than you think*) Like being missional is such a
huge concept and can be a big thing
(253) and not time consuming but can overtake your life, but the project made me realise that
(254) I have made excuses and have gone I'll leave the missional stuff a bit because it's such

(255) a big thing and I don't know what to do so the course made me realise it's not a big thing

(256) but that it should be a normal part of my life and it can be. (*Making missional normal*) I've been going to church

(257) since I was little and you hear the stuff over and over again and it's hard for the stuff to

(258) not become stale or like I've heard that before. So I think the project was good, a

(259) different way of presenting the same information and a bit more, giving it to me and

(260) saying what are you going to do with this? I suppose making it very more practical and it's there, I can do it. (*Practical- able to do*)

Interviewer: Did you experience God in that?

(261) P2: Definitely. I think all the stuff with my old church is having an impact on me and I

(262) think my walk with God has been up and down in the last couple of years and sort of

(263) questioning who I am in God and what sort of relationship I want with him and what

(264) that looks like so I think the project reminded me that God is there in everything and

(265) wants to talk to me. I used to hear God more clearly and the project reminded me that

(266) God is there and if you want to God will show you things about your world. (*Hearing God more clearly again*)

Interviewer: How would you change the course?

(267) P2: I think the having the meeting once a week was good and share what happened but

(268) I suppose, I would like more of that sort of stuff, more sharing, but maybe in different

(269) way, like emails or...but I think that's the part that I liked and it was a real boost every

(270) Thursday night to come and hear what everyone had been going through and pray and

(271) refocus. Doing that more in different ways. I think all those practices are good but I did

(272) feel like, through the week it would be I'd lose motivation or everyday life would get

(273) too much so I felt good on Friday because of Thursday night I'm excited again, and you

(274) go to church on Sunday and that boosts you again so just more little ways of connecting together maybe. *(Need for more interaction with group for encouragement during the week)*

Interviewer: any other thoughts about the course?

(275) P2: It was good for me because I didn't know everyone that well and talking to new
(276) people and hearing what they were going through and I liked the fact that there were
(277) younger and older people and found it shocking that these people had been Christians
(278) for decades still struggled with the things that I did. I found that encouraging. I found it
good I would love to keep doing it. *(Mix of people helpful in course)*

Participant Three (P3)

Interviewer: You had four practices to do, praying with your eyes open, reading Scripture in a public place, practicing a radical act of hospitality and meeting up weekly. How did you structure these practices into the rhythm of your week?

(279) P3: Praying with my eyes open that was I do that lot anyway at school, I suppose I
(280) extended it to praying purposefully going to one spot I found that difficult to do time
(281) wise but I didn't do it every week. I found it easier to do in my natural course of the
(282) day. I automatically pray for my lessons as I walk to them and kids on playground duty.
(283) Did I do it more? Maybe I did with that encouragement and reminder but purposefully
(284) do it was a lot more difficult. *(Difficulty with intentionality)*The Bible reading, again I
didn't do it every week because
(285) of time. But when I did do it, it was I did the praying and reading in that spot at the
(286) same time. Again my daily routine does not lend itself to that being done easily. It's not
(287) like I have a bus trip or train trip. If I had more time in my day it would be lovely to set
(288) aside time two or three times a week and dedicate time totally but time pressure didn't
(289) allow it. Lunch time you are still working and doing lunch duties. It can happen

(290) organically as you are doing, praying, doing encouraging words and it could merge into
(291) hospitality acts. But to do in outside those hours was difficult. (*Difficulty to fit practices
into weekly routine*)

Interviewer: You found that also for the hospitality aspect? Did you need extra time to do it?

(292) P3: If you meant my hospitality you meant reaching out and encouraging them that
(293) happened quite easily. I must admit I did have some ideas to reaching out to certain
(294) people but I hadn't yet followed through.

Interviewer: Overall what was your experience of the course?

(295) P3: I think it did try to, made me more aware of the practices that you could do like
(296) praying I would never have before thought of reading my Bible in a public place. It
(297) highlighted that opportunity.

Interviewer: What did you find enjoyable about the course?

(298) P3: I think it was great to get to know people. You built up a community. One could
see
(299) the value of that in the way that church functions. You develop close connections with
(300) people doing a similar outreach. (*Building up relationships in the weekly meetings*)

Interviewer: What did you struggle with in the course?

(301) P3: Trying to be a good girl and doing all the things for you. Not that you were
(302) demanding you were very gracious. You like to do the best with task at hand. Initially
(303) we were nervous about the acts of hospitality. I wouldn't be afraid of going up to
(304) someone in the city. It was just getting there to do it. (*Negative feeling of pressure to
'do the right thing'*)

Interviewer: Were there any feelings you had in the course?

(305) P3: Sometimes I felt it was too forced I was doing it because I had to. I think you've
just

(306) got to be prepared for the unexpected and you can't put the Holy Spirit into a box and
(307) you can't manufacture something. Sometimes I felt that we were asked to do things
(308) rather than just doing something because it was Spirit led. (*"Too forced"*) (*"Putting
Holy Spirit in a box"*)

Interviewer: What would you do differently if you did the course again?

(309) P3: I would like to do it with less distractions and have it more as a focus because it's
(310) hard, it would be lovely to just focus on that for a week or two. But it's hard to do that
(311) when you have so many other things on in your life but..you do the best you
can. (*Distractions made doing course difficult*)

Interviewer: Do you think the course helped you to become more missional?

(312) P3: I think it was a good reminder. I don't think there was anything new besides the
(313) Scripture idea, but other than that there was not anything new to me. But I'm not saying
(314) that I ever practiced them adequately. (*"Good reminder" of being missional*)

Interviewer: Do you feel like your missional behaviour changed?

(315) P3: I suppose and increase just a reminder encouragement increase in focus, I don't
(316) know what level of change you....

Interviewer: Will that change continue?

(317) P3: I hope the experience won't just fizzle into nothing. I hope it will keep me spiritual
aware and focused. (*Desire to maintain spiritual focus*)

Interviewer: you mentioned about certain people you want to connect with? How did that
happen?

(318) P3: It was God incidental. People who I had not seen for a while and had long
(319) conversations with one and reconnecting. That happened once but someone who is a
(320) recluse and so it was quite rare to bump into her. So it requires action on my side to

(321) connect and know on the door and reach out rather than the other way. (*Need to follow up after course and continue to practice*)

Interviewer: You did that a few times.

(322) P3: Yes

Interviewer: Do you think the course helped you to keep doing that?

(323) P3: Yes is someone who has been on my heart for a long time and hadn't reached out to

(324) her as a friend. I just need to get off my butt and do it.

Interviewer: At one point you were intentional with the dog groomer at your place

(325) P3: Oh the dog Groomer! We will keep up with him. You chip away slowly.

Interviewer: What suggestions do you have for improvement of the course?

(326) P3: I don't want to say things like do it less because I didn't do the practices. But to

(327) make it more achievable for the likes of me. But it's not about whether I achieved them.

(328) The others might have done them more beautifully and succeeded and I didn't. I

(329) wouldn't know what you would replace it with. How many times were we asked to read

(330) Scripture? Twice? You can make it once? But then someone travelling on the bus then

(331) it's easy. The readings were good and relevant and good to have set readings. Praying

(332) was great. Acts of hospitality well, I mean I think that you defined acts of hospitality

(333) was so broad that it's something that should be achievable. Initially we thought we had

(334) to ask people over for dinner...but. The meeting up was fine and you can't make that any less frequent. (*Make course more achievable*)

Interviewer: Did you find the meeting up helpful?

(335) P3: Yes. Hearing other stories and how they are going on the course.

Interviewer: Did you find the meetings encouraging?

(336) P3: Yes and realising that some things will, we are all different.

Interviewer: P3: Do you feel like there was community formed as we met?

(337) Yes. Just getting to know people. I don't think I really knew or had conversations with

(338) everyone except for one. Getting to know people from our congregation on a deeper

(339) level that I had not before. So that was good. (*Getting to know people on a deeper level*)

Interviewer: Do you feel like your relationship with God changed during the course?

(340) P3: I suppose it encouraged me to spend more time with him and more focused. (*More focused on God*)

Interviewer: Can you give examples?

(341) P3: It's just praying for the right people to cross my path and then the one did, I still

(342) haven't done everything. Answered prayer.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts about the course?

(343) P3: I think it's a good way of introducing the spiritual disciplines without saying that

(344) they are to put people off. It's how church should really function. (*The way church should function*)

Participant Four (P4)

Interviewer: You had four practices to do, praying with your eyes open, reading Scripture in a public place, practicing a radical act of hospitality and meeting up weekly. How did you structure these practices into the rhythm of your week?

(345) P4: I suppose the Bible reading and prayer I did on the train to work it seemed a good

(346) time to set aside and often wouldn't have anything better to do. I would often do daily

(347) quiet times on the train anyway. Then towards the end I did try and start doing the

(348) prayer throughout the day as well like if I'd go for a walk around ... (suburb) to pray so

(349) that was that. And the hospitality was I feel like it didn't happen as much as possible.

(350) There was the intentional vouchers I did for the homeless. I felt that in that area I was

(351) trying to be aware of people around me and look for opportunities. I guess I had my

(352) eyes more open along with praying for people. *(Ability to fit into daily routine)*

Interviewer: What was your overall experience of the course?

(353) P4: I think it was pretty positive I think just that regular catch up with the group was a

(354) big part of it. Having that chance to check in and see how others are doing that was

(355) encouraging to keep at it and thinking around things as well. Think through how we

(356) tackle the practices. So that was good experience. Fitting those experiences into life and

(357) seeing that you can make the time to do those things. *(Weekly meetings helpful,*

supportive)

Interviewer: What did you find enjoyable about the course?

(358) P4: Again the meeting up that was good. Meeting up with people and talking through

(359) things and life. I think that was the main thing. I enjoyed the feeling of making positive

(360) changes to life and to how my relationship with God how that looks and changing

mindset. *(Good feeling of making positive change)*

Interviewer: What did you struggle with in the course?

(361) P4: I think probably Bible readings application to what does this mean for the people

(362) around me. What do I do with this Scripture? Is it just changing the way I think or pray

(363) for them? Is it supposed to prompt action? Discerning what God is saying in light of

(364) people that was challenging. And also that initial feeling of not achieving the acts of

(365) hospitality you want to be kicking those goals but you just have to wait for those

(366) opportunities or be bold to take them when they come. That is a challenge.

(Disappointment of not achieving goals-need to wait on God)

Interviewer: Did you have any feeling during the course?

(367) P4: On the positive side feeling good that I there were feelings of connectedness with
(368) God through the Bible reading and actually just experiencing that new revelation about
(369) how things scripture applies to the world and our community. So that, feels good. Feels
(370) like your relationship with God is building. Also feeling frustrated and unsure of where
(371) God was. “I want to be doing this”, how am I relevant to my community as an
(372) individual then there is the frustration I don’t feel very relevant or making much of an
impact. (*Feels like relationship with God is building*)

Interviewer: What would you do differently if you could do the course again?

(373) P4: Not sure that I’d do much differently. I guess. I thought they were good practices to
(374) focus on and what I would do is make it more long term. Meeting up with group longer
(375) and have that regular catch up. For the purpose of encouraging those practices over a
(376) long period of time. (*Longer meetings*) So that allows greater room to work on that and
to be encouraged
(377) week to week. Maybe if I was to try again I work more on the intentionality and allow
(378) time to think and reflect on the process on the individual level and a group level. I want
(379) to be doing these practices so how am I going to fit them in tackle them especially the
(380) hospitality brainstorming what can I do? Some form of sitting down individually
(381) planning or in the group “this is my life where are the opportunities”? There was a bit
of
(382) that in weekly catch up. Sharing reflections. (*Increase intentionality*)

Interviewer: So what effect did the course have on you?

(383) P4: I guess it made me see quiet times with God is a different way. (*Seeing “Quiet
times” in a different way*) We talked about
(384) how often we see quiet times as going off on our own and just me and God I guess it
(385) was useful to see how we could have one on one with God in that public place for our

(386) eyes to be open to see what God is saying to us in your context I think that was useful
(387) and have made me have other times where all this stuff is going on around me and what
(388) is God saying to me about how I am as a Christian in light of the scripture and how that
(389) flows out into mission in the world. (*Increasing awareness of context*)

Interviewer: Do you feel like the course made you more missional?

(390) P4: I'd say so. If just like building that desire to be more missional. It maybe me not so
(391) much beyond those four practices. It is more of an attitude thing. Hopefully that will
(392) translate more into being involved in different things in a more missional way and
living
(393) that out. That's how we are called to live in our world as agents of God's
mission. (*Increase awareness of being missional*)

Interviewer: Do you think your behaviour will change long term as a result of this?

(394) P4: I think so. I hope so. Being a bit more intentional seeing the missional opportunities
(395) in the world. When we think about how we allocate our time and decide what we want
(396) to do with our time like conferences or church events I think often it's like we feel like
(397) we are ticking boxes to do those things but while they might be good in increasing our
(398) knowledge and confirming doctrine and encouraging each other I guess that there is
that
(399) whole "what about the missional side of church"? Can't just be about doing all those
(400) Christian things. And feeling like our service to God, from my view, has been in the
(401) context of church but in some ways while I have been involved in mission for church,
(402) it's all very structured sometimes the benefits seems to be not in proportion to what you
(403) put in. God can use anything but being intentional and looking to what the world needs
(404) rather than ticking doing an event off and saying we've been missional or we have done

(405) the outreach event. My own activity, how I choose to be involved in those events and church stuff. *(More aware of missional aspect of church)*

Interviewer: Has it broadened your perspective on church?

(406) P4: I think so. I remember there were points where I was doing prayer walk near work
(407) and thinking part of what I prayed was that they churches in the area would be relevant
(408) to the community and be places for people to go to if they were experiencing hardship.
(409) I do believe that church as a collective is God's agent and most of God's instructions is
(410) to church not individuals so. It's not that we gather as a church then go off as
individual to

(411) do our mission we need that church event and maybe it is rethinking how the church is
(412) relevant to community and how it's being missional and intentional and how it's
serving the community. *(Re-thinking how church can be missional)*

Interviewer: Did you feel that your relationship with God Changed during the course?

(413) P4: I don't think there was any huge shift it was more I had been not a regular with
(414) quiet times it's kind of from that it's got me back into practice of thinking regularly
(415) checking in with God. From that point of view that has encouraged me to get back into
(416) practices. So I think more from seeing God from a mission point of view. Slight shift in
(417) understanding in how he works the prominence of his grace and love in the work we
do.

(418) I was reflecting beforehand my position was evangelical this is the church message, the
(419) world needs to hear it and we will be persecuted but just get out there and preach it as
(420) opposed to we have that message and we need to hear but the challenge is to speak that
(421) message out in a more complex nuanced way so we know people will connect and hear
(422) it rather than be awkward overly confronting so people say that is not for me. The

(423) teaching was always as long as we have told them the good news we can say we have

(424) done that now it's their choice to accept or not that is true but sometimes we can put

that

(425) effort into how that message is delivered and it make a huge effort in how it is received.

(Increase awareness of need to contextualise gospel)

Interviewer: What about your heart connection to God?

(426) P4: I think maybe more seeing the love of God trying to think on that a bit more and

my

(427) own dependence on God's grace. Connecting a bit more with that. Seeing that

relational

(428) side of God and he is interested in my life. *(Growth in experiencing relational God)*

Interviewer: How could the course improve?

(429) P4: I think attendance was a big issue for people involved. It was an issue for people to

(430) be able to commit. It's unavoidable. That whole continuity. I don't know how you

(431) tackle that. It's hard to find a time and people to commit every week. I feel like if

(432) everyone was there every week it would create a more synergy and relationships would

(433) build up. Making it more long term then relationships build and you are more open to

(434) each other and sharing more. I liked the diversity of the group. People had different

life

(435) experiences which was good to draw from. *(Finding variety of people in group helpful)*

Interviewer: Are there any other thoughts about the course?

(436) P4: I think it was a good experience and it does suit that small group setting. As

(437) Christians we were sharing life together there we are challenging each other to live out

(438) what we believe as well and that is part of meeting together. The aspect of encouraging

(439) each other is what should be doing anyway especially in the setting of small groups and
(440) church as a whole. I'd had that in different setting but nothing as specific as checking in
(441) with what we had been doing over the last weeks it was a good thing

Interviewer: So that checking in you found that positive?

(442) P4: Yes. It was helpful. That kind of, everyone things differently and it takes people to
(443) get together and think differently to challenge each other's thoughts. Seeing different
(444) perspectives on things and different life experiences there were different experiences to
(445) share and thinking through how can I do something similar in my life. And
(446) encouragement that others struggle with things you do too. The barrier where people
(447) weren't there, there was that loss of community because of the absence when they
weren't there. (*Presence of group members crucial*)

Participant Five (P5)

Interviewer: You had four practices to do, praying with your eyes open, reading Scripture in a
public place, practicing a radical act of hospitality and meeting up weekly. How did you
structure these practices into the rhythm of your week?

(448) P5: I was able to do the Bible reading as well as the praying in all the places that you
(449) suggested, in a park, cafe on the train and at work so and it was easy for me because the
(450) day that I worked I made an effort to do all those because I was out in the community
(451) and the idea was not to do it at home. On the train it was quite easy, then lunch I went
to
(452) park and sit in cafe and read Scripture on my phone which helped because I had it
(453) handy. Also consciously made effort to pray for my workplace and colleagues and pray
(454) for people I see around me and on train and street and park and cafe, that was easy. The
(455) radical hospitality was not so forthcoming or easy but I did fit it in although not in the

(456) extremely radical acts. But I did try to be more open to helping people. (*Easily integrated into daily routine*)

Interviewer: So you found structuring the practices easy in terms of your weekly routine?

(457) P5: It was easy because I put my mind to it. This is what I need to do it just takes the discipline to do that. (*Need for discipline*)

Interviewer: Overall how would you describe your experience of the course?

(458) P5: I think it was very positive I really enjoyed it. It was some of the evenings it took a
(459) bit of discipline to go out in the cold in winter to attend the meetings but once there it
(460) was great to connect with others and hear their stories and what an adventure it was
(461) and where that leads and a time of spiritual growth for myself. (*Spiritual growth*)

Interviewer: How would you describe that spiritual growth?

(462) P5: I think the whole thing of being accountable to other people. I know that I have to
(463) check in every Thursday nights and say how I went it forced me to be disciplined in
(464) Bible reading and prayer and the more you do that the more you grow you reap more
(465) than what you sow (*Need of accountability for growth*) With practicing Bible reading
and prayer so I think I have got a lot

(466) out of Bible reading and prayer. It was a blessing to me and the idea of becoming more
(467) aware of being an open channel of God's love that we don't just pour into ourselves but
(468) it is a channel pouring in and pouring out. (*Channel of God's love*) I became aware that
it has to be conscious

(469) because it doesn't happen automatically. The moment we think it's going to happen
(470) automatically then I started to lag. (*Doesn't happen automatically*)

Interviewer: So was there anything that you struggled with about the course?

(471) P5: Not really struggle. I found that the radical acts of hospitality forced (*Hospitality forced*) but I think it's

(472) only forced when you feel like you have to do it and you feel pressured to do it but
(473) when I relaxed about it and the opportunities came then I saw how I could get involved
(474) even after the course was finished where I was thinking about that I should continue
(475) this, this should not be just for the course it should be an ongoing thing to benefit from.
(476) I was walking in the city one day and that morning I was reading on the bus and
(477) thinking I should look for opportunities for acts of radical hospitality and a guy came
up
(478) to me a student a young guy. He looked downtrodden. He asked me do you have a few
(479) dollars for the meal and I said to him, So what do you feel like and he said kebab and I
(480) said well it's your lucky day and I gave him money I said but what happened did you
(481) miss breakfast? And he said I did but I could see he probably had a bad night and he
(482) was so thankful for the money but it didn't take anything from me five dollars is
nothing
(483) to make me poorer but certainly helped him a lot and made me feel good and I thought
(484) gee it was nice doing this and the opportunity came to me. (*Continuation of practice of
hospitality*)

Interviewer: Where there any feeling that came through for you on the course?

(485) P5: I did not have any negative feelings more or a confirmation of my faith and a
(486) deepening of my relationship with God and with other people doing the course and my
(487) relationship with the world I'm living in and becoming more aware of that. The feeling
(488) of, awareness I've got some power in the world that I'm living in and I can make a
(489) difference and be an instrument in God's hands. (*Increasing awareness of being able to
make a difference*)

Interviewer: If you could do the course again what would you do differently?

(490) P5: I would maybe call the radical acts of hospitality something else. Give it another

(491) name because that was a little bit confusing I know what you meant we clarified that.

(492) Maybe call it something else. (*Ambiguity around act of hospitality*)

Interviewer: Would you do anything differently?

(493) P5: No I think this worked well for me.

Interviewer: Did the course help you to become more missional?

(494) P5: Yes because it helped me to really focus on the practices and on being more aware

(495) of the people around me and not live life that is so focused inwards but focused

(496) outwards (*Move from inward focus*) and making myself available to people around me

and being aware of their

(497) needs and being prayerful about the people I see around me and the community. People

(498) I know and don't know to think more about others instead of thinking about myself.

Interviewer: Can you say how your behaviours changed to being more missional?

(499) P5: In terms of that again just the idea of being more outwardly focused and on the look

(500) -out for where I can be of service or help or connecting maybe talking to someone

(501) instead of just walking past, making eye contact, smiling acknowledging someone, on

(502) the train or giving up my seat for someone. Just being more others focused rather than

self focused. (*Increase in being outwardly focused*)

Interviewer: Do you think the course will have long term impact on your behaviour?

(503) P5: I hope so. It's an effort to stay disciplined, it's not something that happens

(504) automatically but the more that we do something the more it becomes a habit so to be

(505) intentional about being missional is a mindset (*Being missional is a mindset*) so it has

to happen first in the heart

(506) before it becomes an automatic behaviour. So I hope so. I'm trying to. It hasn't been as
(507) good as when we were meeting but I have been able to keep it up a little bit. (*Desire to
keep engaging in the behaviour*)

Interviewer: How did you feel your relationship changed during the course?

(508) P5: It definitely deepened.

Interviewer: Can you describe that?

(509) P5: It's more of a constant communication with God with all the extra prayer that was
(510) happening there was extra communication with god and the Bible readings. It was more
(511) than usual so the door was opened to me and I was more aware of the process it was
like

(512) a spiritual journey. That was positive benefit. (*Constant communion with God*)
(*Spiritual journey*)

Interviewer: Can you describe that term Spiritual journey a bit?

(513) P5: When we started off it was a task of paper and it was exciting meeting up but then
(514) there was the process happening behind the process. (*Process behind the process*)

Because we all prayed for each

(515) other we prayed on our own we prayed for the process of this course and the group and
(516) for good things to come out of this. So it sort of snowballed in terms of the benefits
(517) flowing from doing the practices and coming together it's like the sum is greater than
the

(518) whole of the parts. For me it had great spiritual benefits.

Interviewer: What else would you change about the course?

(519) P5: I can't think of anything I think it was great. I think it would be great for the
(520) congregation to do or people to do in their life groups.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts about the course?

(521) P5: I think it was a great opportunity to know other people on the course. It was
(522) opportunity to connect with them and it was nice the idea of helping you with a
(523) worthwhile project it was an honour to be asked. I appreciated it. It was a positive
experience.

Participant Six (P6)

Interviewer: You had four practices to do, praying with your eyes open, reading Scripture in a
public place, practicing a radical act of hospitality and meeting up weekly. How did you
structure these practices into the rhythm of your week?

(524) P6: The praying with my eyes open that was ok. I could do that while I was walking the
(525) dog or driving to work. The hospitality we didn't have anyone to home but we did the
(526) trolley guys which I'm still doing. I haven't had opportunity to incorporate Greg into
(527) that. So while I didn't read the word in public during the study I made a conscious
effort

(528) now. So I've downloaded the ejesus. Trying to do that at work at lunch but working in
(529) a Christian organisation it's not out here so it's not as if I'm displaying my faith to a lot
(530) of people who are not Christians already. (*Behavioural change in reading the Bible*)

Interviewer: Did you find that it wove into your week easily or was it a struggle?

(531) P6: It was a little bit of a struggle. Just with other family activities, trying to get to your
(532) place, I was always late. That was fine. The hospitality I did that when I was shopping
(533) so that was ok. The reading, changing my mindset and having a desire to do it, that's
(534) not my thing it never has been. But I have sat down and done it at home while I'm
(535) sitting doing nothing and go on internet, I now say that I need to sit for ten minutes to
do the

(536) reading. It's a mind switch which I really needed. (*Some difficulty incorporating the
practices into routine*)

Interviewer: How did you experience the course overall?

(537) P6: I really enjoyed it. It made me accountable. (*Accountability positive and helpful*) But I really enjoyed getting to know

(538) others on a deeper level. (*Deeper relationships*) You don't get that on Sunday morning. You don't engage

(539) with what is happening in their lives because different age group, they are in different

(540) phases of their life, but it was a really good cross section of the church community and

(541) that they were open to how they were feeling. We were all vulnerable and broke down

(542) those barriers so now we are more approachable when we see each other outside the group. (*Increase vulnerability which broke barriers*)

Interviewer: Is there anything that you struggled with in the course?

(543) P6: It's just doing what I was supposed to be doing. Being accountable. So the reading it

(544) didn't happen. I just can't or it's not the right season but I have made improvements on

(545) that since we have stopped meeting together.

Interviewer: Are you encouraged by the readings?

(546) P6: Look I'm enjoying them but I think they say you do them for 10 minutes but it's a tick off

(547) the box, but really what they want you to do is sit and contemplate stuff you have read

(548) where I don't have the capacity to do that. I'm getting a little bit. As practice goes I'm

(549) hoping I can switch into how is this relevant to me today. At the moment I'm reading

(550) but you really have to get into a different mindset and if you do that in the middle of

(551) your workday as well. I find when I get home there are too many distractions. I admire

(552) old people like my mum she'll have a quiet time every day I have never done that. It's

(553) not just one of those practices I do. I'm missing out. Because I haven't instilled that

(554) practices in my life it's really affected me now cause I don't do it. (*Desire to be more disciplined*)

Interviewer: Can you remember having any feelings during the course?

(555) P6: Not really. I am such a social bunny. There was no anxiety with it. To start off with,

(556) am I worthy enough to do this? Can I fulfil this? Then there is guilt when you don't do

(557) what you are supposed to. But as Christian guilt is a big thing..it's not meant to be but it

(558) is...I'm not doing this and I should be. And also not wanting to let you down. Guilt is a

(559) leftover from a lot of Christian institutions. The older I get... it's not what Jesus came to

(560) do, to make us feel guilty so there is still guilt there because you feel. Also because of

(561) my relationship with you I want you to do well. (*Struggle with guilt if not able to do practices*) (*Need to please project leader*)

Interviewer: If you could do the course again what would you do differently?

(562) P6: I don't think I'd do anything differently. I'm not an ideas person. I can't think how

(563) I'd do anything differently.

Interviewer: How would you describe the effect the course had on you?

(564) P6: It was positive. On a number of levels. On the social interactions with people

(565) because that's my thing. Pushing me out of my comfort a bit with the trolley guys.

(pushing out of comfort zone) I also

(566) think ever since coming to CLCC for some unknown reason whether the shackles have

(567) fallen off. I'm more open to what the Holy Spirit is saying. Before you would dismiss it

(568) as an idea you had, but it's not, I suppose being more open to that and when we were

(569) sitting around praying once just the thoughts of the dates came to me and listening to

(570) that. Whether that is a spiritual maturity thing and listening more. (*Receiving word from God during group prayer time*)(*Increase in discernment*)

Interviewer: Do you think that the course helped you to become more missional?

(571) P6: No. Because I think that's my nature anyway. I don't think so.

Interviewer: Did any of your thinking change around being missional?

(572) P6: Well I work for a missional organisation. So you live and breathe that anyway. For

(573) others it might be different. And also (workplace name) they still have that God

element. With (574) Baptist that is their focus. You are working to that every day. The whole organisation is

(575) missional so I don't think it's made me more. (*Feeling she was already missional*)

Interviewer: Have your behaviours changed in being missional

(576) P6: No

Interviewer: Did you find the course unhelpful in shaping you missionally?

(577) P6: No. It was. Hopefully it helped others to be missional so I'm hoping that will be different for others.

Interviewer: With the trolley guys that is something that you would do anyway?

(578) P6: Yes

Interviewer: What would you change about the course?

(579) P6: I don't think I'd change anything. It was good to get everyone together. You

(580) encouraged everyone to come together and share. I think it was good for an intensive 8

(581) weeks to get into the flow of things. If you did it every two weeks there is too many

(582) opportunities for distraction. And you make a commitment for each week and it's good

(583) because you know it's for 8 weeks. You can put aside that time so no I wouldn't

change

(584) anything. You were a good facilitator. Ask everyone how they are going and

(585) encouraging them by asking probing questions and everyone was quite up front no one
(586) held anything back. Everyone was comfortable in that environment. I think you are
right

(587) that it was s God appointed things because we all seemed to gel.

Interviewer: Did you feel it was God appointed?

(588) P6: Looking back on it now I can say it was. Because everyone got on well for me and
(589) that relationships especially with ..(two Participants) and with ..(Participant). I didn't
know him and (590) (Participant) and that was nice. That was a segue to get together and
build on those

(591) relationships. I think we can all help one another in. We are all at different stages. We
(592) all have something to offer. I think with (Participant) and (Participant) their work
experience helps

(593) us and to learn from them and hopefully (two Participants) . And (Participant) I didn't
know

(594) her so it was lovely. She is a gentle soul. I went off to have a chat with her whereas I
(595) would not have done that before. (*Increase in genuine relationships*)

Interviewer: Did you feel like your relationship with God changed at all?

(596) P6: Look I think my relationship with God has a long way to go. Yeah a kick up the
(597) bottom to be aware of stuff that I. Getting this job, that was a major shift in my
(598) relationship with God. Now I'm just cruising. There was divine intervention in that. I
(599) can't believe that almighty God has an interest in me. And you can't call it coincidence.
(600) So my relationship was going along but in awe of what he does. So I don't think it's got
(601) any better. Just acknowledging that I have a huge way to go. (*Sense that relationship
with God has a long way to go*)

Interviewer: Did you feel more connected to God?

(602) P6: It's probably pretty similar

(603) P6: Usually if I hear something bad it's second nature to me to cry out to God. So I

(604) suppose doing the course was more doing God's will. Especially with Trolley guys. So

(605) I would have done that but Not as often. And being more conscious of being Jesus' hands

(606) and feet. So that was something, that was an improvement on missional. That that's

(607) what we need to be doesn't matter what circumstance. I know with church we are trying

(608) to get this missional type thing and I suppose over last month that's what we are his hands and feet. (*Acknowledging we are God's hands and feet*)

Interviewer: So are you saying it made you more aware?

(609) P6: I think so just a bit of an ah ha moment so that by doing the coffee and stuff I'm

(610) doing this for you guys but I'm hoping by some divine way you realise that it's not

(611) really me. That there is something different. That difference is Jesus. I don't know, I

(612) believe the Holy Spirit works in people like that. That they will have an ah ha moment

(613) so even though we don't have to say anything, this person is different, they might be...(*Increase sense of God at work through the individual*)

Interviewer: But you had an ah ha moment in the sense of going I'm doing in the name of Jesus?

(614) P6: I guess so

Interviewer: Any other thoughts about the course?

(615) P6: When I was filling out the survey I was wondering how different it would be. When

(616) I was answering things I was thinking I don't think this is different. How you evaluate

(617) yourself in the start. I'm sure that is the same.

Participant Seven (P7)

Interviewer: You had four practices to do, praying with your eyes open, reading Scripture in a public place, practicing a radical act of hospitality and meeting up weekly. How did you structure these practices into the rhythm of your week?

(618) P7: With the readings I was doing them at lunch so I'd do them there. Once or twice a
(619) week. Praying with eyes open was in the morning. Catching the bus to work I would do
(620) that. I would do that at lunch or after work.

Interviewer: Did you find it fit in with your daily rhythms?

(621) P7: So while I had a routine I found it was fine, weekends I would forget about it or if I
(622) was away I would do it when I thought of it but quite often I'd miss it because it was
out

(623) of my routine. *(Easy fit into daily rhythms but difficult over weekend)*

Interviewer: So overall what was your experience of the course?

(624) P7: I got a lot out of it. I found the hospitality part and quite good, it gave some
(625) structure around each of these activities so I got a lot out of that and within the group, I
(626) felt I was accountable to the group. So my motivation level was high that what it
normally is. *(Good to be accountable so motivation high)*

Interviewer: What did you find most enjoyable about the course?

(627) P7: I liked the hospitality part which I still do so still trying to make it a habit. *(Enjoy
hospitality) (still practicing hospitality)*

Interviewer: What did you struggle with?

(628) P7: Not really anything difficult there. So I didn't really struggle much with any of it.
(629) Just after that with the reading, the Ejesus so I have tried to pick that up in terms of
(630) reading Scripture on the bus every day I will flick onto those and go through those
steps

(631) and pray and read. So I have tried to maintain those habits. It gave me structure.

(Increase in habit of Bible reading)

Interviewer: Did you have any feelings on the course?

(632) P7: It was interesting period of time because so much happened while I was doing the

(633) course so I felt like doing the course and things that were happening it was like a

(634) journey. *(Journey)* So many things had happened to me along that way. Like with my

health and

(635) my father's health. The 8 week it was quite full on. *(Doing course in midst of change)*

Interviewer: What do you mean by journey?

(636) P7: Just to do with relationships with my family. In that time when my father was sick

(637) and the way we related to each other. The things that bubbled to the surface during that

(638) time. Just conversations with my father. The way that he opened up to me. I learned

(639) more about him. Just his life and the regrets he had. When I was sick and being in

(640) hospital and the relationship with hospital. Life's pretty tame but during these 8 weeks

(641) there was all these other things going on. I was connecting with people I wouldn't

(642) normally connect with. Plus doing this course, there were all these things happening

and

(643) things that I was confronted with at that time. *(Personal spiritual growth over the*

course due to practices and life circumstance)

Interviewer: Did that make you feel stressed?

(644) P7: No. It's almost like a real growing period. With the course and doing those things,

(645) family relationships. It was full on. *(Season of growth)*

Interviewer: If you could do the course again what would you do differently?

(646) P7: Maybe a bit more disciplined as far as the readings go and praying. Quite often I

(647) was hit and miss with that. But still carried out the full 8 weeks. *(More disciplined)*

Interviewer: So you would make sure you were more intentional?

(648) P7: I felt I was intentional but maybe life got in the way at times. But I didn't
(649) deliberately avoid it but it would drop out of my consciousness unless there was some
(650) kind of trigger there to think back.

Interviewer: What effect did the course have on you?

(651) P7: I'm not sure. Just with hospitality, I'm a little bit more committed to it. I have one
(652) person that I buy coffee for and bread. Being more confident or more intentional,
(653) stopping to talk with someone, tempted to walk past but stop and think what's two
(654) minutes out of my day? So I think I benefitted from that. (*More intentional*) (*Time to interact with people*)

Interviewer: Do you think the course helped you to become more missional?

(655) P7: Yes. In that way. Just talking to others and trying to help or support others that are disadvantaged. (*Helping the disadvantaged*)

Interviewer: Did any of your thinking change around missional?

(656) P7: I think I'm more missional than what I was before which was pretty light on. And
(657) looking at missional in a different way. (*Increase in missional*) (*Seeing missional in a new way*) Rather than something structured where you go
(658) somewhere to do something or pay money or donate for someone else to do that
(659) whether it's overseas or even local support. I think it's become a bit more personal and
(660) understanding that you can do something in day to day life rather than having to have
(661) something arranged and to do activities that are arranged you can really incorporate it in your day to day life. (*Missional not structured but day to day*)

Interviewer: Do you think your behaviours have changed and that that will last?

(662) P7: I'm hoping it will. I guess I have to be careful. There is a guy on George St I always

(663) buy him coffee. So I do that every day I need to be careful that doesn't become too
(664) comfortable. This is my little piece I'll just keep doing it but I should just keep an open
(665) mind and for other areas not to become complacent. I need to keep that openness to
receive other things. *(Practicing new behaviour but need for continual openness)*

Interviewer: How would you change the course?

(666) P7: There is nothing obvious I can think of. I thought it was good to do in the group.

Interviewer: Why?

(667) P7: Just to hear other people's experiences and in the group there were people that I
(668) don't interact with at church so it was nice to have people that sort of knew but didn't
(669) interact with. It was nice to get to know them. I liked that. And just the conversations
(670) and experiences as well. Just how they were dealing with all of this and seeing the areas
(671) they struggled with which it's good for me to see that other people struggle in these
(672) areas also. Where you don't get that on a weekly basis some people appear to have it all
(673) together, It's good to scratch below the surface and understand them more and the things
(674) that they struggle with or what their strengths are. It humanises it all. Just with dealing
with other people. *(Good to know that others struggle too)*

Interviewer: How did your relationship with God change during the course?

(675) P7: He was more involved in my life than what he was in the past. There's certain
times a week where you would do the practices and just feel that God is part of your life but
(676) then it's easy to walk away from that environment and just forget. I guess that I'm
(677) allowing God into my life more. More regularly perhaps and just that a lot more
(678) conscious in the things I do in my thinking and having God in my life a lot more. *(More
conscious of God's presence in life)*

Interviewer: Did you feel you grew in your connection to God?

(679) P7: I think so. Just through the activities and prayer more than usual and a lot more
(680) reading and applying what I read being a bit more intentional about it and through that
(681) prayer about what you have read.

Interviewer: Do you have any other thoughts about the course?

(682) P7: I just think what we did it would be good to do in groups. We have had the
(683) missional training. This is a lot more practical and I get a lot out of it. So I guess, things
(684) like this that are a lot more practical and applying it in the church for...I feel like I'm
(685) actually doing something. It's nice to sit down in life groups and study Timothy 2 and
(686) all those things it's all good but the practicality of it sometimes you don't apply it. This
(687) is more intentional. And you become accountable. In doing these things. I find my
(688) growth is a lot more when I'm doing something intentionally. (*More practical therefore
growth happened*)

Interviewer: Is that how you connect with God more?

(689) P7: Yes that's probably got a lot out of it. I'd rather be doing something than sitting
(690) down and reading Scripture and then trying to understand it in the context of its
(691) background. It becomes a bit theoretical where I'm not a theologian, I don't have that
(692) intent to become like that. I understand the concepts. I understand it at a high to
medium
(693) level rather than delving into what someone was doing at a certain time and place. I
(694) prefer to apply what I do know. I feel like I get a lot more out of things like this.

Table of Themes and Sub Themes Emerging from Interviews

Theme 1- Spiritual growth

-Awakening:

“I think it was a bit of an awakening.” (P1: 15)

-Shift from inwards orientation:

“..trying to keep that viewpoint as my everyday viewpoint not go back to the way that I was which was a bit insular.” (P1:21)

“So I think the project was good to shift my focus and confronted me with what my life had become and it just happened and I didn’t want it to be like that”. (P2:191-195)

-More energy doing the course:

“umm...sounds bit funny but I feel like I had more energy when I was doing it.”(P1:39)

-Peaceful feeling:

“I was also I had a sort of, it sounds a bit funny but I had a sort of a peaceful feeling.”
(P1:46).

-Sense of increasing need to connect with God:

“I think it has made me value my time with God more. Because I’ve been through a pretty dry season. And then doing the course has me go hang on that’s why I’ve been feeling so crap recently is because I just haven’t been connecting properly with God.” (P1:52-53)

-Being open to spontaneous engagement with God:

“I guess being open, trying to be open, I still struggle with this one, with whatever ...So I think Im beginning to be a bit more open in that but I think it’s still a work in progress.”
(P1:65-68)

-Increase sense of connection to God:

“I don’t think my overall relationship or the way that I view God has changed but just in terms of personally connecting with him.” (P1:100)

“..and I was more aware of the process it was like a spiritual journey. That was positive benefit.” (P5:512)

“..just that a lot more conscious in the things I do in my thinking and having God in my life a lot more....”(P7:678)

-Realisation of need to apply faith today:

“..when I read the Bible I read it from the perspective of this happened years and years ago but when you bring it into today’s context it make it a lot more radical. So I guess in some ways my view did change in having that perspective, and going well no we can still do this today.” (P1: 109-110)

-Practical “hands on” church:

“Sometimes it’s overwhelming whereas when you do something more practical and there are easy steps along the way you can find your own feet better.” (P1:134-135)

“..saying what are you going to do with this? I suppose making it very more practical and it’s there, I can do it.” (P2:260)

“This is a lot more practical and I get a lot out of it. So I guess, things like this that are a lot more practical and applying it in the church for...” (P7:684)

-More focused on God:

“I suppose it encouraged me to spend more time with him and more focused.” (P3:300)

-Challenging but good:

“But there were a few people that God pushed me even though I didn’t want to do this. It was really challenging but good at the same time.” (P2:180)

-Meaningful:

“I felt like once I really got into the pattern I started to see a lot more the first couple of weeks like by the end I thought this felt meaningful.” (P2:182)

-Not just ticking the box:

“..after hearing that I realised that I could lose the whole point of this if I focus on the fact that I’m not being consistent, that’s not the whole point of it, it’s not meant to be tick, tick , tick every day.” (P2:216-217)

-Good feeling of making positive change:

“I enjoyed the feeling of making positive changes to life and to how my relationship with God how that looks and changing mindset.” (P4:360)

-Feels like relationship with God is building:

“On the positive side feeling good that I there were feelings of connectedness with God through the Bible reading and actually just experiencing that new revelation about how things scripture applies to the world and our community. So that, feels good. Feels like your relationship with God is building.” (P4:368-370)

-Growth in experiencing relational aspect of God:

“Seeing that relational side of God and he is interested in my life.”(P4:428)

-Need for focus and intentionally for spiritual growth:

“It was easy because I put my mind to it. This is what I need to do it just takes the discipline to do that.” (P5:457)

“The moment we think it’s going to happen automatically then I started to lag.” (P5:470)

“Because I haven’t instilled that practices in my life it’s really affected me now cause I don’t do it.” (P6:554)

-Spiritual growth:

“...and what an adventure it was and where that leads and a time of spiritual growth for myself.” (P5:461)

“It’s almost like a real growing period. With the course and doing those things, family relationships. It was full on.” (P7: 645)

-Continuation of practice of hospitality:

“..but certainly helped him a lot and made me feel good and I thought gee it was nice doing this and the opportunity came to me.” (P5:484)

“I liked the hospitality part which I still do so still trying to make it a habit.” (P7:627)

-Increasing awareness of being able to make a difference:

“I’ve got some power in the world that I’m living in and I can make a difference and be an instrument in God’s hands.” (P5:489)

-Process behind the process:

“When we started off it was a task of paper and it was exciting meeting up but then there was the process happening behind the process.” (P5:514)

-Behavioural change in regularly reading the Bible:

“So while I didn’t read the word in public during the study I made a conscious effort now. So I’ve downloaded the eJesus. Trying to do that at work at lunch.” (P6:527-528)

“...EJesus so I have tried to pick that up in terms of reading scripture on the bus every day I will flick onto those and go through those steps and pray and read. So I have tried to maintain those habits. It gave me structure.” (P7:630-631)

-Increasing awareness of need to develop relationship with God:

“So my relationship was going along but in awe of what he does. So I don’t think it’s got any better. Just acknowledging that I have a huge way to go.” (P6:600-601)

-Increase sense of God at work through the individual:

“That there is something different. That difference is Jesus. I don’t know, I believe the Holy Spirit works in people like that. That they will have an ah ha moment so even though we don’t have to say anything, this person is different, they might be.”(P6:612-613)

-Journey in the midst of change:

“It was interesting period of time because so much happened while I was doing the course so I felt like doing the course and things that were happening it was like a journey.” (P7:633-634)

“Life’s pretty tame but during these 8 weeks there was all these other things going on. I was connecting with people I wouldn’t normally connect with. Plus doing this course, there were all these things happening and things that I was confronted with at that time.” (P7:641-643)

Theme2- Increase awareness and practice of being missional

-More connected to local context:

“..so it was a bit of a pull back and just focus on what’s happening in your area and who are these people that you are living so closely with and working so closely with.” (P1:17-18)

“..eyes to be open to see what God is saying to us in your context I think that was useful and have made me have other times where all this stuff is going on around me and what is God saying to me about how I am as a Christian in light of the Scripture and how that flows out into mission in the world.” (P4: 387-389)

-Increase in ability to listen to God- Missional listening:

“So I think in terms of missional I maybe developed my missional listening a bit more. And try and identify where God was at work and where I could connect with him already at work in the community.” (P1:62-63)

“I was trying to work out “Is it me, is it God?” (P2:165)

“I used to hear God more clearly and the project reminded me that God is there and if you want to God will show you things about your world.” (P2:266)

“I suppose being more open to that and when we were sitting around praying once just the thoughts of the dates came to me and listening to that. Whether that is a spiritual maturity thing and listening more.” (P6:569-570)

-Ease of incorporating practices into daily routine:

(P2:137-154)

(P4:345-352)

(P5:448-456)

“So while I had a routine I found it was fine, weekends I would forget about it or if I was away I would do it when I thought of it but quite often I’d miss it because it was out of my routine.” (P7:621-623)

-Pushed out of comfort zone:

“No think it was helpful because it pushed me out of my comfort zone and I wouldn’t do that unless it’s very hard to go out of your comfort zone without a push you don’t...” (P1:74)

-God in the everyday:

“..was good to focus me back on what I want my life to be like in a simple way not huge changes or huge things I had to do but in little ways which was good. I think I have become more aware of God in the everyday which is good.” (P2:197-199)

-Being God’s agent in quiet ways :

“So it was good that I can do it without others realising it. Other teachers wouldn’t realise it what I was doing but I can have that impact without causing problems.” (P2:205-206)

-Thinking about needs of others:

“I don’t think I’d looked at the people Im close to and thought what is it they need and what can I give to them.” (P2:246)

“..aware of being an open channel of God’s love that we don’t just pour into ourselves but it is a channel pouring in and pouring out. I became aware that it has to be conscious.” (P5:468)

“..more aware of the people around me and not live life that is so focused inwards but focused outwards and making myself available to people around me and being aware of their needs.” (P5:495-496)

“.. for where I can be of service or help or connecting maybe talking to someone instead of just walking past, making eye contact, smiling acknowledging someone, on the train or giving up my seat for someone. Just being more others focused rather than self focused.” (P5:501-502)

“Yes. In that way. Just talking to others and trying to help or support others that are disadvantaged.” (P7:655)

-Missional thinking brought to fore:

“It wasn’t at the forefront and it wasn’t in my thinking as much I suppose. So I think the project brought those thoughts closer to my thinking.” (P2:250)

“I think it was a good reminder. I don’t think there was anything new besides the Scripture idea, but other than that there was not anything new to me.” (P3:313-314)

“It is more of an attitude thing. Hopefully that will translate more into being involved in different things in a more missional way and living that out. That’s how we are called to live in our world as agents of God’s mission.”(P4:392-393)

“I think I’m more missional than what I was before which was pretty light on. And looking at missional in a different way.”(P7:657)

-Missional easier than you think:

“I think all of them really made me think. I made me think it’s easier than you think it is.” (P2:252)

-Making missional normal:

“..but that it should be a normal part of my life and it can be.” (P2:256)

“I think it’s become a bit more personal and understanding that you can do something in day to day life rather than having to have something arranged and to do activities that are arranged you can really incorporate it in your day to day life.” (P7:660-661)

-Seeing “Quiet times” in a different way;

“I guess it made me see quiet times with God is a different way.” (P4:383)

-More aware of missional aspect of the church:

“ what about the missional side of church? Can’t just be about doing all those Christian things. And feeling like our service to God, from my view, has been in the context of church but in some ways while I have been involved in mission for church, it’s all very structured sometimes.” (P4:400-402)

-Re-thinking how church can be missional:

“It’s not that we gather as a church then go off as individual to do our mission we need that church event and maybe it is rethinking how the church is relevant to community and how it’s being missional and intentional and how it’s serving the community.”(P4:411-412)

-Increase awareness of need to contextualise gospel:

“The teaching was always as long as we have told them the good news we can say we have done that now it’s their choice to accept or not that is true but sometimes we can put that effort into how that message is delivered and it make a huge effort in how it is received.” (P4:423-425)

-Being missional is a mindset:

“..but the more that we do something the more it becomes a habit so to be intentional about being missional is a mindset so it has to happen first in the heart.” (P5:505)

-Acknowledging that we are God’s hands and feet:

“And being more conscious of being Jesus’ hands and feet. So that was something, that was an improvement on missional. That that’s what we need to be doesn’t matter what circumstances.” (P6:606-607)

Theme 3- Personal future hopes

-Intention to keep behavioural change:

P1: “I think so. Because I really enjoyed it and it’s something that I’m going to strive to keep doing. Even though I’m not always going to get there. But I do...I miss that weekly contact with a group so that is definitely something that we do want to have that regular meeting but striving to continue to pray for the community and the people that you meet day to day we want to continue that. And the radical hospitality when the opportunities arise.” (P1:112-115)

-Desire to explore one of the practices further:

“..and with all the conversations that I’ve been having with people that will lead to acts of hospitality. Definitely.” (P1:118)

“I’m trying to. It hasn’t been as good as when we were meeting but I have been able to keep it up a little bit.” (P5:507)

-Desire to maintain spiritual focus:

“I hope the experience won’t just fizzle into nothing. I hope it will keep me spiritually aware and focused.”(P3:317)

-Need to follow up after course certain things which were initiated and continue to practice:

“So it requires action on my side to connect and know on the door and reach out rather than the other way.”(P3:321)

-The way church should function:

“I think it’s a good way of introducing the spiritual disciplines without saying that they are to put people off. It’s how church should really function.” (P3:344)

-Practicing new behaviour but need for continual openness:

“not to become complacent. I need to keep that openness to receive other things.”(P7:665)

Theme 4- Improvements for course

-Need to organise routine into daily life:

“Really sit down and nut out when I was going to do everything.” (P1:35)

“Maybe a bit more disciplined as far as the readings go and praying. Quite often I was hit and miss with that. But still carried out the full 8 weeks.” (P7:647).

-Need for more group connection during the week:

“..but having communication with the people that you are going through the journey with during the week, that would be good I think.” (P1:94-95)

“I think the having the meeting once a week was good and share what happened but I suppose, I would like more of that sort of stuff, more sharing, but maybe in different way, like emails or....” (P2:267-269)

-Distractions made doing course difficult:

“I would like to do it with less distractions and have it more as a focus because it’s hard, it would be lovely to just focus on that for a week or two. But it’s hard to do that when you have so many other things on in your life but..you do the best you can.”(P3:310-311)

-Make course more achievable:

“But to make it more achievable for the likes of me.” (P3:327).

-More intentionality:

“but I suppose, being more intentional about when I was going to do the practices.” (P2:232)

“Maybe if I was to try again I work more on the intentionality and allow time to think and reflect on the process on the individual level and a group level. I want to be doing these

practices so how am I going to fit them in tackle them especially the hospitality brainstorming what can I do?" (P4:378-380)

-Need for more help with group accountability:

"I think that was my problem with hospitality. In my head I thought I knew what I wanted to do but because no one else knew I could not push myself as much because people didn't know what I was thinking. Which I think doing this has made me realise that I do want to have more people that I tell what I'm working on with God and getting them to ask me how I'm going." (P2:237-241)

-Longer meetings/time frame:

"For the purpose of encouraging those practices over a long period of time. So that allows greater room to work on that and to be encouraged." (P4:376)

Theme5-Struggles on the Course

-Feeling rushed to do practices:

"Sometimes I felt a bit like I rushed things because I needed to get them done." (P1:24).

-Ambiguity around hospitality:

"The hospitality, I love but I did find that one really difficult, I think" (P1:86-90)

"So the hospitality I found really hard and I think it was also because in the first weeks I was trying to work to what was a marginalised person." (P2:156)

"I would maybe call the radical acts of hospitality something else. Give it another name because that was a little bit confusing I know what you meant we clarified that. Maybe call it something else." (P5:491-492)

-Struggle to obey God:

“She doesn’t care much about her job just doing it. She sort of isolates herself and doesn’t come to staff meetings and stays up the library and I felt all term God was saying “just get her flowers.” (P2:173-174)

-Shift of feelings positive/negative during the course :

“At the start I felt excited and happy to do it. I felt like it was timely and good for me. I think I got discouraged and disappointed in myself at the start because I felt like I wasn’t doing the practices very well or consistently.” (P2:212-213).

-Difficulty with intentionality:

“Maybe I did with that encouragement and reminder but purposefully do it was a lot more difficult.” (P3:284)

-Difficulty to fit practices into weekly routine:

“But to do in outside those hours was difficult.” (P3:285-291)

“It was a little bit of a struggle.” (P6:531-536)

-Negative feeling of pressure to ‘do the right thing’:

“Trying to be a good girl and doing all the things for you... Initially we were nervous about the acts of hospitality. I wouldn’t be afraid of going up to someone in the city. It was just getting there to do it.” (P3:303-304)

“Then there is guilt when you don’t do what you are supposed to. But as Christian guilt is a big thing..it’s not meant to be but it is...I’m not doing this and I should be.” (P6:557-558)

-Too forced , Putting Holy Spirit in a box:

“Sometimes I felt it was too forced I was doing it because I had to. I think you’ve just got to be prepared for the unexpected and you can’t put the Holy Spirit into a box and you can’t manufacture something. Sometimes I felt that we were asked to do things rather than just doing something because it was Spirit led.” (P3:306-308)

“I found that the radical acts of hospitality forced but I think it’s only forced when you feel like you have to do it and you feel pressured to do it but when I relaxed about it and the opportunities came then I saw how I could get involved.” (P5:472-473)

-Disappointment of not achieving goals-need to wait on God:

“And also that initial feeling of not achieving the acts of hospitality you want to be kicking those goals but you just have to wait for those opportunities or be bold to take them when they come. That is a challenge.” (P4:365-366)

-Feelings of already being missional:

“The whole organisation is missional so I don’t think it’s made me more.” (P6:575)

Theme 6- Support of the group community

-Missed weekly gatherings when away:

“But with work that was also hard because I was out every second week so I think I missed that connection on the weeks when I wasn’t there.” (P1:10-11)

-Group support helped motivation:

“I think the group was very important, because if I just had that course and was going through it by myself, I don’t think I would have stuck to it or would have pushed as hard either necessarily.” (P1:77-78)

“I think it was pretty positive I think just that regular catch up with the group was a big part of it. Having that chance to check in and see how others are doing that was encouraging to keep at it and thinking around things as well. Think through how we tackle the practices. So that was good experience. Fitting those experiences into life and seeing that you can make the time to do those things.” (P4:354-357)

-Building up relationships in the weekly meetings:

“One could see the value of that in the way that church functions. You develop close connections with people doing a similar outreach.” (P3:299-300)

“Getting to know people from our congregation on a deeper level that I had not before. So that was good.” (P3:399)

“I really enjoyed getting to know others on a deeper level. You don’t get that on Sunday morning. You don’t engage with what is happening....”(P6:538-539)

“We were all vulnerable and broke down those barriers so now we are more approachable when we see each other outside the group.” (P6:542)

“Looking back on it now I can say it was. Because everyone got on well for me.” (P6:588)

-Encouragement in meetings- “Lifted me”:

“I came to the meeting but I felt really encouraged by everything else everyone was saying. And it helped to make me feel better and just to hear what God was doing in everyone else even though nothing happened in my life so I think the meetings were really good for that aspect. Then I felt like it sort of lifted me and encouraged me yep keep trying and going.” (P2:225-228)

“It’s good to scratch below the surface and understand them more and the things that they struggle with or what their strengths are. It humanises it all. Just with dealing with other people.” (P7:674)

Mix of people helpful in course:

“It was good for me because I didn’t know everyone that well and talking to new people and hearing what they were going through and I liked the fact that there were younger and older people and found it shocking that these people had been Christians for decades still struggled with the things that I did. I found that encouraging. I found it good I would love to keep doing it.” (P2:276-278)

“I liked the diversity of the group. People had different life experiences which was good to draw from.” (P4:435)

-Presence of group members crucial:

“The barrier where people weren’t there, there was that loss of community because of the absence when they weren’t there.” (P4:447)

-Need of accountability for growth:

“I think the whole thing of being accountable to other people. I know that I have to check in every Thursday nights and say how I went it forced me to be disciplined in Bible reading and prayer and the more you do that the more you grow you reap more than what you sow.”

(P5:463-465)

“ I really enjoyed it. It made me accountable.”(P6:537)

“I got a lot out of that and within the group, I felt I was accountable to the group. So my motivation level was high that what it normally is.” (P7: 626).

Appendix D

Notations from Weekly Meetings

Week One

- Participants were asked why are they doing the course. Many said in order to get some spiritual habits back into their lives. Some said in order to be more missional. Some said to do something outside of their comfort zone. One said because she was waiting to do something that would bring change in her life. Another said in order to change his context as he was unhappy at work.
- After a de-brief of what the 8 weeks would actually entail they were asked what their hopes and fears were. Some were apprehensive of the radical act of hospitality practice. One said they were afraid of what God might show up in them that were character faults. One said she was worried about 'yet another thing to do' in her busy week. Most said they had hope that God would work through the times together even though they were fearful of not doing well. One said that she was glad that she came that night even though she had not wanted to come. Many said that getting into spiritual habits would be a good thing. Many also said that the group accountability would be helpful. Some said that getting into the habit of doing the practices would take a bit of effort.
- Clarifications were made about the purpose and details of the course and the journey of the project designer was shared towards implementation of the project. Some theological corrections were also made. For example, that habit formation was not a way to earn God's merit but rather practices are to be seen as vehicles for the Holy Spirit to work through in order to produce formation.
- The prayer time was a commitment to God to ask him to do what he wanted to do over the eight weeks.

General Questions for Meetings

- Prayer/chit chat- anything to pray about generally speaking
- How did you go this week generally speaking with the practices?
- What did you find that God was saying to you? Could be various thoughts or one.
- What were successes and struggles?
- How would you have done things differently if could go back?
- What will you change for next week?
- Which one was the most difficult to practice? Why?
- Which one came most naturally to you?
- Did God show you anything surprising?
- Did any of the practices cause you to 'do' anything surprising?
- What did God say to you during the Bible reading practice? Did you journal?

- What made you feel uncomfortable this week? Why? What is God saying to you in that?
- Did the practices help you be more missional? How so?
- Did you feel somehow more connected to your environment?
- Did you discern the Spirit?
- Where did you practice self sacrifice?
- Where did you practice hospitality?

Week Two

- Participants overall were encouraged by the week. Two said that they felt discouraged because they did not find time to engage in the practices. Others said they had time but lacked intentionality.
- Most said that the practices helped them have a greater awareness of God in their lives that week and also the broader world.
- One practiced a radical act of hospitality by buying coffee for some trolley collectors at the local shopping centre. This made her feel connected to God because ‘that is what Jesus would do’.
- At this stage the practices are seen as something intentional and not coming naturally. The hope is that they will happen without such ‘effort’ and rather flow more easily.
- A good discussion emerged on getting connected to the area in which you live for the sake of getting to know people. The difficulties around this were discussed and that intentionality was needed here.
- A few engaged in the practice of reading Scripture and felt like God spoke to them about the broader community through it.
- One person engaged with more people on the train even though she felt outside her comfort zone doing so.
- Two people said that as they became aware of God through the people around them, they felt sad.
- I asked them to think about what God might be asking them to do as a result of the practices and also to step out of their comfort zones even more.
- Some found it difficult to find time to read scripture in a public place.
- One person was surprised that she found herself talking to a stranger in a cafe and giving her advice on legal matters.
- We spoke about how God can be in situations which make us feel uncomfortable.
- The first week was about settling into a routine and organising themselves around the practices.
- Over all sense of encouragement and good sharing.
- One person has dropped out due to having a baby. Another will only come every second week as she works and another was away for work in another state.

Week Three

- All group members were encouraged tonight as they shared. They seem to be taking it more in their stride but still keeping the intentionality
- Overall I feel like the group is connecting, bonding and also forming. God is building them up and feeding them with his presence so that they are growing.
- Two group members shared that they had a sense that God was saying that the group is blessed
- One person intentionally prayed during travelling to work by train and felt God focusing him more on others rather than himself. He said that he felt good about that.
- One person said that she read Scripture in a public place in a busy shopping centre where she works and that she connected to the passage of Luke 10:1-12 where Christians are to be people of peace. So she prayed a blessing of peace in her shop realising that shopping centres are not usually places of peace.
- Another person who is a teacher prayed in the school yard and for the first time noticed children laughing and singing as she prayed. She felt God's presence and that he was reminding her of childhood innocence.
- We had a discussion about how to discern the way that God is at work in our lives and one person shared how he had changed work and that he felt God changing his desires in him about what kind of work he wanted, so that is why he moved to another company. He can already see how God is present in his new context through some of the values that the organisation has.
- One person has noticed the struggles of a young mum in her workplace and is praying for opportunities to speak to her.
- Another person started talking with a recent immigrant in her workplace and listened to his story about struggling to find work.
- Another group member normally avoids talking to the dog groomer while the dog is being washed but this time she stayed with him and talked with him for 2 hours. She is praying for him and about him that more opportunities will come to talk with him.
- Another person has been buying coffee for the homeless people around his workplace in the city. He has been enjoying that.
- Another person met up with her neighbour and had coffee with her
- One person prayed in a busy shopping centre and was not sure if she discerned God speaking to her. She felt distracted. This is a theme that came through with two others, that is that when they are distracted with difficulties of life it is difficult to focus on God's presence and engaging with the practices.
- That same person bought food for a group of Muslims breaking their fast for Ramadan.
- Two people were away sick and another was out of the State.

Week Four

- Everyone came except the person who can only come once every two weeks due to work.

- Some are finding that the practice of reading Scripture is difficult. One said that it feels very ‘unnatural’ to read Scripture in a busy place rather than a quiet place.
- Others have struggled to be alone to read Scripture and generally say that they find it difficult to engage with Scripture.
- One said that she was finding that the process is helping her become more aware of others around her. She noticed a person who looked lonely this week and when she was thinking of engaging with him and about what to say he walked away.
- Two said that they felt very distracted this week due to personal things going on in their lives and that they were not able to engage.
- Two felt that God was speaking to them about personal things in their lives like having patience.
- I felt that some are almost trying too hard and that this is what spiritual practice often do, they force behaviour. So I prayed grace in the group and for the practices to be done with God’s enabling and strength.
- One who practiced giving homeless people coffee last week, was actually able to connect with the homeless people this time and hear their story. He said that he felt good about what he did and that he saw them more as people not just objects.
- One said that work had been particularly stressful that week with a lot of politics and investigations. She prayed every morning that she would be a witness of peace and she felt like God gave her many opportunities to be his presence of peace in that place. She said she did not feel like she was striving but that it was God at work through her. She said she was quite in awe of what God was doing through her in her workplace without her really putting in any effort.
- One person bought some pastries for two men who she feels are marginalised in our community. They work at the local supermarket to gather the shopping trolleys. She bought them those pastries then watched as they took a break on their trucks parted the food and shared it with one another. She said that she felt like they were ‘breaking bread’ and to quite emotional when talking about it. She saw it as such a humble act and also that the presence of God was in them as they did that. She discerned God there.
- Another person wanted to be very intentional about stepping out with the practice of radical hospitality. He bought some vouchers from a supermarket and just held on to them in faith that a situation would come up where he would use them. He walked through the shopping centre praying. On his way back to work he encountered two homeless people in unexpected places. He gave them the vouchers and smiled at them. He was surprised that they responded with thanks. He was encouraged that he took that step

Week Five

- Four participants were away due to sickness or tiredness. This was actually good because it made the group smaller and we were able to talk a little more intimately.

- I felt that tonight more than ever the group is taking ownership of the group rather than looking solely to me for direction. So participants were asking each other questions rather than only me asking those questions.
- Two participants said that they felt they were gaining a greater awareness of God's presence, not necessarily though feeling that presence but just by awareness. They both said that this was changing their relationship with God.
- Two said they still struggle to read Scripture in a public place due to distraction.
- There were no stand out acts of radical hospitality this week however all members did make an effort to connect with people more within their vicinity.
- One person said that they made an hour during the week to practice an act of hospitality. At the end of the hour they just felt frustrated and didn't feel like they heard from God. She realised however the she was forcing something and that these are disciplines that cannot be forced. She also said that she has trouble breaking out of her routine to even think about praying while she drives. I realised that a part of this is helping people to step out of routine which leaves space for God to engage with them.
- One person said she noticed a new student in her class who looked a bit 'different' due to her gender. She said that she felt that she would look out for this student in the future to care for her in case she is marginalised.
- This was the first time that the prayer time was strong in terms of praying for each other and naming the situations that each person is in. Prayers were very specific for the week.
- One person said that the practices were helping her to deal with the toxic work environment at the moment. She is able to be aware of the presence of God.
- Two people said that they were impacted by the Scripture this week regarding presenting the body as an act of worship in Romans 12 and Philippians 2 regarding humility. They held on to those passages for the week and they felt strengthened to pray for others based on those passages.
- This week I sensed that God's heart was being revealed to the group as they discussed their week. God's compassion was being revealed, peace, love towards them and his desire to reveal himself to our world through us.
- I also sensed that the practices are being engaged in as something that Christians 'should do' and that it is difficult to experience the practices as more of a natural rhythm. The balance of intentionality and rest in practicing disciplines still needs to occur.

Week Six

- Three people were away this week due to sickness. It has made me reflect on the fact that doing this project in winter has been more difficult. Another reflection is that 'life' gets in the way of running something like this in a neat fashion. It has made me realise that we need to better be able to see God in the planned and unplanned times of life. How can we see God in everything we do and everything that happens to us in life?

- An example of this was that one participant last week had a bout of vertigo and was hospitalised for a week. During that week he kept practicing his disciplines as far as he could. So he connected with the people in his ward, helping them and offering welcome to them as best he could. Sometimes he found it difficult as with one noisy patient. This participant wished he would be moved to another ward. But other times he showed warmth to people. One sick patient asked the project participant to ‘pray for him’ even though he did not know that this participant was religious. The lesson here is that God is present if we are aware of him, during the planned and unplanned happenings in our lives.
- This week a theme stood out and it was showing kindness to those who were struggling. One participant to patients in a hospital ward, another towards a school child who was being isolated, another towards a workplace who was about to be dismissed.
- Each person said that they are becoming more aware of the presence of God and some said that this was changing their relationship with God in a positive way.
- One person said that the Bible passages focused on marginalised people and this has made him think more about the church response to those that do not fit in with the usual Christian construct. He also said that the passages have made him aware that they are not just for him but the whole of the church since the passages use ‘we’ often referring to Christians as a group. This has made him pray for the church
- The group wondered without the project leaders prompting, how the whole church could engage in these practices.
- The group is bonding more even though the numbers were small this week. People are more relaxed with one another
- The formation of routine is difficult for some. I wonder if this is a personality issue. One person said that they found it difficult to engage with each practice in a routine manner however showing hospitality, when it arose, was easy for them.
- One participant is each week buying coffee for the ‘trolley guys’.
- Another participant made an effort to connect with her reclusive next door neighbour and bumped into her in the shops which led to a coffee appointment.

Week Seven

- Only one person was away this week and there was a good feel in the group in terms of being more relaxed with one another.
- The main thing I am noticing is the difficulty of getting people out of one routine and into another. Another person due to personality perhaps, finds it difficult to practice these routines and focuses more on being ‘evangelistic’. The difficulty of seeing new possibilities and opportunities is real and people seem to be stuck in a certain way of viewing things therefore not able to change.
- The difficulty of connecting with neighbours is also real as people have a hard time seeing the same people in order to build relationships. People are busy.

- Several people said that they are more aware of the presence of God now. They would be more likely to engage with other people and connect with them as opposed to ignoring them.
- One person is blessing people in his quiet praying as he speaks with them.
- Another person as she was praying, felt God speak to her about her local context and that his protection was on that place
- Another person while praying in the car about world events felt that she was able to have a ‘conversation’ with God about the suffering in the world today.
- One participant again this week bought some food for homeless people this week and engaged with them.
- One participant said that she did not feel able to connect with the Bible reading practice but felt that her devotional time with God had improved as a result of the practices.

Week Eight

- One participant tonight said that he had had a difficult week and had felt discouraged so that made practicing the disciplines difficult. However he said that he felt that even in the midst of his struggles he was able to experience the knowledge of God’s presence.
- Another person said that he continued to buy coffee for the homeless people around his workplace in the city. He also said that the Scripture reading was in line with his workplace training for resilience that week.
- Another said that as they practiced reading Scripture on the train, they felt God guiding their prayer time and became more aware of the needs of the people around them.
- I asked each person to summarise their experience over the last 7 weeks and these were the comments from each participant
 - Growth in relationship with God was an experience by two people
 - Being more courageous in the way that they expressed their relationship with God
 - Two people liked meeting up every week and sharing with the group as well as getting to know everyone in the group.
 - Everyone said that they were more aware of the presence of God and of other people in their lives.
 - One person said they were more willing to connect with people they did not know.
 - One said that they realised the need that is out there in the world.
 - One shared that her experience of seeing the ‘trolley men’ sharing food like it was communion was a real message from God.
 - Three said that they had become more aware of certain relationships in their lives that they needed to invest in.
 - Everyone seemed to agree that they would like to incorporate the practices in their regular weekly cell group meetings.

- One said that it was a very new thing for her to read Scripture in a public place and to pray with eyes open so she said that they are habits that she might want to continue to practice.
- Everyone said that their intention was to keep practicing the disciplines to keep forming the missional habits.