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Recovering a Biblical Form of Spiritual Formation in Contemporary Pentecostal Churches

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RECOVERING A BIBLICAL FORM OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN
CONTEMPORARY PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

A THESIS PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

The project addressed the problem of an inadequate theology of spiritual formation within the discipleship doctrine of a specific expression of North American Pentecostalism. The problem manifests most acutely at the local church level where ministry leaders are struggling with divorce, mental illness, moral relativism, and poverty. Pentecostalism is failing to measure up to its potential where the human experience intersects with religious life.

This project took a multilateral approach to the problem. The first approach used a theological method to survey the biblical description of spiritual formation and the existential need for it with special emphasis on The Book of Acts and the Apostle Peter.

The second approach involved a literature review and content analysis. Review and analysis considered contemporary and historic theology along with behavioral science literature related to the nature of the embodied soul, human development, and the effects of religious experience on human development. The primary data was developed through a qualitative case study.

Data developed through the multilateral approaches was coalesced to develop recommendations related to improving spiritual formation outcomes that facilitate God's idea of human flourishing and good community in a local Pentecostal church.

Three primary findings were discovered and discussed. Finding 1 related to a lack of commitment to formal education and clergy professionalization. Finding 2 related to critical biblical-theological knowledge gaps experienced by the case study participants.

Finding 3 related to the consequences of a lack of diverse and specialized ministries at the local church level.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

An Inadequate Theology of Spiritual Formation

The problem this project addressed was an inadequate theology of spiritual formation within the discipleship orthodoxy and orthopraxy of a specific expression of North American Pentecostalism - the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI). The project moved through three phases of inquiry in response to this problem. Phase one was Bible-centric with respect for the superiority of Scripture. A defined theological method was used to discover a biblical-theological foundation for spiritual formation with special attention paid to the first-century religious life of the disciples and the Apostle Peter.

Phase two involved a literature review related to spiritual formation. The focus was placed on literature that described the discipleship doctrine of the UPCI. Additional materials came from contemporary and historic theology sources as well as the behavioral sciences. The aim was to understand the inadequacies inherent in the orthodoxy and orthopraxy of the UPCI's discipleship doctrine.

Phase three was a qualitative case study of the religious life and spiritual outcomes of members of churches associated with the UPCI. Insights gleaned from the three phases of inquiry were coalesced into recommendations for improving spiritual formation outcomes in a local Pentecostal church.

Unpacking the Problem

It was unreasonable to argue that there was an inadequate theology of spiritual formation within the discipleship doctrine of the UPCI without illustrating aspects of the

problem. The following section opens with a definition of spiritual formation and presents some of the data that illustrate the problem discovered during the inquiry phases.

Defining the Mark Being Missed

Dallas Willard defined spiritual formation as "a process of transformation of the inmost dimension of the human being, the heart, which is the same as the spirit or will. It is being formed (really, transformed) in such a way that its natural expression comes to be the deeds of Christ done in the power of Christ."[1]

In An Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation, Barton and Mulholland defined spiritual formation as "a process of being formed in the image of Christ for the sake of others."[2] "Thus spiritual formation is a process of involvement with God's gracious work. Once we understand spiritual formation as a process, all of life becomes spiritual formation."[3]

Chandler, Kiple, and Hagenberg defined spiritual formation as "the ongoing, interactive and grace-based process of being conformed to the image of Jesus through the indwelling Holy Spirit, within the community of faith, in order to bear fruit that glorifies the Father."[4] Spiritual formation is a process of becoming more like Jesus. Spiritual formation takes place through the work of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual formation results in individuals bearing fruit.

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[1] Dallas Willard, *"Spiritual Formation and How it is Done,"* School of Kingdom Living. November 25, 2020. https://dwillard.org/articles/spiritual-formation-what-it-is-and-how-it-is-done

[2] Ruth Haley Barton and M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downer Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 16

[3] Barton and Mulholland, 20

[4] Diane Chandler, Cindy Kiple, and Beth Hagenberg. *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness* (Downer Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 70

The defining idea used throughout this project was reflective of these with one necessary emphasis. The definition used throughout this report is that spiritual formation is the process of being reformed spiritually, psychologically, and morally into the image of Christ, which reveals the potential of the Imago Dei. Achieving increasing degrees of this potential is the expected outcome of the lifelong process. Field research showed that this achievement was not as evident within the UPCI as it could have been.

Growth Rate is not an Adequate Measure of Success

The growth rate of Pentecostalism around the world could be used as counter-proof. The rate suggested that Pentecostalism at the time of this research was successful. According to the Atlas of Pentecostalism developed by the Pulitzer Center:

> Pentecostalism is growing worldwide, but especially in the global south. Every day, 35,000 people are born again through baptism with the Holy Spirit. Since the 1960s, Pentecostalism has gained acceptance from other Christian traditions through the related Charismatic movement. One-quarter of the world's 2 billion Christians are Pentecostal or Charismatic now, compared to 6 percent in 1980.[5]

The Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative at the University of Southern California claimed that:

> Pentecostalism and Charismatic religion flourish at some of the most fluid and hotly contested boundaries – cultural, religious, and economic – in the age of globalization. Broadly categorized as renewal movements, these religious communities are experiencing their most dramatic growth at the frontier between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria: in the vast factory towns of China's interior; among members of the rising middle class in Kenya; in the slums that ring the rapidly modernizing urban areas of Central and South American; in Muslim-majority Indonesia and Hindu-majority India.[6]

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[5] "Atlas of Pentecostalism," Pulitzer Center. November 27, 2019. http://www.atlasofpentecostalism.net/.

[6] "Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative," University of Southern California: Center for Religion and Civic Culture. April 28, 2010. https://crcc.usc.edu/pcri/.

According to the Pew Research Center:

> Pentecostalism and related charismatic movements represent one of the fastest-growing segments of global Christianity. At least a quarter of the world's 2 billion Christian is thought to be members of these lively, highly personal faiths, which emphasize such spiritual renewing gifts of the Holy Spirit as speaking in tongues, divine healing, and prophesying. Pentecostalism and its related movements were one of the most influential developments in global Christianity in the 20th century, and it is poised to have an even greater influence in the 21st century.[7]

The growth rate alone was a problematic measurement. It was an inadequate measurement because it did not describe what was happening in the hearts and homes of Pentecostal believers. Nor did it address the subtleties that characterized local church life and the institutional realities of the Pentecostal movements.

It was important when assessing success to differentiate the Pentecost phenomenon from the material and immaterial outcomes of the Gospel. For instance, experiencing the Holy Spirit did not automatically result in a Christian identity. The experience of glossolalia was not a theologically rich explanation of redemption, salvation, and sanctification. Field research showed that growth-oriented outreach remained the priority for the UPCI however.

Even with their focus on worldwide growth, the UPCI's membership total illustrated the problem. For instance, there were roughly 330 million Americans at the time of this research and if all five million worldwide members of the UPCI relocated to the United States, they would represent less than .015 percent of the population. There were roughly 36 million Californians at the time of this research and if all five million

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[7] "Pentecostal Resource Page," Pew Research Center: Religion and Public Life. October 5, 2006. https://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/pentecostal-resource-page/.

worldwide members of the UPCI relocated to California, they would represent less than .14 percent of the population.

<div align="center">*The Problem is Most Acute at the Practitioner Level*</div>

The problem of an inadequate theology of spiritual formation was most acute at the practitioner-level. The problem was manifested in the struggles of local church leaders to mitigate the divorce rate and respond to socio-psychological pathologies. It was exhibited in a struggle to create knowledge, make necessary organizational realignments, and set realistic policies.

This evidence will be described in detail in later chapters, so generalizations will be offered for now. For instance, field research uncovered an emphasis on an emotive religious experience that resulted in theological illiteracy. Field research further discovered that an emphasis on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit circumvented the creative use of information and communication technology for sacred communication.

<div align="center">**Delimitations and Assumptions**</div>

<div align="center">*Delimitations*</div>

Treatment of the problem was necessarily limited in several ways. The Biblical-theological literature reviewed was limited to sources from Protestant, evangelical traditions related to the Great Awakening and revivalism in America. The project did not attempt to synthesize Christian, but non-Protestant ideas of spiritual formation.

The behavioral science literature reviewed was limited to sources that are allied with Christian theology. Engagement of behavioral science material was conducted in an integrationist approach to knowledge creation. The project did not attempt to critique non-allied sources.

The qualitative case study was limited to cases involving members of the Western District of the United Pentecostal Church International. This limit bracketed the research to a particular group of Pentecostals within a common setting. The setting of the study is described in a later section.

Assumptions

The first assumption was that the Bible is the only authoritative source of knowledge related to God. The second assumption was that subjective beliefs were inadequate alone and must be held in tension with objective propositional truth claims.

The third assumption was that a theological method was necessary for examining subjectively constructed beliefs and/or making an objective claim. Such a process required a methodic approach to Scripture that included textual exegesis, objective hermeneutical tools, and prayerful homiletics.

The fourth assumption was that everyone has been profoundly disabled by the outcomes of the fall. This disability affected each aspect of the spiritual-psychological-moral soul. Salvation, therefore, has both an existential and eternal quality.

Research Overview

The problem identified represented multiple sub problems and therefore required a variety of treatments. The research addressed the problem in four ways. The first treatment used a theological method to develop a biblical-theological foundation for spiritual formation with special emphasis placed on the themes and characteristics of the religious life of first-century believers and the Apostle Peter.

The second treatment used literature review and content analysis to understand the inadequacy of the UPCI's discipleship doctrine in light of contemporary and historic theology as well as insight drawn from the behavioral

sciences. The third treatment involved a qualitative case study of the religious life and spiritual outcomes of long-standing members of churches associated with the Western District of the UPCI.

The fourth treatment was to develop recommendations related to improving spiritual formation outcomes in a local Pentecostal church that facilitate God's idea of human flourishing and a good community. The recommendations were crystalized through a knowledge creation process involving literature review, content analysis, field research, and prayerful reflection.

Research Context

The United Pentecostal Church International

Research showed that the UPCI was an incorporated, non-profit organization representing churches and ministers around the world. It identified itself as a ministerial fellowship rather than a denomination. As such, its ecclesiastical polity was congregational. The UPCI resulted from a merger of the Pentecostal Church Incorporated and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ in 1945. Like all Pentecostal organizations, the UPCI emerged from the Pentecostal revival that began in a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas in 1901 and the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California in 1906.

The general organization of the UPCI conducted its business in a loosely Presbyterian way. Affiliated ministers with voting status met in the sectional, district, and general conferences to elect officials and to conduct the business of the organization. Districts and sections were geographically arranged. The General Conference, which met annually, was the highest governing body of the UPCI. An elected General Board of

Presbyters governed between conferences. Similarly, each district elected a board of presbyters representing sections within that district.

The membership of the UPCI was comprised of licensed and/or ordained ministers. Ministers could hold three levels of ministry endorsement: local, general, or ordained. Ordination was generally for those ministers who held a paid, full-time ministerial status. Candidates received ministerial endorsement when they met the following requirements: they were recommended by an affiliated pastor, satisfied the educational requirements for the level of ministerial endorsement sought, and were approved by a district board following a series of interviews conducted by members of the district board.

Membership was voluntary and could be discontinued at any time by the member. Membership did however incur a monetary obligation in the form of quarterly fees divided between the national and district bodies. Endorsed ministers were expected to remain loyal to the fundamental doctrines of the organization as well as its cultural expressions of holiness and ministerial ethics.

The corporate organization, boards, and conferences were in practice, insignificant to the spiritual life of each church. The local churches were autonomous. Each congregation was supposed to elect its pastor, although the majority of pastorates passed from father to son. The pastor was traditionally the decision-maker within a local church. Pastoral appointees ratified by congregational vote typically filled leadership positions within the church. Those positions, particularly those in public ministry, were filled by those most loyal to or somehow connected with the pastor.

The Western District of the UPCI

Additional research showed that the Western District of the UPCI was comprised of churches in Northern California and Nevada. The geographic boundaries were from Bakersfield, California to the Oregon border, from the Pacific Ocean to the Nevada border, except for Carson City and Reno, Nevada, which fell within the Western District. There were over 150 affiliated churches in the Western District.

The constituency of the churches within the Western District lacked ethnic diversity when compared to the population within the same geographic borders. Western District officials estimated that the average church membership within the Western District was less than 100 members per church. The wide geographical dispersion of the churches resulted in a range of social and cultural conditions differing one from another, sometimes widely.

Research Value

To the Researcher

The importance of the project to the researcher related first to self-leadership. Spiritual formation represents a call to personal renewal. It is a call to put off "the old man" and "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 4:22-24). This implies an exercise in self-leadership.

At the most fundamental level, this research journey was a chance for the researcher to experience the "righteousness of God available through Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5:21) at the deepest possible level. Thus affected, the researcher was better prepared to help others experience that righteousness for themselves.

To the Researcher's Ministry Context

The importance of this project also related to the broader issue of the professionalization of the clergy and the researcher's role as an institutional and military chaplain. Although some movements that did not insist on a professionalized clergy had experienced degrees of ecclesiastical success at the time of this research, that position was untenable in light of emerging 21st-century trends.

The secular and sectarian nature of the evolving western worldview was increasingly difficult to navigate, missionally and evangelically. Church organizations were also at greater risk for legal liability connected to incidents of ministry malpractice. The socio-cultural conditions of the post-modern, post-Christian world were necessitating professionalization.

Furthermore, institutional chaplaincy ran parallel to and often intersected with rehabilitative initiatives. Public-funded correctional systems had a responsibility to return an investment to the public. The anticipated return was that inmates leaving the correctional system would return to society as productive citizens. The rehabilitative quality of the new birth and a transformative Christian experience was without clinical equal.

Additionally, the care and nurture of Americans serving in national defense fell to the military chaplain. The chaplain was uniquely positioned within the institution to take on this critical responsibility. Law also protected the chaplain's role and the continuity that came through this protection allowed the chaplain corps to shape policy related to caring for service members. An active and informed spirituality was critical to warfighter wellness and readiness.

To the Researcher's Church at Large

The researcher's ecclesiastical fellowship, the UPCI, needed intellectual leadership to identify and communicate an effective means of ministry realignment that took into account the fluidity and accelerated dynamics of 21st century humanity. The importance of this project related to meeting that need.

The researcher's fellowship was less than 100 years old at the time of this research. Unfortunately, some of its theology positions had resulted in degrees of socio-cultural-religious isolation. This isolation had resulted in unintended yet adverse consequences that were marginalizing the organization. One of which was the problem under consideration. Another way forward was warranted.

CHAPTER TWO: A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF SPIRITUAL
FORMATION

The problem under consideration was complex and therefore required a complex treatment. The first treatment was an inquiry to discover a biblical-theological foundation for spiritual formation. A theological method was established to facilitate the inquiry, which focused on the need for spiritual formation and how the first-century church pursued it. The theological method and the results of the inquiry will be described in this chapter.

The Supremacy of Scripture and the Elements of the Researcher's Theological Method

Supremacy of the Bible

The first and most important assumption in Chapter one affirmed that the Bible was the only authoritative source of knowledge about God and that it was necessary to scholasticism. This affirmation was based on the divine nature of the Bible. It was foundational to the researcher's theological method.

The Bible's Role in Scholasticism

The Bible conveys a truthfulness assured by its divine nature that is necessary for authoritative knowledge. This assurance underwrites inerrancy, "an attribute of Scriptures by which whatever it affirms corresponds to reality and it never affirms anything contrary to fact."[8] Aligned with the idea of inerrancy is infallibility. "Infallible signifies the quality

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[8] Gregg Allison, *50 Core Truths of the Christian Faith: A Guide to Understanding and Teaching Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 16.

of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters."[9]

Furthermore, the Bible's role in scholasticism is necessary because it provides propositional truth claims that are historic, transcendent, and intersectional. "God has taken the initiative to make himself known to humanity more fully than general revelation allows. This means that lost and sinful humans can know God and then go on to understand what he expects of and promises his children."[10]

A Description of the Researcher's Theological Method

The second assumption in Chapter one was that subjective beliefs were inadequate alone and must be held in tension with propositional truth claims. This affirmation was foundational to the researcher's theological method. The third assumption was that a theological method was necessary for constructing such claims. These affirmations were important to mitigate humanities' susceptibility to error.

The researcher's theological methods sought to meet standards of clarity that differentiated between personal beliefs and objective truth claims. These standards required claims to be synoptic and either descriptive and/or explanatory or both. Standards of clarity also required claims to be adequately complex and to be defensible.

In addition to standards of clarity, the researcher's inquiry into the Scriptures was methodical and included textual exegesis, the use of hermeneutical tools, and homiletical

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[9] "The Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy," Moody Bible Institute. 1978. https://www.moodybible.org/beliefs/the-chicago-statement-on-biblical-inerrancy/articles-of-affirmation-and-denial/

[10] Millard Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine,* 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2001), 58.

application. The researcher's exegesis included an analysis of the biblical language involved, an analysis of the passages' historical setting, and an analysis of the passage through the original interpretive perspectives.

The researcher's hermeneutical system used an integrational approach to construct a plenary sense of the biblical data. This system limited the researcher's claims to those with coherence to Christian orthodoxy. The researcher's homiletics attempted to faithful contextualize and apply the meaning of the text to the circumstances related to the problem under consideration.

This researcher's engagement of Scripture involved two steps. The first theological engagement attempted to understand the existential need for spiritual formation. The second explored the religious life of the first-century believers and the transformation of the Apostle Peter, looking for patterns or principles of spiritual formation.

A Biblical View of Spiritual Formation

The following will present insights gained from the biblical-theological engagement of the Scriptures. Before closing, it will explore a passage of Scripture identified during the engagement that is critical to a biblical-theological foundation for spiritual formation.

The Necessary Existential Remedy

The Bible describes and explains how God rescues humanity from the consequences of the first rebellion. This rescue includes eternal and existential outcomes. The description and explanation unfold along with human history, through the activity of God's chosen people and culminates with the work of Jesus Christ. While salvation is the

remedy for eternal damnation, spiritual formation is the necessary remedy for being existentially doomed.

Isaiah described the world to which Christ would come as one "covered in darkness with total darkness covering the people" (Isa. 60:2 CSB). The word darkness translated the original Hebrew word *choshek* which referred to a state of misery, destruction, ignorance, and sorrow. *Choshek* denoted an active state in that there was a compounding nature to this darkness that resulted in "total" darkness enveloping the people. *Choshek* used elsewhere in the Old Testament illuminates the content of the word and its depth of meaning.

Choshek was the darkness that covered the deep in Genesis 1:2. *Choshek* was the darkness that fell over Egypt in Exodus 10:21. *Choshek* was the darkness Job cursed the day of his birth with (Job 3:18). *Choshek* characterized the condition of the fool in Ecclesiastes 2:14. The final wrath of God against Judah involved *choshek* (Zeph. 1:15).

The outcomes of this darkness are pathologic. Romans 1:21-32 described them. This darkness resulted in people following a "corrupt mind so that they do what is not right. They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful" (28-30 CSB).

The theological term for this darkened state is depravity. Depravity is deeper than the act of sin. Depravity represents the tragic but predictable outcomes of "one man's sin" (Rom. 5:17-19). Death exercised dominion over humanity because of Adam's transgression. Depravity is not simply a legal condition though. It includes the issue of

likeness. While Adam and Eve were created in the *Imago Dei*, Adam and Eve's children bore the image of their parentage, fallen and broken (Gen. 5:1-3).

The Bible is completely honest about depravity. Depravity led Cain to kill Abel (Gen. 4). Within a relatively short time of the creation story "the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time" (Gen 6:5-6). Depravity led Lot to choose the plains of Jordan (Gen. 13:8-11), which led to the vexation of his soul among the wicked (2 Pet. 2:8) and his descendants of incest (Gen. 19:30-38).

The anarchical times of the Judges is a picture of the pathologies of this evilness. Gibeah's crime with the concubine in Judges 19:22-30 is unparalleled in sadism. Depravity resulted in David's sin again Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11) and Amnon's sin against Tamar his half-sister (2 Sam l:13). Absalom's murder of his half-brothers (2 Sam 13:28-30) represents the culminating consequences of depravity come full circle within one family.

The Apostle Paul describes depravity in personal terms in Romans 7:14-24 by exposing the condition within himself. He describes himself as "flesh and sold into slavery under sin" (v. 15). He laments "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate because of the sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it" (v. 16-18).

Paul elaborates on the nature of depravity when he explained that even though "I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members" (v. 22-23). His final personal assessment is damning: "Oh wretched man that I am! Who will

rescue me from this body of death?" (v. 25). Paul's description is an echo. Jesus himself situates the issue of depravity in the heart of man (Matt. 15:18).

The outcomes of depravity are clear throughout human history. Global catastrophes like the Holocaust in World War II and the Killing Fields in Cambodia are the results of darkened, depraved hearts. Genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina, apartheid in South Africa, and sex trafficking out of Asia are additional symptoms of this soul-sickness. The tragedies are the result of socio-psycho-moral pathologies stemming from the consolidated darkness in the human heart.

The only remedy for depravity is the new birth salvation described by Jesus in John 3 and expounded upon in the Epistles. The new birth deals with all the aspects of the soul – psychological, spiritual, and moral. This divine effectiveness ensures eternal and existential outcomes. The new birth is the remedy for eternal damnation and spiritual formation is the necessary remedy for being existentially doomed.

A Biblical-theological Point of Departure

Theological engagement of the Scriptures identified First Thessalonians 5:23 as critical to a biblical-theological foundation for spiritual formation. Here, Paul described spiritual formation this way: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Several key elements stood out that provided a biblical framework for the idea of spiritual formation.

First was Paul's acknowledgment that God Himself was responsible. Second, Paul acknowledged the integrated nature of man and asserted that sanctification influences all aspects of that nexus, comprehensively. Lastly was the focus Paul put on the sanctifying

effects of this comprehensive influence. Paul pointed out that God's aim is complete

sanctification. These three aspects reflect anticipation for all believers.

Spiritual Formation in First Century Religious Life

The second theological engagement of Scripture explored the religious life of the

first-century believers and the transformation of the Apostle Peter. The same standards of

clarity and methodology were used in this engagement. The remaining sections of the

chapter will describe the patterns and principles discovered during these engagements.

Gathering Together

The first compulsory element discovered within the first-century religious life was

the act of gathering as a community. This involved more than congregating in the

contemporary sense of meeting for church. The act of gathering in the first-century had

many layers of implication.

The term "come together" (Acts 1:6; 10:27; 1 Cor. 11:17-33; and 14:23-26) was

particularly useful to the process of unpacking these layers. Come together translates the

compound Greek word *synerchomai.* Of particular significance is the primary preposition

syn "with or together"[11] that stems from *sy,* which "is the personal pronoun of the second

person."[12]

The significance of *sy* and *syn* provided the intellectual complexity associated

with the descriptions of the variety of conditions that characterized relationships in the

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[11] Verlyn Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* s.v. "together," Abr. ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 312.

[12] James Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. "with" (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 84.

New Testament. This complexity would have texturized for the original audience what coming together meant.

For instance, *synago* meant to gather together as the disciples assembled out of fear for the Jews (John 20:19) while *synalizo* suggested something formal like the time Jesus met with his disciples on Mount Olivet before ascending into heaven (Acts 1:4-12). *Syzugo* meant "those united by the bond of marriage or relationship, office, study, or business" as Paul described his "true companion"[13] in Philippians 4:3 while *synergos* means simply "a co-worker."[14]

The intellectual complexity discovered was extensive and nuanced. While a plain reading of Scripture may call the believers to meet corporately, a deeper exploration of the biblical language revealed that the first-century believers anticipated much more than a service in contemporary terms. The nature and processes of gathering together exceeded those terms.

Called out of Ethnicity, Status, and Cultural Norms

Biblio-theological engagement revealed that gathering together implied being called out of competing worldviews. Palestine in the first century was a battlefield of entrenched worldviews that resulted in violent sectarianism. Religious sects battled to lead the theological discussion. Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Seneca provided intellectual leadership for the Greco-Romans.

The significance of this calling out to gather together should not be overlooked. The radical sectarianism of class and race and status was being challenged by Christians

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[13] Strong, *The New Strong's*, s.v. "together." 85.

[14] Strong, s.v. "together," 87.

gathering together. The world of discrimination was being offered a corrective alternative as the first-century believers described "God as no respecter of persons" and explained that "in every nation those that fear him and work righteousness, are acceptable with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Christian gathering affirmed that within the Body of Christ "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for all are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Furthermore, socially and culturally, "Christian spirituality has both a catholicity (universality) and a locality (particularity)."[15] It was the call out of sectarianism and into ideological solidarity that enabled the social flexibility necessary for relevance and sustainability wherever Christianity went. An "underlying and essential unity in Christian spirituality" transcends cultures and contexts.[16] This enabled the necessary contextualization of the locality in "appropriate and relevant ways."[17]

Individual and Corporate Prayer

It was discovered during the engagement of the first-century religious life that spirituality pivoted off individual and corporate prayer. Jesus role modeled prayer for his disciples. It was common for him to "rise before day and depart into a solitary place" to pray (Mark 1:35). On the night of his death, "he kneeled, and prayed" (Luke 22:41). His last public act with his disciples was prayer.

Prayer rooted first-century believers in the metaphysical realities of eternity and the ever-present, ever-active Spirit of God. John's great Revelation of Jesus Christ is an

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[15] Robert Solomon, "Contextual Spirituality" in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 205.

[16] Solomon, 205.

[17] Solomon, 205.

example of this intersection. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet" (Rev. 1:10). Paul's experience with visions and revelations are an example as well. "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows) such as one caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2).

Experiences like these texturized Paul's instructions to "let your requests be made known unto God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" (Phil. 4:6). They were inculcated in Peter's reminder to the believers in Asia to "watch and pray" (1 Pet. 4:7). Jude echoed both when he said "building up yourselves and your most holy faith, beloved, praying in the Holy Ghost.

Sacred Communications

Biblio-theological engagement highlighted the commitment the first-century believers had to communication in all its forms. Scriptural analysis revealed two related causes for this commit. Communication was critical because of the ideological battle that contextualized the world of emergent Christianity. Communication was also critical to establishing a faith that was sustainable and transferable for the future. Engagement identified three primary means.

Preaching

The word, or a derivative of the word, preach occurs 137 times in the King James Version of the New Testament. One hundred of these times, the original word is *kerysso,* which means to; "announce, make known, or proclaim (aloud)."[18] The intellectual center

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[18] Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary*, s.v. "preach," 304.

of *kerysso* in the New Testament was Christ's Kingdom (i.e.: Matt. 4:17; 10:7; 11:1;

Mark 16:15; Luke 4:19; Acts 10:42; Acts 15:21; Rom. 10:8; and 2 Cor. 4:5). The second

most-often used word was *euangelizo,* which means to; declare good news or good

tidings." The intellectual center of *euangelizo* was Christ's Gospel (Luke 4:18; Acts 5:42;

16:10; Rom. 1:15; 10:15; 1 Cor. 1:17; 9:16; 2 Cor. 10:16; Gal. 1:8; Eph. 2:6; 3:8; Heb.

4:6; 1 Pet. 1:12 and Rev. 14:6). New Testament preaching was Christ-centered.

This form of Christ-centered preaching was common, beginning with Christ, and

continuing throughout first-century Christianity. "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching

in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of

sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23). Once commissioned,

the disciples "departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing

everywhere" (Luke 9:6). After Pentecost, the disciples "were scattered abroad and went

everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4) because "it pleased God by the foolishness of

preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

Teaching

The second primary means identified was teaching. The most commonly used

Greek word for teach, or one of its derivatives was *didasko,* which can mean "to inform,

instruct, demonstrate, and prescribe; to be instructed, be taught; to learn for oneself, to

think out, to master."[19] A fundamental difference between preaching and teaching

quickly emerged when the intellectual focuses of the two words were compared.

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[19] Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary*, s.v. "teach," 141.

Preaching in the first-century focused on proclaiming Christ and his Kingdom while the point of teaching was to facilitate learning about Christ and his Kingdom. This was not simply a semantic difference. Preaching heralded, teaching explained what was declared.

Engagement demonstrated that Jesus was the preeminent example of teaching. Luke carefully differentiated that Jesus both taught and preached (Luke 20:1). The best example of Jesus' emphasis on teaching rather than preaching was the lesson of the Beatitudes recorded in Matt. 5 and Luke 6. "When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to teach" (Matt. 5:1-2).

Writing

The third means of sacred communication discovered was writing. Writing was a common and critical practice in the first-century church. This writing process was reciprocal in that the apostles wrote to believers and believers wrote in response. Examples of this are the multiple letters addressed to the same recipients. Engagement revealed that writing took on the form of a feedback and learning loop.

For example, the first formal message to the gentile believers was in written form in response to expressed confusion (Acts 15). One of the best examples of this process was discovered in Jude's letter when he wrote "I was eager to write to you about the salvation we share, but I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith…" (v. 3).

Sacred communication was critical because "education – teaching and learning – is a vital part of the Christian spiritual tradition, a feature that is shared with and inherited

from the church's Jewish roots."[20] While the church is not "merely a school, it is a

school, as something central to its way of being."[21] A church is a learning community:

> Which in its learning is forming disciples into the image of Christ Jesus.
> When accompanied by prayer and other spiritual disciplines, the study of
> the Scriptures is the very lifeblood of the Christian believer and the
> Christian community. And the necessary complement to the Scriptures is
> the historic teaching of the church; the two complements each other – the
> primacy of the Scriptures grounded in the creedal heritage of the church as
> this heritage always tested again the enduring witness of the Scriptures.
> Thus, catechesis is a twofold exercise: to know the Scriptures and to know
> the faith of the church.[22]

Praise and Singing

During biblio-theological engagement, praising God individually and in a

company with music and singing were recognizable traits of first-century religious life.

Jesus and the disciples sang before they went to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30). Paul

and Silas prayed and sang praises while locked deep in prison (Acts 16:25). Paul

instructed the believers in both Ephesus and Colossae to use psalms, hymns, and singing

as part of their religious lives (Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16).

"The song-saturated life of the Christian is depicted warmly by the Christian

theologian Clement of Alexandria, writing in the early third century: throughout our

entire lives, then, we celebrate a feast, persuaded that God is present everywhere and in

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[20] Gordon Smith, "Education and Spiritual Formation," in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality,* ed. Glen Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 84-85.

[21] Smith, 84.

[22] Smith, 84-85.

all things; we plough the field while giving praise, we sail the seas while singing hymns, and on every other public occasion we conduction ourselves skillfully."[23]

Partnership

A unique form of partnering for mentorship and ministry was evident in the first-century religious life. Engagement of the Scriptures revealed that a preference for partnership is discoverable throughout the entire New Testament. This idea of life together stems directly from Christ's first commissioning of the disciples and sending them out two-by-two.

Examples of this partnering included Paul's first entrance to the company of believers which was only with Barnabas' advocacy. The disciples were naturally afraid of Paul but Barnabas "brought *him* to the apostles" (Acts 9:26-27). It was also Barnabas that connected Paul and the church in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).

Priscilla and Aquila were willing helpers of Paul throughout his ministry (Rom. 16:3-4). As were Andronicus and Junia, in addition to being "Paul's kinsmen and my fellow prisoners" (Rom. 16:7). The New Testament's repetitive spotlighting of these partnerships made it clear that serving God was a shared endeavor.

Engagement further discovered a special relationship between the Apostles and second-generation believers. No relationship spotlighted this better than Paul's with Timothy and Titus. Titus and Timothy were Paul's "own sons in the faith" (Titus 1:4 and 1 Tim. 1:2). This status resulted in a profound intimacy and trust. Paul described Timothy

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[23] Steven Guthrie, "Music and the Arts," in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 185.

as "unlike any man" (Phil. 2:22). Titus and Paul's relationship was so significant that Paul was "comforted Titus' coming" (2 Cor. 7:6).

Theological engagement connected this partnering spirituality with several critical features of relationship. The first feature was that "humans are already embedded in relational networks" and therefore "Christianity is never a disembodied experience to be undertaken by escaping from the realities of life."[24] The second feature related to the fact that "being in relation stands at the center of eternal reality" – God in relation to himself and God in relation to his creation.[25] The last feature is the fact that humans are relational by nature.

<div align="center">Mission</div>

A compelling mission animated the religious life of the first-century believer. This was clear throughout biblio-theological engagement. The Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28 and Mark 16 were explicit. The last thing Christ did before his ascent into heaven was to reinforce the message with "you will be witnesses of me in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

This sense of mission was evidenced by the disciples being scattered and preaching everywhere (Acts 8:4-5). Philip went to the city of Samaria to preach (Acts 8:5). Paul's described his ministry travels from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Rom. 15:19). Missionaries reached "the twelve tribes dispersed abroad" (James 1:1) and "the exiles dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Pet. 1:1).

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[24] Glen Scorgie and Kevin Reimer, "Spirituality in Community," in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 77.

[25] Scorgie and Reimer, 78.

Engagement revealed a mission-driven pattern within the religious life of the first-century church. The church gathered for fellowship and instruction but it did not remain thus consolidated. "Mission and ministry were natural expressions of God's work through his people in the church and the world."[26] "Mission and ministry incorporated divine realities and human realities, for God chooses to do his work in the world through frail humans, broken vessels."[27]

Supernatural Charismatic Phenomena

Biblio-theological engagement revealed that miraculous phenomena characterized first-century religious life as no other aspect could. The anticipation of the supernatural amongst the first-century believers was clear. A sense of amazement followed the disciples because "by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people (Acts 5:12).

"Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8). "The multitude kept silence and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul because of the "miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (Acts 15:12). "God himself was bearing witness both with signs and wonders, and with gifts of the Holy Ghost (Heb. 2:4).

Theological engagement showed the transcendence, contingence, and persistence of these charismatic phenomena, even to contemporary times. While the contemporary Pentecostal explanation was not the only or best explanation of this contingency or this

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[26] Dennis Hollinger, "Mission and Ministry," in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 228.

[27] Hollinger, 228.

manifestation, it was clear that the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit did not cease after the first century. Within the literature surveyed, charismatic phenomena is understood as "an opening to divine reality, access to which or the meaning of which is gained through unique participation with God, a transforming participation that both mediates and is itself the fruit of this opening."[28]

<div align="center">Celebrating the Lord's Supper</div>

The last compulsory element of the first-century religious life identified was the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Associated with the Lord's Supper was the practice of foot washing as demonstrated by Jesus on the night he was betrayed (John 13:5). Corporate life pivoted around this crucial element.

The Lord's Supper continuously nested the theology and practice of the church in the covenant of grace, only possible through the vicarious death of Jesus Christ. It called the church to remember the terms and conditions of the covenant of grace along with recognizing the cost of their newfound experience. It also lent a formality to the corporate life of the church that provided a harbinger of liturgical worship and spirituality.

The implications recommended a liturgical form of spirituality. "While nearly every Christian community practices corporate worship in some form, liturgical spirituality refers to an approach with particular emphasis."[29] This emphasis spotlights "the nourishing value of corporate worship and is intentional about cultivating well-grounded worship practices that express the faith of the church throughout time and

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[28] Evan Howard, "Mysticism," in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 179.

[29] John Witvliet and Carrie Steenwyk, "Liturgical Spirituality," in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality,* ed. Glen Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 159.

space, and invites worshipers to explicitly link these practices with a grateful, obedient, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-led way of life."[30]

A Narrower Aperture – the Apostle Peter

The first-century religious life offered one aspect with which to build a foundation for spiritual formation. A case study of the Apostle Peter offered another equally useful aspect. It added one additional means of turning theory into practical guidance for the practitioner.

Peter's transformation became more descriptive of the spiritual formation process when brought into conversation with the ancient framework of Christian spirituality - Christ with us, Christ in us and Christ through us. A case study allowed the question of spiritual formation to be situated within the life and times of a fellow believer.

The historic framework of relationship (Christ with us), transformation, (Christ in us), and mission (Christ through us) was borrowing from some of Christianity's earliest and most revered theologians. Engagement showed that while Peter lacked the eloquence of Paul and failed to exhibit the affections of John, his life and his literature offered invaluable insights into spiritual formation.

A Product of His Environment

Research showed that the Greco-Roman world of Peter's day was a remarkable time in history. It emerged from hundreds of years of on-going political, military, and social revolution. Peter lived on a battlefield sandwiched between the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria. War and political intrigue had ravaged Palestine for over 300

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[30] Witvliet and Steenwyk, "Liturgical Spirituality," 159.

years. The Jewish occupants of Palestine were stuck in the middle of it all – sometimes as insurrectionists and sometimes as slaves. Jewish leaders rose and fell in succession. Each vying for personal power and national independence.

The political life Peter inherited was texturized by the Maccabees and the Hasmoneans who took their turns revolting against and then ruling in subservience to the greater powers of their time. Peter's religious life was conditioned by the infamous Pharisees and Sadducees, along with the lesser-known Essenes. The subjugation of Palestine by the Roman general Pompey in 63 B.C. set the conditions into which Christ and his mission would come.

From 63 B.C. on, Palestine was a land, garrisoned by the Roman Legion. That fact texturized living conditions in every way. Peter was a Jew living in a Hellenized, Roman world ruled culturally and religiously by Jewish religious sects vying for whatever degree of control and power afforded them.

"Classes were sharply stratified in the surrounding pagan societies"[31] generally comprised of those living in luxury, slaves who comprised the bulk of the workforces, or "homeless, foodless mobs in the cities who were worse off than slaves."[32] Extended families were the norm. The families were paternalistic. "As a general rule women – especially Jewish women – lived under severe restrictions. They were largely uneducated

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[31] Gundry, Robert. *A Survey of the New Testament,* 5th ed (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 53.

[32] Gundry, Robert. *A Survey*, 53.

and dominated in the home and religious and political institutions."[33] Honor and shame were compelling motivations within and in-between families.

Small businesses ran by artisans and tradespeople, along with agriculture represent the majority of enterprise and economics. A unique aspect of business was the role of "brokers who brought patron and clients together for mutual benefit."[34] The desolation of the family was especially problematic. "Divorce documents are among the most numerous of papyrus remains and gentile parents often exposed or abandoned their infant daughters in the city forum, on a hillside or in the alleys."[35]

Peter was a product of this environment and the psychological-spiritual-moral implications of living and working in this setting would be profound upon anyone. His heritage and membership of a subservient minority group were clear. The continuous exposure to paganism and the gratuitous nature of vice would have been a daily distraction.

Peter was raised in an unmediated paternalistic culture texturized by class hatred which would naturally result in a degree of suspicious isolation from outsiders. The religious pressure from the ruling sects along with the fanaticism of the Zionist insurrectionists would have kept the religious discourse of Peter's day on a razor's edge. It would have been impossible for Peter to not fearfully, resent the menacing presence of

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[33] Gundry, *A Survey,* 54.

[34] Gundry, 60.

[35] Gundry, 57.

the Legion and its despotic enforcement of Roman rule. The crucifixion of slaves and insurrectionists was not a sight Peter could have easily dismissed.

Biblical Composite of the Angler Turned Apostle

Peter was called Barjona or son of John (Matt. 16:17). He and "his brother Andrew came from Bethsaida and were Galilean fisherman in business with James and John."[36] Peter was a married man, presumably with children, and lived in Capernaum. "Peter and Andrew were associated with John the Baptist before becoming disciples of Jesus (John 1:40)."[37]

Peter was associated with several firsts. He was the first to be called (Matt. 4:18). He was the first apostle to recognize Jesus as the Messiah (Matt. 16:15). He was the first apostle to witness the resurrection (Luke 24:24). He was the first apostle to publicly preach following Pentecost (Acts 2:14) and the first apostle to preach to the gentiles (Acts 10-11).

Peter enjoyed unique proximity to Christ. Peter walked on the water with Jesus (Matt. 14:28). Peter was one of the three who followed Jesus into the Garden of Gethsemane and the one whom Jesus confronted for falling asleep (Mark 14:37). Peter saw Jesus in his glorified state on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1) then Jesus rebuked Peter for not being mindful of the things of God (Mark 8:33). Peter went fishing for the company's tax money (Matt. 17:24).

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[36] Stephen Cox, "Peter," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Revised and Expanded,* ed. Chad Brand (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 1253.

[37] Cox, 1253.

The Bible characterized Peter in a variety of ways. Peter exhibited the ability to be impulsive and imprudent. His request to walk on the water with Jesus (Matt. 14:28) and his swim to shore when he recognized Jesus (John 21:7) were examples of this characteristic. He was not beyond risk. Drawing a sword to attack the high priest's servant illustrated (John 18:10) that Peter could act without thinking.

This impulsivity took on the texture of insolence at times. Peter refused to have Jesus wash his feet (John 13:8). He rebuked Jesus, actually took Jesus aside, to correct his course of action (Matt. 16:22). Upon being told to "rise, kill, and eat," his response carried a tone of obstinacy (Acts 10:13-14). This impulsive insolence stemmed from some degree of conceit.

Peter offered audacious protests when Jesus described the disciple's response to his imminent arrest (Matt. 26:31). Matthew recorded Peter's claim as "I will never be offended" (Matt. 26:33). Luke recorded Peter's boast as "I am ready to go with you, to prison and to death" (Luke 22:33). John recorded, "I will lay down my life for you" (John 13:37). This language betrayed an unrealistic view of self under pressure. Particularly when compared to Peter's performance in such cases.

Twice, the Bible depicted Peter acting boldly then quickly losing courage. His courage failed in the face of the winds and the waves (Matt. 14:30). It failed around a fire pit on the night Jesus was betrayed (Matt. 26:69). What appears as conceited impulsivity in the biblical engagement was no match for the demands of reality with Jesus.

These were not the only characterizations of Peter in the Scriptures. Peter was a man capable of self-sacrifice and commitment. He left his nets when called. He forsook

all to follow Jesus (Matt.19:27). Research showed Peter as a man who felt regret and repentance at the deepest possible level. His betrayal of Jesus was followed by a period of "bitter weeping" (Matt. 26:75).

Careful sequencing of scriptural events demonstrated that Peter's character took a remarkable turn following the day of Pentecost. While still prone to conceit and stubbornness, Scripture showed that Peter had become a man of remarkable resolve and courage. Acts 2:14-39 recorded Peter standing up to the scoffers with eloquent and confrontational preaching. Acts 4:5-12 recorded Peter's bold address to the Sanhedrin. Acts 5:28-29 showed Peter facing incarceration or worse with a simple declaration "we ought to obey God rather than men."

Relationship, Transformation, and Mission

Intersecting the biblical engagement with the historic framework of spiritual formation – Jesus with me, Jesus in me, and Jesus through me –offered insights into how the angler become the apostle. "These three dynamics are more than sequential steps to spiritual growth; they are ongoing realities of the Christian life."[38]

The man called away from mending nets was very different from the man who wrote to the believers in Asia because "true spirituality involves continuous cycles of encounter, change, and action."[39] The narrative of Peter's life revealed the intersection of these realities. Peter was a unique case study of the outcomes of these realities over a

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[38] Glen Scorgie, ed., "Overview of Christian Spirituality" in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 30.

[39] Scorgie, 30.

lifetime. Looking forward to chapter three, these aspects will offer a taxonomy or framework for the behavioral science literature review.

Relationship

As described earlier, Peter enjoyed unique proximity to Christ. This naturally resulted in a uniquely personal relationship between Peter and Jesus. This relationship was dynamic and a pivotal transformative factor that prepared Peter for mission. Engagement centralized this transformation around a seminal event and confrontation.

Transformation

The seminal event was the Day of Pentecost. The disciples, including Peter, were united in anticipation of the promise. Its arrival in the form of a rushing mighty wind that filled the room was divinely compelling (Acts 2:1-2). The appearance of fire sitting upon each of them to signal the infilling of the Holy Ghost was not a physical element that could be dismissed (Acts 2:2-4). This event could not be understood as anything other than supernaturally seminal.

The first confrontation was with Peter's character. Matthew 26:72 and John 18:25, along with other passages illustrated that Peter had personality issues. Christ confronted Peter's character directly. This confrontation continued throughout Peter's life and ministry. The circumstances surrounding the event at Cornelius' house were examples of Peter's lack of integrity.

First, Peter refused to eat due to religious prejudice. When he relented and eventually returned to Jerusalem after his mission to Cornelius' house, he shrank from telling the truth when confronted by Jewish Christians. This issue remained unresolved

for Peter for years. There was such a degree of vacillation in Peter's character that a personal conflict emerged between him and Paul over it (Gal. 2:11-12).

The second confrontation was with Peter's worldview. The incident on the rooftop recorded in Acts 10 was not the only time Peter's worldview clashed with God's plan. The incident on the Mount of Transfiguration where Peter suggested the building of three tabernacles – one for Moses, Elias, and Christ – revealed Peter's nationalistic and ethnic confusion about the coming kingdom.

Mission

The dynamic of Christ working through Peter was also functional to Peter's transformation. Scripture engagement clearly showed that Peter willingly accepted and deeply cared about this mission. It began with a direct order – "feed my sheep" (John 21:15) and remained Peter's center of gravity for the rest of his life.

By the time he wrote his epistles, Peter had changed a great deal by being with Christ, Christ being in Him, and Christ using him for ministry. The language in Peter's epistles reflected that change. One example was his encouragement to those coming in his footsteps to; "feed the flock of God," to be willingly responsible for them without looking for a reward, to be stable in thought, and godly examples (1 Pet. 5:2-3).

He expressed anxious anticipation of Christ's return and recommended submission and humility (1 Pet. 5:4-5). He was no longer naïve about the nature and source of conflict surrounding believers, it was their "their adversary the devil" (1 Pet. 5:8). Seen through the biblio-theological material, this language reflected deep and

powerful psychological-spiritual- moral content from a man who had been thoroughly immersed in the "ongoing realities of the Christian life."[40]

Summary

This chapter described the first treatment of the problem under consideration. It began with an argument in support of the Bible's role in any form of scholarship and set out the theological method that would be used for biblio-theological engagement into spiritual formation.

Two foundational aspects for a biblically informed view of spiritual formation were discussed. The first was the religious life of the first-century believers as described in the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the Epistles. The second was the transformation of the Apostle Peter. This aspect came into view when Peter's transformation was brought into conversation with the ancient framework of Christian spirituality - relationship, transformation, and mission.

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[40] Glen Scorgie, "Overview of Christian Spirituality", 30.

CHAPTER THREE: SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN RELATED LITERATURE

A Discipleship Commitment Missing a Spiritual Formation Core

The UPCI had a stated commitment to discipleship at the time of this research. While such a commitment was laudatory and fundamentally correct, a review and analysis of the UPCI's discipleship material illustrated that their discipleship doctrine lacked a theology of spiritual formation at its core. Content analysis showed that neither contemporary views of Pentecostal spiritual formation, nor the historic richness of spiritual formation theology were invested in the UPCI's understanding of discipleship.

UPCI Discipleship Literature

The Pentecostal Publishing House (PPH) was the UPCI's institutional knowledge manager. Material that the UPCI endorsed and/or was written by affiliated writers was marketed and distributed by the PPH. A search for material on the subject "spiritual formation" discovered two titles. More Like Him: The Process of Spiritual Formation by James Littles Jr. was the first. The Rain Project: Reforming Attitudes and Identities into a New Way of Life by E.R. Krantz Jr. was the second.

Conversely, a search for material by the subject "discipleship" discovered 40 products. The most notable of the materials, because they were study series, included: "Follow to Lead: The Journey of a Disciple" with a small group kit by Stan Gleason, the "Elements Master Bundle" with modules and certificates by David Bernard, and the "On Being Pentecostal" series by David Bernard and Robin Johnston.

PPH also offered a curriculum entitled "The Discipleship Project: Developing Lifelong Apostolic Disciples." PPH marketed this curriculum as "a whole-church study of doctrinal topics designed so every age level focuses on the same big idea each week."[41] PPH claimed, "this structure empowers the home and church to work together in the mission of spiritual growth."[42]

All the material was organized around fundamental UPCI doctrines and was oriented towards the development of apostolic identity and Pentecostal spirituality. Specific titles that defined these religious culture expectations included "Apostolic Identity in a Post-Modern World," "Pursuing Holiness," and "The Apostolic Life" by David Bernard.

Additional titles included "Character Counts" by Cindy Miller, "Christian 101: Basics for New Believers and Youth" by Lori Wagner, "How to Receive a Miracle" by Joy Haney, and "Daily Things of Christian Living" by Carlton Coon Sr. All of the material came from UPCI endorsed authors and echoed the basic doctrinal positions of the UPCI. All the material was part of a closed, circular system that reinforced the same basic doctrinal ideas.

Analysis of Pentecostal Discipleship Doctrine

Content analysis showed that the UPCI's discipleship doctrine was both similar and dissimilar with that of other main-line Pentecostal movements. One of the most common aspects of Pentecostal discipleship was the connection between being and

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[41] "The Discipleship Project," Pentecostal Publishing House. November 27, 2020. https://pentecostalpublishing.com/pages/the-discipleship-projectcurriculum.

[42] "The Discipleship Project."

making disciples. Linked to disciple-making was the idea that mature Christians can use their spiritual gifts for ministry purposes.

Prayer and fasting were compulsory to the spiritual maturity necessary for effective disciple-making. Words like tarry, travail, and intercede were prominent throughout the literature. Fasting, from food or even social media, were common recommendations for believers who wanted to be spiritually mature. Discipleship was described as activating one's spiritual gifts and then using them with spiritual authority.

Being a witness for Christ was fundamental to disciple-making and therefore Pentecostal discipleship. Disciples were expected to know how to tell others who Jesus is and how He had changed their life. This witness was described as a necessary part of the disciple's service to Christ. Bible reading and familiarity with the church's doctrines undergirded the witness enterprise. The material reviewed explained that prayer and fasting, along with biblical and doctrinal studies, ensured that a person's witness was correct and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Regular church attendance was also fundamental to Pentecostal discipleship. This attendance signaled faithfulness to Christ and solidarity with one's church family. It also made a person available to serve within the ministries of the local church. Pentecostal discipleship involved working within the structure of the church in support of two primary foci - outreach to the lost and in-reach to make disciples.

An urgency to resist temptation through the power of the Holy Spirit was described as fundamental to Pentecostal discipleship. The idea of temptation was informed by moral and ethical codes that were in some cases, rigorous. Pentecostal

discipleship also included the requirement to pay tithes and financially supporting one's local church. In some cases, paying tithes was salvific within extreme forms of Pentecostal discipleship.

Content analysis revealed that discipleship was often engendered, looking specifically at men's or women's issues. Men's discipleship described what it meant to be a good father, a good leader in the home, and a good worker in one's local church. The need to avoid pornography or other forms of vice were common topics. Men's discipleship language pivoted around words and phrases like leadership, courage, stepping-up, being a warrior, and brotherhood. The men of the Bible were seen as heroic or used as case studies about the dangers of sin.

Women's discipleship described what it looks like to be a godly wife and mother. The woman's historic role in the home was celebrated. This was often summarized with the Proverbs 31 framework. Women's discipleship naturally spotlighted the characteristics of women of the Bible. Women's discipleship language pivoted around words like adorned, beauty, entrusted and chosen.

Overall, the discipleship doctrine of the UPCI was more similar than dissimilar to other Pentecostal movements. Two differentiating aspects discovered, were the UPCI's insistence on conformity to encultured views of personal holiness and obedience to spiritual authority. Personal holiness had to be evidenced by a pattern of dress and behavior. As speaking in tongues was evidence of being saved within the UPCI's theology, personal holiness was evidence of living a life pleasing to God.

Submission to the authority invested in the local pastor had a similar degree of insistence. Disobedience was equated to rebelliousness which in turn, was considered sinful. An unwillingness to conform to this requirement was seen as a spiritual and/or moral act deserving discipline which held significant consequences.

Summary

Literature engagement and content analysis demonstrated more similarity than dissimilarity between the UPCI's and other Pentecostal movements' discipleship doctrine. Materials from various sources were often interchangeable. In some ways, Pentecostal discipleship resonated with the same doctrinal themes as discipleship from any evangelical movement. The fundamental difference of Pentecostal discipleship from broader evangelism was the expectation of uniquely personal interactions with the Holy Spirit. The fundamental difference of the UPCI's discipleship doctrine from broader Pentecostalism was an insistence on religious conformity.

As previously stated, the UPCI's commitment to discipleship was correct. It was fundamentally correct in that it sought to fulfill the Great Commission. Content analysis revealed, however, a lack of theological robustness. This theological weakness resulted in an inadequate theology of spiritual formation. The UPCI's discipleship doctrine did not take into consideration the details of the first-century religious life described in Chapter Two, nor did it reflect contemporary or historic views of spiritual formation.

Contemporary Pentecostal Spiritual Formation

Pentecostalism was not without scholarship related to spiritual formation at the time of this research. Literature engagement and analysis discovered many unique, Pentecostal voices discussing spiritual formation in scholarly ways. The problem under

consideration arose because an adequate theology of spiritual formation informed by this broader discussion was not integrated into the UPCI's discipleship doctrine.

The literature reviewed from wider Pentecostal circles brought that scholarship into the conversation. For instance, Lee Roy Martin echoed spiritual formation themes when he approached Psalm 63 from the perspective of "a Pentecostal spirituality characterized by an integration of orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy."[43]

Additionally, "In an effort to move toward a more robust theology and practice of spiritual formation, Johnson and Moore explored the multi-dimensional, multi-level character of spiritual formation."[44] Macchia argued that "the Pentecostal understandings of baptism in the Holy Spirit held potential for a more substantively pneumatological understanding of spiritual formation" and pointed out that "a more expansive eschatological view of Spirit baptism opens breathing room for prioritizing a pneumatological vision of spiritual formation in the life and mission of the church."[45]

Martin, Johnson, Moore, and Macchia were three of many. A common concern within the research was that right orthopathy should be in balance with right orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Another common concern was that crisis eschatology had averted serious consideration of spiritual formation until recently. A common theme within the research

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[43] Lee Roy Martin. "Longing for God: Psalm 63 and Pentecostal Spirituality," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22 (2013): 54–76.

[44] Bob L. Johnson Jr and Rickie D. Moore. "Soul Care for One and All: Pentecostal Theology and the Search for a More Expansive View of Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 26. no. 1 (2017): 125–52.

[45] Frank Macchia. "Spirit Baptism and Spiritual Formation: A Pentecostal Proposal," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 13, no. 1 (May 2020): 44–61.

was that Pentecostalism could enrich and broaden the current understanding of spiritual formation.

The Historical Steams of Spiritual Formation Theology

Not only was it discovered that the UPCI's discipleship doctrine was disconnected from contemporary theology, but it was disconnected from historic theology as well. Research was unable to connect the UPCI's discipleship doctrine to any historic theological system related to spiritual formation. As a consequence, the UPCI's discipleship doctrine lacked the richness of historic theology.

Literature engagement showed that the streams of spiritual formation began as early as Polycarp, Tertullian, Origen, and the Patristic fathers. Insights from Athanasius, Jerome and Augustine flowed into this stream and eventually took in the work of Aquinas and Scotus. The mystics like Bernard of Clairvaux and Theresa of Avila took their turn in adding depth and complexity to the insight. Priestly orders like Benedict's and Francis' took their turn as well. Echoes from this period were not identifiable in the UPCI's material.

The great reformation beginning in the 13th century signaled a radical shift within spiritual formation theology. Waldo, Wycliffe, Hus, and Jerome assaulted the theological empire of Catholicism and set the stage for the rupture of Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Zwingli, and Tyndale. Insights from these contributors, nor the future insights of the great awakenings were discernible in the UPCI's material.

Research revealed that each theological era contributed important innovations in thought and practice to a richer understanding of spiritual formation. The spiritual phenomenon of the Moravians and the Quakers exhibited a relationship with the piety of

the Methodists. The keen insights and eloquence of Johnathan Edwards reinforced the compelling preaching of Moody, Finney, and Spurgeon. The missional activism of those like Carey, Hudson, and Booth reflected church renewal and evangelical mobilization.

The richness of the theological history just described was missing from the UPCI's discipleship commitment at the time of this research. Survey and content analysis showed that the UPCI's discipleship commitment was mismatched with an overly-simplistic discipleship doctrine and their robust commitment to discipleship was dependent upon a weak and poor theological tradition.

Spiritual Formation and Behavioral Science

Analysis of the UPCI's discipleship material further exposed the failure to incorporate insights related to spiritual formation from allied behavioral sciences. Engagement and analysis revealed a complete disconnection between the current UPCI discipleship doctrine and behavioral science theory. This omission contributed to the problem under consideration.

Research showed that the inclusion of behavioral science theory was helpful to the practice of spiritual formation due to the composition of the soul and its embodied nature. It was discovered that behavioral sciences offered excellent insights into the interrelated and interdependent composition of God's image-bearer. These insights could be useful to the care and recovery of that image. The following section will explore key behavior science theories discovered through literature review, then intersect insight from them with the aspects of the biblical-theological foundation discussed in Chapter Two.

Personhood and the Embodied Soul

It was widely accepted that man should be considered a living soul that moves along a developmental life cycle. Engagement showed that this development could be

impeded and impaired. It could be misguided, resulting in deplorable outcomes. This development occurred within the soul, but conditions experienced in the material world influenced it. Aspects like heredity and genetics intersected with learning environments and cultural conditioning to affect this development cycle in both positive and negative ways. Religious experiences, including religious allegiances, did as well.

An important view of humanity was that; "Humans function holistically out of the created capacities that constitute the imago Dei."[46] God created a material world for his and man's pleasure so a material means of interacting with that world was therefore necessary. This insight lead to the conclusion that human features such as soul, mind, and heart are interdependent and worked with and through the material body.

Disaggregating and further analysis of the related material revealed that the intellect included "consciousness, reason, imagination, and memory."[47] Volition and emotion involved "self-determination, inward feelings about self and outward-oriented feelings like anger, desire or pain."[48] All of these aspects were embodied thus allowing humans to share the material world with other embodied beings.

The most compelling argument for this view was the Incarnation itself. In the Incarnation, we saw the ontologically unique, eternally self-existent God condescend, not in the form of an angelic theophany as seen in the Old Testament, but as a man, born of a woman through the natural process of conception, gestation, and birth. Following this

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[46] Bruce Demarest, "Human Personhood," in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 71.

[47] Demarest, 72.

[48] Demarest, 72.

miraculous condescension, Christ grew within a family and community until he reached an age of maturity and eventually accepted His role as the Messiah of God.

All Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxy depend on this. No one could make this argument more poignantly than the Scriptures itself:

> Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those whom all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason, he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Hebrew 2:14-18).

Understanding the Mind/Brain Relationship

This view of the soul was aided by understanding the relationship between the mind and the brain. Working together, theology, philosophy, and science had created an excellent picture of how the mind/brain interacted within the soul and body. It was clear to the researcher that the theory and practice of spiritual formation could be aided by adding insights about the mind/brain relationship to those about personhood and human development so further engagement was conducted.

Exegesis of the Scriptures related to the mind/brain relationship was able to connect biblical with scientific data. The King James Version of the Bible used the word mind 95 times throughout both the Old and New Testaments. The New King James Version used it 90 times. The New Living Translation used it 88 times. The Christian Standard Bible used it 117 times. The New American Standard Bible used it 144 times. The Revised Standard Version used it 167 times.

Engagement with theological material led to the conclusion that within Christian theology, the mind or the ability to reason is the "part of the human being in which thought takes place and perception and decisions to do good, evil and the like come to expression."[49] The importance of the brain/mind relationship "could be seen especially in its relation to God and his revelation."[50] God had the capacity to think therefore humans who enjoyed the privilege of sharing his image must be understood as thinking beings too.

Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, the mind was identified as the "faculty of conscious reflection and perception. It was with the mind that one chooses to accept God and obey his commandments or reject him and rebel against him."[51] This made the mind/brain relationship the heart of unbelief or faith; the focus of the regenerative and restorative enterprise; and necessary for growing in grace and knowledge.

The relationship between the mind and the brain as it interacts within the embodied soul was discovered to be an enormously complex issue well beyond the scope of this project. There were some generalized conclusions possible though. The first was that the secular view of embodied cognition and the theological view of conditional unity were coherent with the biblical data. These two views of the mind/brain relationship also

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[49] Phillip Towner, "Mind/Reason," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed., Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), 527.

[50] Towner, 528.

[51] Towner, 529.

had the theoretical and intellectual flexibility to benefit from an allied relationship with cognitive science.

A second conclusion was that there was interactive reciprocity between the physiology of the brain and the functioning of the mind. Research showed that a person's physiology and psychology were interdependent and both were initiated when stimulated, not one or the other. These two aspects could be at peace or in conflict. They could exist in healthy or unhealthy reciprocity that was either enabling or disabling.

The last conclusion spotlighted was that the psychological content of the soul can be debilitating. Conversely, that also meant that the psychological content of the soul could be enabling. The nature of the interrelated reciprocity could be influenced in either healthy or unhealthy ways leading to positive or negative outcomes.

Summary

The behavioral sciences offered critical insights into the interrelated and interdependent composition of God's image-bearer. The literature review shed light on the mind/brain relationship that occurred within the embodied soul. An interdisciplinary engagement of theological, philosophical, and scientific resources composited a working picture of the relationship between the body and the soul, the brain and the mind.

An omission of these and similar insights from the UPCI's discipleship doctrine was clear. This was an unfortunate oversight. Matching the UPCI's commitment to discipleship with a robust theology built on a biblical-theological foundation and that was reflective of contemporary and historic views of spiritual formation was a necessary correction. Expanding that theology with insight from the behavioral sciences would be the next logical step.

Behavioral Science and First-century Religious Life

Engagement and analysis of the literature were not adequate to address the problem at hand. Synthesis to integrate the theories into a functional doctrine of discipleship making had to be demonstrated. Efforts to make the insights drawn from the behavioral science literature during the content review usable were still necessary. The researcher intersected the insights discovered in the literature with the two foundational aspects discussed in chapter two to create this usable material.

Gathering into Community

As was seen, first-century religious life involved gathering into community and research showed that the concept of community had extreme importance within the behavioral sciences. Examples included the idea that "communitarianism is a political theory stressing the moral value of community."[52] The theory was popularized in the early 1990s when certain sociologists began arguing against the individualism of western cultures. A prominent proponent was Amitai Etzioni who argued that "advanced industrial societies of the capitalist west suffered from rampant moral confusion and social anarchy because individuals have been given too much freedom and not enough responsibilities."[53]

Research showed that community theory was nested in the broader fields of social sciences or the "study of society and human relationships."[54] It described community as

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[52] John Scott, ed., "Communitarianism," in *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology,* 4th ed (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014) 103.

[53] Scott, 103.

[54] John Scott, ed., "Social Science," in *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology,* 4th ed (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 201) 705.

"any particularly constituted set of social relations based on something that the participants have in common – usually a common sense of identity."[55]

The number of topics studied by the social sciences was extremely diverse – but all related to gathering and community. Formation of communities and mobility and movement within them were subjects of significance. Community solidarity and the means of differentiation among members were subjects of significance. The social sciences have examined the nature and dynamics of gathering into a community like these mentioned since its initial inception. Additional concerns included classes; behaviorism; anthropology; contract and control; fluidity; exchange; trends; and systems.

It was widely accepted that community of origin had a profound effect on the development of individualized personhood and the content and condition of the embodied soul. The healthiness or pathological nature of community insinuated itself into a developing child's psychology. The accumulative and compounding effect of social pathologies inevitably resulted in adverse psychological content in individualized psyches of one degree or another.

Conversely, a safe and empowering community of origin was shown to add exponential value to the development of a child throughout the progress towards adulthood. A healthy mind/brain relationship enabled psychological-moral-spiritual development. As it related to the issue of spiritual formation, whether one's local Christian community was healthy or pathological was of extraordinary consequence to one's spiritual formation journey.

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[55] Scott, "Social Science," 705.

Individual and Corporate Prayer

The first-century religious life was shown to be deeply rooted in individual and corporate prayer. Engagement showed that prayer was becoming influential in the behavioral science of psychology, specifically psychotherapy. More and more psychotherapists were recognizing that "prayer could be a life-changing experience and a key component in all forms of healing."[56] Prayer provided several key enabling dynamics within a therapeutic relationship under the right conditions. For instance, prayer could foster a "bond of trust or safe zone" between the client and therapist.[57] This shared experience and a common belief about prayer created an alliance. This alliance often satisfied the client's basic psychological need for acceptance and safety.

A search of Bethel's Digital Library, looking for sources between 2010 and 2020, using the Boolean search phrase "prayer and psychotherapy" resulted in 2,913 articles, 169 book chapters, 140 reference entries, 139 books, and 4 text sources. The variety of source origins was interesting. There was an article in the Russian Social Science Review.[58] There was a book dedicated to spiritual interventions in child and adolescent

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[56] Cedric Johnson, "Use of Prayer in Counseling," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling,* 2nd ed., ed. David Benner and Peter Hill (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 895.

[57] Johnson, 896.

[58] Fedor Vasilyuk, "Prayer, Silence, and Psychotherapy," *Russian Social Science Review* 57 no. 4 (2016): 275-81.

psychotherapy.[59] There were also resources available from the Jewish[60] and Islamic[61] traditions.

Scholars agreed that prayer was a remarkable tool in the process of renewing, redirecting, or recovering from the effects of socio-psychological pathologies that inhibited maturation. Prayer could be cathartic – it could aid in the freeing process of resolving guilt or shame. Prayer could be inspirational as it linked the soul to the divine. Prayer could move someone to forgive and find healing reconciliation with others.

This renewing, redirecting or recovering led, over time, to resolving adverse psychological content. Thus resolved, the mind/brain relationship achieved improved and improving functionality. When it came to spiritual formation, the issue was whether one's community was a community of authentic prayer or not, whether one's community authentically and deeply practiced prayer in all of its variety.

Sacred Communications

Communication in all its established forms was a critical aspect of first-century religious life. It was critical because of the ideological battle underway. It was critical to establish a faith that was sustainable and transferable for the future. Sacred communication was critical because "education – teaching and learning – was a vital part

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[59] Donald Walker and William Hathaway, ed., *Spiritual Interventions in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2013).

[60] Avidan Milevsky and Michael Eisenberg, "Spiritually Oriented Treatment with Jewish Clients: Meditative Prayer and Religious Texts," *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 43, no. 4 (2012): 336-40.

[61] Hani Henry, "Spiritual Energy of Islamic Prayers as a Catalyst for Psychotherapy," *Journal of Religion and Health* 54, no. 2 (2015): 387-98.

of the Christian spiritual tradition, a feature that is shared with and inherited from the church's Jewish roots."[62]

The behavioral sciences also recognized that education in the form of knowledge management was a critical element of child development, belief formation, community formation, even education and economic enterprise. The field of knowledge management encompassed many theories of learning. These theories included cognitive complexity and complexity science. Knowledge management was concerned with communities of practice and how those communities utilized information science technologies. Knowledge management encompassed knowledge architecture, production, and legitimation.

Knowledge management was shown to be necessary to the healthy intellectual, moral, and social development responsible for a person's social capital. Accurate knowledge was empowering as ignorance was disabling. When it came to spiritual formation, the issue was whether one's community empowered or disabled knowledge management. This was particularly acute in terms of religious experience. Poor theological ideations naturally resulted in a sense of futility and frustration about one's religious experience and community. Wounded theism was a classic example of the consequences of poor theological ideation.

Singing and the Lord's Supper

Religious acts like praising God individually and in community with music and song were recognizable traits of first-century religious life. As was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. These compelling practices had cultural as well as spiritual value. The

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[62] Gordon Smith, "Education and Spiritual Formation," 84-85.

practice of such acts positively influenced critical cultural or community dynamics like formation, identity, and solidarity.

For instance, cognition was recognized as "the processes by which humans acquire, store, transform, and use information."[63] Symbols and practices were understood as powerfully informative of a person's fundamental views of the world. Cultural symbols like religious acts were "the set of shared understandings, beliefs, and values that resided in people's minds."[64] This was true whether the person explicitly understood them or not so the proper use of cultural symbols was critical to accurate knowledge management.

The field of psychology was especially interested in the role of cultural symbols in the development of psychopathology or wellness. One inquiry into this phenomenon examined how "sociological factors affect the etiology of mental illness and interact with biological, psychological, and environmental factors" to influence either illness or wellness.[65] The presumption was that cultural symbols have either a positive or a negative effect on a person, which was mentally capacitating or incapacitating.

These insights led to the conclusion that the proper or improper use of cultural symbols, along with the biblical accuracy of religious cultural symbols, could create true or false expectations within an individual's beliefs. These religious and culturally bounded symbols could communicate and reinforce good ideas at the heart of healthy

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[63] Alexander Bolynatz, "Culture and Cognition," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling,* 2nd ed., ed. David Benner and Peter Hill (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 305.

[64] Bolynatz, 305.

[65] Ihsan Al-Issa, "Culture and Psychopathology," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling,* 2nd ed., ed. David Benner and Peter Hill (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 307.

interpersonal relations or bad ideas at the heart of unhealthy community dynamics. They could have both positive or negative effects on the development of individualized personhood, the content and condition of the embodied soul, and the effects of religious experience.

Partnership

Partnership for ministry and partnership for mentorship were evident in the first-century religious life. As was seen, the entire New Testament narrative indicated a preference for partnership. Both biblio-theological and behavioral sciences literature recognized that intimate, platonic relationships that emerge between professional partners or within a mentor and protégé relationship have a profound influence on human development and behavior.

This type of relationship was differentiated from all the other possible types of interpersonal relations by a degree of intimacy. Sociologists and psychologists agreed that intimacy was "a complex sphere of inmost relationships with self and others that are not usually minor or incidental and which usually touch the personal world very deeply."[66] Intimacy involved a unique type of loving, sharing and caring that was dependent upon willful disclosure between individuals. It involved privileged knowledge between individuals that instigated a unique way of caring for or caring about the other person.

Intimacy was also understood as "a process in which an individual expresses personal feelings and information to another and as a result of the other's response comes

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[66] John Scott, ed., "Intimacy" in *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology,* 4th ed (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 373.

to feel known, validated, and cared for."[67] It was widely recognized that this process took time and that is was a precarious process only possible within bonds of genuine commitment. Research showed that people who experience genuine intimacy were "warmer, more egalitarian, and less self-centered and dominant. They spent more time thinking about people and relationships, were more tactful and less outspoken, and not surprisingly, more liked by others."[68]

Intimacy is related to the psychological content and condition of the embodied soul as the fingers of a potter relate to the vessel made. The analysis showed that it was impossible to separate the effects of healthy or pathological intimacy from personhood and socio-psychological pathologies that inhibit maturation. By extension, it was impossible to separate the effects of healthy or pathological intimacy from one's spiritual formation journey.

Intimacy with a full-orbed, actualized adult over a period-of-time was seen as the foremost protective, developmental factor for any child. Psychological-spiritual-moral inadequacies that cause social disabilities were directly linked to the absence of one. Furthermore, limited access to a person with an adequate degree of social capital naturally resulted in a social capital deficit. It was rare to the point of abnormal that a person vastly outclassed an original community. This was true within any relationship but especially so within a religious community directed towards spiritual formation.

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[67] Leslie Parrott, "Intimacy," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling,* 2nd ed., ed. David Benner and Peter Hill (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 648.

[68] Parrott, 648.

Behavioral Science and a Narrower Aperture – the Apostle Peter

The intersections between the first-century religious life and the behavioral sciences occurred within the social-cultural domains of the human experience. These elements were associated with how behavioral sciences described a healthy community or healthy community dynamics. The first-century church was successful, in part, because healthy community interaction characterized it. The nature of the first-century Christian community fostered human flourishing unlike anything else in the Greco-Roman world.

The case study of the Apostle Peter narrowed the focus of our engagement to the intrapersonal domains of the human experience. This portion of the engagement drew primarily from the person-centered versus community-centered behavioral sciences. While subjects like culture, ecology, economics, and symbolism were considered in relation to first-century life, the conversation shifted to subjects like intrapersonal psychology and neural science when shifting to the case study of Peter.

Personal Religious Experience

Research showed that personal religious experiences have a profound influence on a person's psychology-spirituality-morality. The authenticity of these experiences could not be assumed. Nor could it be assumed that the influence of these experiences was always positive or healthy. What could be concluded was that they were profound, one way or the other.

It is widely demonstrated in Scripture and theology that God was willing and able to relate to his creation. God's condescension in the Incarnation signaled his deep

commitment to personally relating to his image-bearers. The interrelatedness of people everywhere should be understood as an echo of God's relational intent.

Furthermore, a survey showed that the Bible normalized direct experiences with God. Moses came across a burning bush in the desert (Exodus 3-4). The Angel of the Lord promised Gideon divine deliverance from the Midianites (Judg. 6:11-8:32). The Lord interacted with Abraham several times (Gen. 12 and 28). God frequently appeared to kings and prophets with numerous warnings and promises (1 and 2 Kings). That God initiates these contacts was a fact that could not be overlooked.

These experiences continued in the New Testament. The birth of John the Baptist and Jesus were packaged in personal experiences (Luke 1:5-38). The Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36) and Paul's blinding encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus were two others (Acts 9:1-19). This normalization was reinforced when Jesus' described the personal relationship that would exist between the Comforter and the disciples (John 16:13).

Psychology and Spiritual Formation

Engagement showed that "psychoanalysis and Christian spiritual formation were both processes intended to result in deep change and in the context of clinical encounters, working at the crossroads between the two, potentiates the possibility of transformation."[69] Within this integration, spiritual formation was seen as "an embodied process that could be understood in light of basic principles of modern neuroscience"

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[69] Anita Sorenson, Theresa Tisdale, and Earl Bland, "Deep Calls to Deep: Healing and Renewal at the Crossroads of Psychoanalysis and Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 36, no. 4 (2017): 276.

since the "self-soul is embodied in a body-brain system with known principles of functioning."[70] Necessary to assure the Biblicism of this approach was the acknowledgment that spiritual formation is "a process initiated and sustained by grace from God."[71]

Intersecting the theories resulted in a correlation. The person-centered behavior science of psychology provided a means of understanding psychodynamics like biblical-theological study provided a means of understanding pneumadynamics. This correlation was seen as necessary because "if we are to have a full understanding of His work in sanctification, it is necessary to actually study the Spirit's work in the human experience (what we might call pneumadynamics) and also the dynamic processes of the human spirit, sin, psychopathology, and response to the Spirit (psychodynamics)."[72]

Relationship

As described earlier, Peter enjoyed unique proximity to Christ. This relationship was identified as critical to Peter's transformation. This transformation pivoted around three critical elements. The first element is a relationship.

Research showed that "in recent years, relational spirituality has emerged as a theme in numerous conceptual frameworks for explicating the relation of psychology to spiritual formation. The term relational spirituality draws upon relational theories of

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[70] Keith Edwards, "When Word Meets Flesh: A Neuroscience Perspective on Embodied Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 34, no. 3 (2015): 228.

[71] Sorenson, Tisdale and Bland, "Deep Calls to Deep," 276.

[72] John Coe, "Spiritual Theology when Psychology and Theology in the Spirit Service Faith," in *Psychology and Spiritual Formation in Dialogue: Moral and Spiritual Change in Christian Perspective,* ed., Thomas Crisp, Steven Porter, and Ten Elshoh Gregg (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academics, 2019), 20.

human development (e.g., attachment theory, interpersonal neuroscience, relational psychoanalysis, and differentiation-based systems theory), relational theology, and contemplative streams of spirituality."[73]

Relational spirituality's approach to spiritual formation explored how a person related to the sacred "including devotion, disappointment, trust, resentment, and submission. How one related to whatever was considered sacred had diverse implications for spiritual, psychological, and interpersonal well-being."[74] Response sets could be adaptive and maladaptive. These responses were similar to the common responses between humans everywhere.

It was seen that "adaptive approaches to spiritual development could involve growth in self-regulation, maintaining hope despite spiritual trials, and humble receptivity to new spiritual understanding while maladaptive could include complacency, narcissism and destructive entitlement, and chronic emotional reactivity."[75] All these responses and their referential outcomes were associated with interpersonal dynamics. In Peter's case, they were common reactions, not between Peter and others, but within a relationship between him and Jesus.

Relational spirituality, like the one Peter enjoyed with Jesus, was a starting point for exploring relational implications through "differing theological perspectives (e.g., relating to God primarily through unquestioning submission, authentic wrestling, or

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[73] Sorenson, Tisdale and Bland, "Deep Calls to Deep," 230.

[74] Sorenson, Tisdale and Bland, 231.

[75] Sorenson, Tisdale and Bland, 231-232.

intimacy)."[76] This approach was compatible with theistic traditions. It was also compatible with the theories of "incorporate embodied practices and rituals that can be influenced by limbic-mediated styles of relating and also prescribe relational virtues."[77]

As described earlier, the relationship Peter had with Jesus was differentiated from all the other possible types of interpersonal relations by a degree of intimacy. The material intimacy Peter experienced with Christ, and the spiritual intimacy he experienced with the Comforter was the catalyst for transformation. Christ was the epitome of a full-orbed adult image-bearer. Intimacy with him over a period-of-time proved to be Peter's foremost protective, developmental factor.

Furthermore, the psychological-spiritual-moral inadequacies caused by the absence of intimacy with an actualized image-bearer were resolved through growing, relational intimacy with Jesus. The scriptures clearly showed that Peter eclipsed his former life because of the relational spirituality that facilitated his personal experiences with Jesus.

Transformation

The data develop through engagement and analysis led the researcher to conclude that the answer to how Peter's transformation took place was two-fold: one aspect involved embodied cognition and the other involved *teleos*. One was seen as necessarily functional to the other.

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[76] Sorenson, Tisdale and Bland, "Deep Calls to Deep, 232.

[77] Sorenson, Tisdale and Bland, 232.

Research consulted agreed that "spiritual transformation practices result in changes in the structure and functioning of the body-brain system otherwise known as embodied cognition."[78] This relationship was considered necessary because "it was widely recognized that spirituality requires the capacity for self-consciousness and the use of abstract symbols and language which were developmental accomplishments."[79] It was considered necessary because effectively embodied cognition was necessary to make good use of religious experience packaged in symbols and language.

This led the researcher to conclude that transformation of a believer's embodied cognition was necessary because "human development begins primarily as a sensory-behavioral-emotional-relational attachment experience and progresses overtime through biological and social processes jointly supporting the emergence of conscious awareness" and self-adequacy.[80] This necessary degree of consciousness and self-adequacy was understood as "a joint function of the physical integrity of the body-brain system and the individual's mental organization created by memories of experience."[81]

Insights that supported this conclusion were readily available. For instance, research showed that religious experiences contain moment-to-moment content and that the "embodied spiritual consciousness" necessary to manage the content appropriately "depended on the maturation and health of the material body-brain system."[82] The more

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[78] Keith Edwards, "When Word Meets Flesh," 228.

[79] Edwards, 229.

[80] Edwards, 230.

[81] Edwards, 230.

[82] Edwards, 229.

nuanced a religious experience was, the more important it became that a healthy, mature embodied cognition was available to the mind to sort through the content correctly. A biblical example of this was Paul's visions in the "third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2).

Transformation was not exclusively a mind/brain issue though. Christian spirituality was widely understood as both transcendent and embodied. This point could not be overemphasized. This dual nature determined that the process of spiritual formation is an embodied, subjective experience given transcendent meaning by words or other symbols that represent spiritual reality provided by God in his word."[83]

The transcendent nature of the Christian experience was the second aspect described above and analysis showed that the transcendent aim was a re-creation of the image-bearers first design – *teleos*. It was found that "basic to Christian anthropology was an appreciation of the goal of human formation as glorification in the presence of God" and returned the research to "the question of final causes and the ultimate end for which God created human persons."[84]

The analysis showed that positive psychology intersected with the question of original design and supported the explanation of Peter's character transformation. Positive psychology was a relatively new subfield of psychology at the time of this research. Two views predominated. The one preferred by Christian theologians was the psychological science of eudemonic character strength or virtue. Virtue and character

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[83] Keith Edwards, "When Word Meets Flesh, 229.

[84] Bruce Hindmarsh, "End of Faith as It's Beginning," in *Psychology and Spiritual Formation in Dialogue: Moral and Spiritual Change in Christian Perspective,* ed., Thomas Crisp, Steven Porter, and Ten Elshoh Gregg (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academics, 2019), 67.

strength were considered eudemonic in that they were thought to be good for oneself and others. It was in the area of eudemonic research that spiritual formation and positive psychology best intersected.

This intersection supported the conclusion that spiritual formation was "the work of the Holy Spirit to cultivate Christian – eudemonic – virtue among individuals and communities whose character was being transformed to the character of God as it was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ."[85] In other words, spiritual formation could be understood as a process that resulted in a person being reshaped by various means of grace in ways that reflect eudemonic virtue or virtues that best echoed most clearly the final cause and the ultimate end for which God created human persons.

This process was seen in the on-going confrontation of Peter's character within the community of grace. Peter's character issues and his misshaped worldview were counter-eudemonic. They reflected the poorer side of human nature. They represented the influence of Peter's upbringing in a world of sin. Conversely, living within a community of grace that prioritized virtue and value created transformative space for Peter. Within that space, the mind/brain relationship was being transformed as Peter was re-created "in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:24).

Mission

Engagement with the behavioral sciences revealed a correlation between the ideas of mission with questions psychological researchers have asked about purpose and

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[85] Evertt Worthington, Brandon Griffin, and Caroline Lavelock, "Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit Contributions of Positive Psychology to Spiritual Formation," in *Psychology and Spiritual Formation in Dialogue: Moral and Spiritual Change in Christian Perspective,* ed., Thomas Crisp, Steven Porter, and Ten Elshoh Gregg (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academics, 2019), 206.

meaning. The psychology of purpose had its origin "in a Holocaust survivor's experiences in a series of Nazi concentration camps."[86] That survivor was a Viennese psychiatrist named Viktor Frankl. Frankl noted that a sense of purpose, even seemingly insignificant purpose, resulted in "greater resilience to the torture, slave labor, and starvation rations to which prisoners were exposed."[87] Frankl's 1959 book, Man's Search for Meaning, a book that proved to be seminal in the field, crystallized the first argument for the crucial role of meaning and purpose in a person's healthy psychology.

Over the last six decades, "more than 120 publications can be traced back to Frankl's work."[88] The last six decades have been incredibly fruitful in the exploration of "definition, measurement, benefits, and development of purpose."[89] To get a grasp of the vastness of this field of study, a search of Bethel's digital library was made using the Boolean search phrase "(purpose and meaning) psychology," limited to a timeframe of 2010-2020. That search revealed that in the last ten years, academics and practitioners have generated 118,596 articles, 3,347 book chapters, 3,135 newspaper articles, 2,906 books, and 2,241 reference entries related to the idea of purpose and meaning.

Works with special significance to this project were discovered. Dik, Byrne, and Steger looked at purpose and meaning in the workplace.[90] Richard Leider explored the

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[86] "Character Virtue Development: The Psychology of Purpose," John Temple Foundation. January 21, 2020. https://www.templeton.org/discoveries/the-psychology-of-purpose.

[87] "Character Virtue Development"

[88] "Character Virtue Development"

[89] "Character Virtue Development"

[90] Bryan Dik, Byrne Zinta, and Michael Steger, *Purpose and Meaning in the Workplace* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2013).

importance of purpose and meaning to self-realization and a sense of vocation.[91] Weiss and Bass followed the effects of purpose and meaning throughout the life cycle into one's later years.[92] Southwick and Charney looked at the importance of purpose and meaning to resilience.[93]

Peter's calling correlated with this research. Peter experienced a sense of vocation when Christ called. That deep sense of vocational purpose was necessary to underwrite his resilience in the face of imprisonment and eventually crucifixion. Peter's commitment to this vocation endured throughout this life, even into his later years. Peter even shared in Frankl's experiences, rooting the value of purpose and meaning to Peter directly in a shared human experience with Frankl.

Summary and Conclusion

Analysis of the UPCI's discipleship material revealed a commitment to discipleship-making that lacked an adequate theology of spiritual formation at its core. It lacked a biblical-theological foundation like the one described in Chapter two. It lacked the richness of contemporary and historic views of spiritual formation. And, as described in this chapter, it lacked a sophisticated view of the embodied soul. Two conclusions that deserved re-stating stood out to the researcher.

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[91] Richard Leider, *The Power of Purpose: Find Meaning, Live Longer, Better*, 2nd ed (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010).

[92] Robert Weiss and Scott Bass, *Challenges of the Third Age: Meaning and Purpose in Later Life* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[93] Steven Southwick and Dennis Charney, "Meaning, Purpose, and Growth," in *Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life's Greatest Challenges* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 184-97.

The first was that insights from the behavioral sciences were necessary for a full-orbed understanding of spiritual formation due to the composition of the soul and its embodied nature. Without these insights, any theology of spiritual formation or discipleship doctrine would misunderstand the functional relationship between the body and the soul, the brain and the mind.

A second was that the work of spiritual formation ran parallel with some theories of contemporary clinical therapy in that it addressed the existential crisis of depravity. Direct correlations between the biblical view of depravity and contemporary descriptions of sociological and psychological pathology were discovered. This correlation positioned spiritual formation within the work of socio-psychological care of the soul.

CHAPTER FOUR: MULTILATERAL APPROACH TO DATA DEVELOPMENT

The problem addressed by this project was an inadequate theology of spiritual

formation within the discipleship doctrine of a specific expression of North American

Pentecostalism. The primary data was developed through a qualitative case study.

Secondary data was developed through biblio-theological engagement and engagement

and analysis of literature from allied behavior sciences. The data developed was

coalesced into recommendations for improving spiritual formation outcomes in a local

Pentecostal church that would facilitate God's idea of human flourishing and good

community.

Qualitative Case Study Methodology

Qualitative Research

This research project mirrored a pragmatic and realistic approach to knowledge.

The researcher "acknowledged that absolute truths regarding various phenomena may

exist – even if they are exceedingly difficult to discover – and human being's self-

constructed beliefs about those phenomena were legitimate objects of study in their own

right."[94]

This project refused the idea that objective and subjective were incompatible

sources of legitimate knowledge. It aligned with the idea that individual constructions of

reality and objective truth claims about reality were mutually supportive partners in

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[94] Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod. *Practical Research: Planning and Design,* 11th ed.*, global ed* (Essex, UK: Pearson, 2015), 26.

discovery. The following sections lay out the rationale beneath the commitments that informed the data engagement.

The concern of qualitative versus quantitative methodology came down to the question of what makes particular data valid. This required some exploration of the nature of data and its role in discerning objective claims through subjective experiences. "Data are those pieces of information that any particular situation gives an observer."[95] The researcher recognized that all data has limited value in that they "are merely manifestations of various physical, social, or psychological phenomena that one wants to make better sense of."[96] All types of data in this sense are transient. "Tomorrow, next week, or next year – what we thought we had discovered may have changed completely."[97]

However, an acknowledgment was made that, a common description or explanation of phenomena, shared by a wide variety of people over a long period, took on a historic and transcendent nature. Under such circumstances, data that would be limited and transient when taken individually becomes much more compelling. The subjective experiences of individuals thus become a more reliable means of understanding the outcomes of a particular way of shared life. The preponderance of the data builds in clarity and subsequently in strength over time.

The researcher concluded that qualitative research was necessary because subjective data was viewed as necessary data that was acceptable. This conclusion was

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[95] Leedy and Ormrod. *Practical Research*, 94.

[96] Leedy and Ormrod, 94.

[97] Leedy and Ormrod, 94.

reached because qualitative research would explore "phenomena that occur in natural settings" such as local churches.[98] Furthermore, qualitative research was best suited to study the "many dimensions and layers of complex phenomena, [such as religious experience and spiritual outcomes,] then describing or explaining them in a multifaceted form."[99]

While qualitative research did not "allow one to identify cause-and-effect relationship" as quantitative research does, it had its own advantages.[100] Qualitative research was best suited for exploration "to gain insight into what had previously been a little-studied phenomenon."[101] It was well suited for "problem identification," "theory development," and "evaluation."[102] Case study and ethnographic tools naturally emerged from the researcher's commitment to qualitative methodology.

The researcher recognized that "case study was especially suited for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation" and that it was most appropriate for "investigating how an individual changes over time, perhaps as the result of certain conditions or interventions."[103] This was exactly what the project sought to do – understand what happens over time given certain religious conditions or interventions.

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[98] Leedy and Ormrod. *Practical Research*, 269.

[99] Leedy and Ormrod, 269.

[100] Leedy and Ormrod, 270.

[101] Leedy and Ormrod, 271.

[102] Leedy and Ormrod, 271.

[103] Leedy and Ormrod, 272.

The researcher understood that a "major limitation was that, when only a single case was involved, one could not be sure that the finding was generalizable to other situations."[104] However, using multiple cases centered on a variety of believers with a common religious history drawn from multiple affiliated churches in California would offset this limit.

Applying an ethnographic tool to the set of cases added depth to the data. "In a case study, a researcher looks in considerable depth at a particular person, but in an ethnography, a researcher looks in-depth at an entire group."[105] Understanding a person's religious life and spiritual outcomes were important to the project but getting an ethnographic composite from all the individual cases was the priority. This ethnographic composite was "especially useful for gaining an understanding of the complexities of a particular sociocultural group."[106] A contemporary, evangelical, Pentecostal, socio-subculture in the case of this project.

Case Study Methodology

Within the qualitative case study method, the researcher's approach was to enter the individual's life to learn, without bias, as an anthropologist would enter a community to learn. Data was acceptable based on first-person accounts where the person interviewed felt safe to share and was not experiencing any sense of manipulation or exploitation. Data was also acceptable when a brief back mechanism was used

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[104] Leedy and Ormrod. *Practical Research*, 272.

[105] Leedy and Ormrod, 272.

[106] Leedy and Ormrod, 273.

throughout the interview to ensure that what was being recorded accurately reflected the views of the person being interviewed.

This case study methodology resembled the approach of a religious anthropologist using two ethnographic tools to understand the religious life and spiritual outcomes of members of the Pentecostal community of interest. Participant consent was obtained verbally and electronically in the form of a text or email after an initial interview. Participants started with the right to decline to participate and retained that right in the form of the right to withdraw at any time throughout the process.

Research Instruments and Participants

Interviews

The initial interview provided the participants with an overview of the project, an explanation of their role in it, and their rights as subjects within an academic research project. (APPENDIX A) The mood of the initial interview and the disposition of the researcher was specifically set to offset any fear or misunderstanding on the part of the possible participant.

The participant's experiences and outcomes were the area of interest in this portion of the research. The research sought to develop first-hand descriptions and/or explanations of the common religious life of these Pentecostal churches and how this life shaped the participant's outcomes. Participants were given the opportunity to self-report what was important to them and do so in whatever way they wished and in whatever terms and ideas they had to work with. Interviews were conducted face-to-face over FaceTime or Google Meeting applications. Interviews used a standardized interview protocol and ethnographic surveys. (APPENDIX B)

Pilot Tests

Both ethnography and the interview protocol were tested before the interviews. The first test revealed some dysfunction, so modifications were made. A second test with a different practice participant was made which revealed a few more items that needed adjustment. A third test was made with the first practice participant to validate the tools.

Interview Participants

Primary research included personal interviews with five individual Pentecostal believers. Each participant had a minimum of 20 years of religious life. Participants were drawn from five different churches affiliated with the Western District of the United Pentecostal Church International. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 60. Participants included four English speakers and one Spanish/English speaker. Three participants were white/non-Hispanic with the remaining two Hispanic/non-white. Three participants were male and two were female.

Table 4.1 Interview Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Language	Religious life
1	Male	48	White	English	Second generation
2	M	39	White	English	Third generation
3	F	24	Hispanic	Spanish/English	Second generation
4	M	53	Hispanic	English/Spanish	29.5 years
5	F	40	White	English	33 years

Ethnographic Survey

The first ethnographic survey explored the individual's religious life. (APPENDIX C) This included questions about weekly service schedules and the venues for these activities. It included questions about who lead the activities, what the agenda of the activities included, and any religious acts that took place.

The second ethnographic survey looked at the spiritual outcomes the participant self-reported. (APPENDIX D) This ethnography considered three well-documented elements of spiritual formation; encountering God, being transformed by God, and then being sent by God on a mission. The ethnography also intersected these elements of spiritual formation with aspects of the embodied soul; intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and relational.

The research offered a prompt and allowed the participant to fill in the blanks during this portion of the interview. For instance, participants were asked how often they encountered God intellectually in a particular service. They were asked how often they spiritually encountered God in a particular service, with differentiation being made between an emotional encounter and a solely divine encounter.

The activities designated as most compelling by the participant were explored with the same series of probing questions. The rate of occurrence was recorded as rarely, often, or always. The significance of occurrence was recorded as negligible, substantial, or profound. Participants were also given the opportunity to describe or explain in their own words these encounters, transformations, or sense of being sent.

The interviews started by focusing on the religious life of the participant, then shifted to the spiritual outcomes he or she reported. Interviews lasted 1.5 hours on average and, with one exception, were conducted in one sitting. Analog notes were made on the ethnographic surveys and digital recording was used to capture the participant's responses. No personal identifying information was collected. Names were not used during the interview process. The interviews were identified as Interview #1, #2, and so

forth. The analog notes and digital records were bundled separately and kept in a secure location to ensure a chain of custody.

Data Analysis

Data analysis started with preparing and organizing case data. The analog notes, any additional note sheets, and the digital recordings were used to create an interview transcript. The transcripts were organized using the participant's ratings, explanations, or descriptions as content for a narrative.

Thus organized, the data was reviewed looking for commonalities and exceptions. Commonalities were the elements each participant shared with everyone else. The exceptions were the elements that were most pronounced to the participants. Exceptions were elements deserving of particular attention and possible future study if and when this project was ever expanded. Commonalities were combined into general themes.

Several themes emerged. The first was related to the emotionalism of religious activities reported throughout the case studies. The second was related to the intellectual content invested in religious activities. The third was related to the liturgical or religious acts specific to the activities. By way of summary, combined data revealed an emphasis placed on emotional value, or what is described as "the supernatural," and a lack of relevant intellectual content coming from a religious life that is repetitive, narrow, and lacking in specialization, creativity, and unique contextualization.

Literature Engagement, Analysis, and Synthesis

A literature review was necessary to intersect subjective data with data in the form of objective truth claims. The literature review provided the individual constructions

of reality with a mutually supportive partner in discovery. The literature review provided the "theoretical perspectives and previous research findings" related to the problem at hand.[107]

The researcher acknowledged from the outset that; "the more one knows about investigations and perspectives relate to a topic, the more effectively one can address their own research problem."[108] Subjectivity, even historic and transcendent descriptions of phenomena, lacks objectivity by its very nature. Engagement, analysis, and synthesis created a necessary matrix to filter and evaluate the subjective data.

The literature review allowed the researcher to see the problem through a variety of perspectives and treatments. It familiarized the researcher with leading scholars and the positions they posited related to the problem at hand. It offered a "view of how others have handled methodological and design issues in similar studies."[109] Most importantly, it "alerted" the researcher "to controversial issues and gaps in understanding – personal or otherwise – that have not been resolved and need to be addressed."[110]

Knowing when to limit the review was one of the greatest challenges associated with the literature review. The amount of recent and contemporary literature related to the problem was overwhelming. When added to the historic material, the literary data field became endless.

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[107] Leedy and Ormrod. *Practical Research*, 70.

[108] Leedy and Ormrod, 71.

[109] Leedy and Ormrod, 70.

[110] Leedy and Ormrod, 70.

The first strategy to narrow the material started with encyclopedic entries looking for common themes and terms. The second strategy was to look for scholars most often referenced or cited within the last 20 years. The third strategy was to work with scholars from within evangelical traditions, or in the case of behavioral science literature, scholars allied with a Christian worldview.

Biblical-theological Data

The literature engagement explored the historic biblical-theological theory of spiritual formation along with the spiritual formation practices of first-century Christians as described in Acts and the Epistles. The aim was to understand how the biblical-theological literature normalized spiritual formation and how that normalization reconciled with the themes and characteristics of spiritual formation normalized or prescribed in the first-century church.

Acceptable data included materials from acknowledged scholars and the researcher's capacity to engage it exegetically utilizing reliable theological methods and hermeneutical templates. Data collection surveyed the Scriptures, commentaries, theological works, journals, articles, and on-line resources. The data was secured through digital and analog means.

The data was accumulated and then thematically organized. Once organized it was used to evaluate, inform, and cultivate the researcher's understanding of how the Bible normalized and prescribed spiritual formation. The same process was used to understand how the historic church understood spiritual formation with special attention paid to the modern evangelical movements from which Pentecostalism stemmed.

Allied Behavioral Science Data

The literature engagement also explored materials drawn from allied behavioral sciences. The aim was to understand how contemporary science explained or described the nature of the embodied soul, human development, and the effects of religious experience on human development.

Acceptable data included materials from acknowledged scholars and the researcher's capacity to engage it exegetically utilizing reliable epistemological methods and hermeneutical templates. Data collection surveyed encyclopedias, clinical research, dictionaries, journals, articles, and on-line resources. The data was secured through digital and analog means.

The data was accumulated and then thematically organized. Once organized it was used to evaluate, inform, and cultivate the researcher's understanding of the embodied soul, how it developed throughout one's lifetime, and how religious experience influenced that development. Synthesis of all the data drawn from biblical-theological and allied behavioral sciences was used to develop a synoptic view of spiritual formation.

Why Qualitative Case Study Plus Literature Review

Combining first-person insights developed through a qualitative case study with insights from acknowledged experts in allied fields was necessary to differentiate this project from its more academically focused kin. A practitioner actively working in ministry settings rather than an academic working in a scholastic setting conducted this project. The outcomes of this project aimed at developing new and/or improved methods

of spiritual formation that facilitated God's idea of human flourishing and a good community in a local Pentecostal church.

This aim made this project action research rather than purely academic research. For the researcher, action research by definition was a "type of research in which the researcher is also a change agent."[111] This project fits that definition. Its stated goal was catalytic in nature. The aim was catalytic change, not simply an effort to push out the intellectual edges of Pentecostal orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

This was an important distinction because practitioners seek to develop knowledge as a means of improving systems or processes. The researcher recognized that while scholars push out intellectual boundaries, this project's goal was to "look at a practice to check whether it was as it should be."[112] If and when the research demonstrated that a given standard of practice was satisfactory, reinforcement of the practice would be recommended. However, when research demonstrated that something was wanting, change based on "authenticated evidence" would be recommended.

The researcher's commitment to an action research approach was based upon the following reasoning. First, it was clear in Scripture that human agency has a great deal of creative power, intentional or unintentional, guided or misguided. The biblical form of "power is for flourishing. This means power is a gift worth asking for, seeking, and—

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[111] John Scott, *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, 4th ed (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 4.

[112] Jean McNiff, *Action Research: Principles and Practice,* 3rd ed (New York, NY: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 23.

should one receive it—stewarding."[113] The researcher believed that practitioner research could help sanctify power by providing objective guidance for its use.

Second, it was widely recognized at the time of the research that in-time/in-context research provided a means of avoiding strategic, operational, or tactical misguidedness that stems from the researcher's subjective view of reality. The researcher relied upon the fact that practitioner research pushed against leader subjectivity by pressing for an objective, full-orbed understanding of reality. Specifically, to this project, this type of research supported moving from an inadequate theology of spiritual formation within Pentecostal discipleship doctrine towards a robust theology of spiritual formation to cultivate human flourishing in a local Pentecostal church.

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[113] Andy Crouch, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (Downer Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 9.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA AND FINDINGS

Even though the sample size used in the project was relatively small, a great deal of insight into the religious life and spiritual formation outcomes of long-term Pentecostals was developed. This chapter will discuss data about the nature of the Western District of the UPCI as well as the five individual case studies.

Some of the insights drawn from the data reinforced the researcher's 47 years of personal experience with the UPCI. Some challenged it. Key data related to the Western District of the UPCI will be discussed in the Research Setting Data section. Data developed during the case studies will be reported individually. An exploration of each case will be offered since the number is small.

Research Setting Data

Conducting research proved very difficult in the Western District UPCI because partner pastors were a necessary enabler for the project. Individual case studies would come from their churches. The researcher began soliciting these partnerships in December 2019. Through the process, it was discovered that none of the pastors contacted were willing or able to participate. Out of 40 requests sent, none of the pastors responded, even after a follow-up email.

Participants for the case studies were developed by leveraging a broker who was the researcher's pastoral colleagues and personal friend. Aided by the broker, the researcher developed a list of ten prospects who met the criteria identified in chapter four and who initially expressed interest in participating. Three of the ten prospects expressed

an interest but did not respond to the researcher's digital meeting request. Two of the remaining seven declined after the intake interview. Two out of the five participants eventually interviewed were pastors.

Design Modifications

The lack of partner pastors required two modifications to the project. First, the original intent was to work with lay members of a church - not pastors. Second, attending the participant's church for direct observations was also part of the project's original design. Under the circumstances, the researcher used the individuals' available and limited field observations to a survey of the participant's church website. This reflected a necessary modification to the original design based on uncontrollable and extenuating circumstances.

Case Study #1

The first participant had been Pentecostal for well over 20 years. The participant's family had been associated with the Western District of the UPCI since the participant's parents were teenagers. Participant 1 was a 47 years old white male, married, and had two children. The participant was a business owner and had a bachelor's degree in business.

Participant 1 had attended two churches primarily, the participant's childhood church and the church he currently attended. The participant's mom and dad were involved in various ministries to include music, choir, teaching, and youth ministry. Participant 1 was currently involved with music and choir ministry. The participant's pastor was also his brother-in-law.

Participant's Religious Life

Participant 1 described his religious life as "typical." Participant 1 reported that the church he attended had a Sunday morning service and a midweek service. The participant did not identify any other activities of significance. Participant 1 described both services as "similar and consistent with little variation" being "led by the pastor who prescribed the flow of service and did the preaching or teaching."

Participant 1 said Sunday and midweek service were "exactly the same and that nothing distinguished one from the other." The participant believed "creativity was not important; it is not cultivated or leveraged." Participant 1's description was pessimistic. Participant 1 explained, "there is no outside the box thinking which is kind of a bummer." Participant 1 attributed this to a "leadership mentality which was plodder in nature."

Participant 1 explained that there was "always singing and extemporaneous worship led by a choir or chorale, followed by prayer, taking offering and then preaching." The one outlier was the church did participate in Communion and Foot Washing once a year. Participant 1 described the facility as a traditional church building. Participant 1 said there was nothing uniquely religious about the setting except "posters with religious sayings on them."

Participant's Spiritual Outcomes

Encountering God (Christ with Us)

Participant 1 rarely had any kind of intellectual encounter with God during the services. When the participant did encounter God, it was moderate to substantial in significance. Participant 1 reported that he often had an emotional encounter with God during services, and like the intellectual encounters, it was moderate. Participant 1

described these emotional encounters as "lessening in intensity over time" and not "necessarily relevant to any spiritual outcomes anymore."

Participant 1 rarely spiritually encountered God. When an encounter that was uniquely divine occurred, it is substantial. Participant 1 described these encounters as inconsistent; sometimes they are "liberating" and sometimes "deflating." Participant 1 rarely relationally encountered God, which naturally resulted in rating the significance of relational encounter as negligible.

Transformed by God (Christ in Us)

Participant 1 rarely experienced any intellectual transformation during the services. If it did occur, it was "meaningful" but not substantial. Participant 1 rarely experienced any emotional, spiritual, or relational transformation. Participant 1 reported that on the rare occasion when something transformative happened in one of the services it rated somewhere between negligible and substantial.

Mission - Sent by God (Christ Through Us)

Participant 1 often intellectually encountered God as it related to his mission, particularly about "relationship stuff." The participant acknowledged that services "did offer insights into relationships with others." Participant 1 explained that when those insights occurred, they were substantial in significance. Participant 1 likewise rated the rate and significance of the influence these services exerted on how he did relationships. Participant 1 acknowledged that "there is often good insight into doing relationships."

However, participant 1 rarely felt emotionally aroused or spiritually empowered about his Christian mission during these services. When Participant 1 did feel some sense

of emotional arousal or spiritual empowerment it rated somewhere between negligible and substantial. Participant 1 declined to add any additional information to the record before the interview concluded.

Case Study #2

Participant 2 had been Pentecostal for well over 20 years. The participant's family had been associated with the Western District of the UPCI for several generations. Participant 2 was a 39 years old white male, married, and had three children. Participant 2 did not have any formal secondary education.

Participant 2 attended the same church until he was an adult and then entered full-time ministry. This participant's grandparents and parents were pastors and deeply involved with local church and organization responsibilities. Participant 2 was a church planter and pastor.

Participant's Religious Life

Participant 2 reported his home church had six significant activities throughout the week. These included – two services on Sunday, a midweek service, home groups set up like school semesters, children's ministries, and community outreach in the form of social services. The primary services were the Sunday Services and the midweek service. Sunday services were the pivotal services for participant 2.

Participant 2 explained the services were led by the pastor or someone designated by him to do so. Worship leaders or a choir led "the worship portion" of each service which was followed by prayer, offering and then preaching or teaching. Like participant 1, participant 2 explained that Sunday and midweek services were generally the same

format. Sunday morning service and Wednesday had a "teaching focus" while Sunday evening was "evangelistic."

Participant 2 averaged his involvement in weekly activities "between 10-15 hours per week." Participant 2 did not rate any particular activities as more significant than the others saying, "All of them were as important to his spiritual upbringing." These activities were often multilingual including Spanish, Slavic, and Mandarin.

Participant 2 explained that "there was a concerted effort to fellowship" at these activities. Fellowship, particularly "over meals was a very common and intentional reoccurrence." Participant 2 said that "the culture made you want to be there, want to invest in relationships with people there." Relationships "legitimated the meaning of church."

Participant 2 identified two additional elements that were very influential. The first was the emphasis the church put on children's ministry. Participant 2 "benefited a great deal as a child from this focus." The second was that the church had an "over the wall, out of the gate focus" about missions. Participant 2 described "a lot of local outreach going on but also a bigger vision about foreign missions."

Participant 2 described the venue in much greater detail than participant 1. The facility was a traditional church building but several specific features stood out to him. The platform area, which included a choir loft and baptistery "felt like a very sacred space that was also very approachable." Participant 2 remembers flags representing all the foreign missionaries the church financially supported hung near the front of the sanctuary. Participant 2 also remembered a grassy courtyard in the center of the church. It

was "an outdoor space where lots of people would hang-out and visit." Participant 2 said it was common to "use the courtyard to create intentional space outside which still felt like it was inside the church."

Participant's Spiritual Outcomes

Encountering God (Christ with Us)

Participant 2 often intellectually encountered God during the services and that those encounters occurred along a "spectrum between moderate and profound." Participant 2 clearly remembered, "Seminal moments when songs, teaching, and preaching would shape [his] view of things in substantial ways." These seminal moments occurred for him "6-7 times a year." These experiences "always had spiritual weight or gravity to them." The participant described them as moments when "God made sure you heard what was being said."

Participant 2 often or always emotionally encountered God during services. Participant 2 described these experiences as "calm and comforting" or like "time with a nurturing father." Participant 2 also rated these experiences along a spectrum between moderate and profound. Participant 2 "always felt emotionally animated one way or the other."

Participant 2 often spiritually encountered God during services. Like the previous two, the participant rated the significance of these occurrences along a spectrum between substantial and profound. Participant 2 explained that the "substantial moments that happened more regularly often led up to one of the profound spiritual moments." Participant 2 rarely too often encountered God in a uniquely relational way. However, when the participant did encounter God relationally it was always profound.

Transformed by God (Christ in Us)

Participant 2 often experienced intellectual transformation during services, "particularly when the participant was young." Participant 2 described these transformations as "by degrees" and explained that the "village around him helped make meaning of the word he received." Similar to the intellectual transformation, participant 2 reported experiencing emotional transformation during services often. Participant 2 explained that "although terms like emotional health were not used in a technical sense," the participant considered these experiences very related to emotional well-being."

Participant 2 often experienced spiritual and relational transformation during services. These experiences were rated along a spectrum from substantial to profound. Participant 2 reported that substantial experiences often "snowballed into profound experiences, particularly in spiritual ways." Participant 2 further explained that when he experienced a relational transformation with God it was not as often but always profound.

Mission - Sent by God (Christ Through Us)

Participant 2 described the church as mission-oriented and was always intellectually challenged about missions in substantial to profound ways. Participant 2 indicated that discussions about missions were common so ideas about how to "be on mission" were often explored. Furthermore, participant 2 said it was "hard not to be emotionally challenged about missions." "Missions were a rally point, especially during Sunday evening service."

Participant 2 was often and profoundly empowered spiritually for missions during services. This empowerment was particularly strong during "services specifically focused

on missions which were very common to the life of the church." Participant 2 reported that the way he did relationships were often influenced by services in substantial ways.

The participant reported a seminal moment occurred during one of these mission services. The moment affected him "deeply" in intellectual, emotional, and spiritual ways. Participant 2 reported that "he was prophesied over as a child." According to participant 2, "experiencing this moment and having elders speaking into my life shaped my sense of calling into the ministry."

Added Data

Participant 2 was forthcoming when offered the chance to add additional information for the record. First, the participant explained that the "other services had a common and significant value." Participant 2 reported that "all the activities coalesced and were necessary."

"Gathering for preaching and prayer" was a pivotal feature of it all. Prayer and preaching, along with "fellowship over the breaking of bread" were the central features participant 2 consistently mentioned. One exceptional feature added was "how God used people in the community." Participant 2 called these people "silent leaders." Participant 2 said, "The individuals made the difference for him." These people "loved him" and participant 2 felt they were "handpicked people." "Individual relationships were highly valued within the church culture and leadership was always approachable."

One additional feature added was the anticipation of and common experience with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Participant 2 described the Gifts as "very common." Moments involving the Gifts of the Spirit were always "profound moments." These

moments were "indispensable and necessary tools for my spiritual upbringing." Participant 2 explained that his "outcomes would be different without these experiences."

Case Study #3

Participant 3 had been Pentecostal for over 20 years. The participants' entire life had been spent in a Pentecostal religious experience. This participant diverged demographically from the first two in that she was a 24-year-old Hispanic female. The participant was not married and did not have any children. Participant 3 did not currently have a full-time or professional occupation but did have a bachelor's degree.

Participant 3 and her family's association with Pentecostalism began in another Pentecostal organization which was Spanish-speaking. The participant attended the same Spanish-speaking church until she was 15, at which time Participant 3 transferred membership to an English-speaking church associated with the Western District of the UPCI. Participant 3 was involved with a variety of ministries in the local church including leading worship, youth ministry, and campus outreach at the local University of California.

Participant's Religious Life

Participant 3 reported going to church on Sundays and to a midweek service. Participant 3 also said that prayer meetings were common. The participant's current church was primarily English-speaking "but did have bi-lingual services sometimes."

Participant 3 described the services as "typical." The pastor conducted the service and did the preaching. "Worship leaders led singing and worship." There was "always prayer time for the sick or those with needs" followed by offering and then preaching.

Participant 3 described Sunday and midweek service as generally the same format with a "shorter" midweek service.

Participant 3 offered a few exceptions to this description. Participant 3 described "times when the Holy Spirit would take over." These were compelling experiences for participant 3. She considered them "rare." The participant "believed it should happen more but our humanity prevented God from working this way." The participant described these times as when "the service would stop and people would be praying and worshipping on their own or in small groups." Participant 3 described these are "powerful services" when "God was in control."

These events included public incidents of speaking in tongues and Gifts of the Spirit. Participant 3 spotlighted one particular incident during one of these services. The participant reported that someone who was described by others as "demon-possessed" came into the service. The participant said, "He was acting crazy and all the men were praying for him." Participant 3 could not explain how the event turned out because the participant never saw the man again.

The second exception is that Participant 3 spent the "third year of college studying in Spain and attending church there." The participant expressed very deep and fond sentiment towards that time. The participant believed "the level of faith was different" there. Participant 3 said the "services were always more powerful and the Spirit had more liberty to move." The participant claimed that the church there "prayed all night at times for the supernatural and to walk in the Spirit." The church there had a lot of "foreigners" or non-Spaniards in it.

The last exception was going to "conferences." Participant 3 described these as annual English and Spanish events. Participant 3 described "feeling the Holy Spirit stronger in these events." The participant explained that it was more common to see "signs and wonders" during these events. When asked about specifics, participant 3 mentioned "healings and the Gifts of the Spirit." Participant 3 attended several a year.

Participant 3 described her church venues as buildings converted into churches. The participant explained that "the church used whatever was available." Participant 3 described one facility as "a rented community center where they had to set up and take down the setting for each service." "A large wooden cross in the front of one sanctuary" was worth noting to participant 3. The church building in Spain shared a common description.

Participant's Spiritual Outcomes

Encountering God (Christ with us)

Participant 3 often intellectually encountered God in moderate or profound ways during services but rarely and negligibly during conferences. Moderate encounters were more common than profound ones. Participant 3 explained these experiences would involve "connecting an idea with something else or being confronted about how I thought about something." However, "intellectual content was not really a part of the preaching." Participant 3 went on to say that "preaching was very different than the participant's experiences with apologists like Ravi Zacarias."

Participant 3 described the emotional encounters with God during services and conferences as the same as intellectual encounters. Participant 3 reported that profound emotional encounters were mostly associated with "someone praying for or speaking into

the participant's life." Participant 3 described these emotional encounters as "comforting" and an experience of "joy and peace." Participant 3 explained that she felt "God's goodness" during these experiences. The participant said that these experiences "always elicited a physical praise" response.

Participant 3 rarely encountered God spiritually (as something distinct from the participants' emotions) or relationally (as a personal being) but when she did discern a difference the experience was profound. The participant said this personal encounter happened 3-4 times a year and that "she got an experience that she could not get from anywhere else." This experience "lasts, it had a residue that stuck around."

Transformed by God (Christ in us)

Participant 3 rarely experienced intellectual transformation in services but when it happened the experiences were substantial. Participant 3 rarely experienced any intellectual transformation at conferences. The transformative moments that did occur were generally concerned with "who Jesus wants me to be or finding alternative ways to deal with a situation or people."

Participant 3 indicated the experiences with emotional transformation were the same as intellectual transformation. Spiritually, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the most transformative event reported by participant 3. The participant explained this event "really changed how I saw and understand God." This was when "I saw God as real and wanted to have a relationship with him."

Mission - Sent by God (Christ through us)

Participant 3 reported that services and conferences rarely intellectually challenged or informed her Christian mission. It was negligible if they did. The participant explained, "Mostly the preacher talked about reaching people or doing personal evangelism." Neither services nor conferences gave any clarity about the participant's mission nor helped her emotionally connect with it. Participant 3 felt "more spiritually empowered in Spain" but it related to "personal evangelism and bringing people to church."

Participant 3 explained that she "was not sure what her personal calling was." Participant 3 "never really talked about her personal Christian purpose with her pastors." Participant 3 "still struggled to some extent with mission" but always "felt empowered for evangelism." Participant 3 "had always been able to talk to strangers about Jesus."

Added Data

Participant 3 cited one, formative experience during childhood. The participant explained that "God answered my prayer when I was 8 years old." This personal experience related to the participant's mom. Participant 3 explained that her mom "left church during that time." Participant 3 "prayed for a year that her mom would come back to church and she did." This episode in the participant's Christian experience remained compelling and foundational to her faith.

Case Study #4

Participant 4 had been Pentecostal for "29 and one-half years." The participant was unique to the case studies in that he was a "first-generation Pentecostal." Participant 4 was a 53-year-old Hispanic male but "identified as American." The participant was

married and had two adult children. Participant 4 was bi-vocational. The participant was a pastor as well as a project manager for a construction firm. Participant 4 did not have any formal secondary education.

<div align="center">Participant's Religious Life</div>

Participant 4 had attended two churches, the second for over 20 years at which he was "heavily involved with all the church ministries." Services included two on Sunday, a midweek service, youth services, and various yearly events. The participant's ministry activities included "leading worship and being master of ceremonies." The participant was the "youth leader for a period of time." The participant filled various administrative roles as well as a preaching and teaching role.

Participant 4 reported that the church had a bus route and a Spanish outreach. The services included singing, taking offering, prayer, and preaching. The participant mentioned there were "special offerings for different ministries such as children's ministry." Sunday morning service was "larger because of the buses and the Spanish outreach." "Sunday nights were smaller." Various people "were trained to lead the service so the pastor could concentrate on bringing the word."

Participant 4 explained there was "always lots of singing and worship, sometimes thirty minutes or more." The participant described the services as "charismatic," especially the Sunday evening service. Sunday night was always "exuberant" or what the participant described as "typical Pentecostal." Participant 4 explained that this service was generally attended "by the core folks." Participant 4 said "services would be supernatural in nature" several times a year.

Participant 4 described the venue as a traditional church setting. The facility had been "purchased from the Nazarene's and was large with a mid-century design." The facility "had a steeple on the outside, on the corner. It also had a school facility where the church ran a K-12 Christian school." Participant 4 described the "platform was raised and included a baptistery." The church used "no iconography" but it did have "prayer stations including Scriptures posted around the sanctuary for guided prayer." Annual events included youth camps and various conferences.

Participant's Spiritual Outcomes

Encountering God (Christ with us)

Participant 4 rarely intellectually encountered God in church services but often and profoundly did so at conferences or special services. Midweek services and conferences offered a better chance to "hear" because "he was not in charge so he could sit and listen."

Participant 4 always had moderate emotional encounters with God during services and often profound ones at conferences. Unique to these emotional encounters "was the sense that there had been a shift in my life, something was confirmed or changed and I felt clarity about it." Participant 4 rarely felt spiritual encounters with God during church services which were negligible. Conferences were different, "personal time in prayer after preaching often involved an intellectual and emotional confirmation in the spirit."

Participant 4 rated relational encounters with God as rare during both services and conferences. When these types of encounters happened, however, they were always profound. They most often occurred "during altar call." "Sometimes it was difficult to tell that something happened" and in those cases, participant 4 "saw it later."

Transformed by God (Christ in us)

Participant 4 rarely experienced intellectual transformation during services or at conferences. When these experiences occurred, they were always profound. Participant 4 suggested that "he was too busy working for the church service to really get a lot out of it." The participant explained that "ministry gives but it does not receive." Participant 4 rarely experienced emotional transformation during services or conferences and they were negligible.

Spiritual transformation related most to the participants' calling to ministry. The participant described these transformative moments as rare. They "occurred a dozen times in 20 years." They were always profound. They were also more likely to happen at a conference or a special event than during a service. Participant 4 described this process as "letting my dream to serve as a pastor die." The participant explained this process involved "spirituality and character coming into alignment with his calling." Participant 4 likened this to "Moses' time in the desert."

Participant 4 explained that "as time went on, my personal time was much more influential" to experiencing relational transformation than services or conferences. The participant explained that there were often substantial transformative moments during services or conference "early on" but those moments "became less frequent over time." The participant explained that "over time he wanted to know God at a different level" and "did not want to be a Pentecostal crack-addict hyped up by special events."

Mission - Sent by God (Christ through us)

Participant 4 explained that both services and conferences were important for the intellectual understanding of his calling. One particular event spotlighted happened

during a conference. Participant 4 described it as "the moment that I knew my calling was real." After that moment, participant 4 always felt emotionally compelled about his calling "with or without services."

Participant 4 explained that leading services was spiritually empowering and influenced his relationships. Participant 4 explained that "leading people required a lot of spiritual change and growth." The participant explained that dealing with certain people "was most important to learning how to lead spiritually." The "exposure to lots of people taught me to adjust to differences." In terms of conferences, participant 4 explained that "the value of these events went down over time as I saw the significance of discipleship and relationships." "Relationships, not events are what matters."

Added Data

Participant 4 added when given the opportunity, "looking back, the part that was missing was a relationship with Jesus." The participant explained that "his experience involved too much emotionalism and it was too much of an event-driven experience." Participant 4 explained that he had to "learn to interact with God on a normal basis, not on an event basis." The participant went so far as to say that "it seems like events were emotionally stunting believers."

Participant 4 described his religious life as "having gaps in it." The participant recognized these gaps "and had to fill them for himself." Participant 4 said, "I felt my spiritual outcomes were inadequate because of the gaps." The participant explained he had to shift to "a Christ-driven experience rather than an event-focused one." The participant explained he "wanted to connect to Christ, not the show."

Case Study #5

Participant 5 was a 40-year-old female. The participant was married and had no children. Participant 5 had been Pentecostal since she was 7 years old. The participant's aunt and grandmother were Pentecostal prior and introduced participant 5 and her mom to the experience. Interestingly, participant 5 and her mother "received the Holy Ghost together on the same night." Participant 5 was a medical practice manager. Participant 5's association with the Western District was unique in that the participant was raised in Texas but came to California to attend a UPCI endorsed Bible College.

Participant's Religious Life

Participant 5 reported a similar religious life as the previous case studies. The participant had attended multiple churches but regularly deferred in the interview to "her home church" she attended until she was an adult. Church included two services on Sunday, a midweek service, and special regional events. Services always included "singing and worship, offering, and preaching." Participant 5 explained that there was "always lots of singing." Participant 5 said that the church did Foot Washing and Communion once a year, around the New Year. The participant also highlighted the "tambourines that were always a distinctive feature of any service."

Participant 5 described that the service format was "informal and involved a lot of fluidity." The fluidity was due to the Holy Spirit "taking over." Participant 5 described this "fluidity" as a common occurrence, "maybe a third of the time." Sunday evening services were the "big service." Participant 5 described it as having "the most energy." The same people attended all the services but Sunday night "was definitely different than the others."

Participant 5 explained that "the pastor was always in charge but would designate people to lead worship and conduct the service." The participant said there were 7-8 preachers who did the preaching and teaching along with the pastor. Midweek service was similar in format and content but "more laid back." Participant 5 suggested this was at least "partially intentional."

Participant 5 described the venue as a "Church of Christ purchased and converted." The participant distinctly remembered a "cross in the baptistery above the platform and bright red carpet with golden pews." Participant 5 also distinctly remembered the United States' and Christian Flags on either side of the platform.

The special regional events mentioned had special value to the participant. Participant 5 explained those were particularly significant during her youth. Going to the events was "spiritual and social." Participant 5 described experiencing a "freedom to worship being around people the same age." Participant 5 described the church she attended as small "so going to these big events was really valuable."

Participant 5 described the events as "true services," similar to the ones at home but "amped up." They occurred very regularly. Participant 5 described these events as "life-altering." The participant explained that she "came back different" and experienced "a lot of growth at these events." The youth group being together was critical for participant 5. "Even the bus ride home was important."

Participant's Spiritual Outcomes

Encountering God (Christ with us)

Participant 5 rarely intellectually encountered God during services and at special events. When she did encounter God in this way it was moderate. Participant 5 rated emotional and spiritual encounter with God the same. Those encounters were often and substantial. Interestingly, the participant did not elaborate on those ratings. Participant 5 rarely encountered God in a relational way growing up and it was negligible when it occurred. Participant 5 explained that the emotion involved was most significant.

Participant 5 described the experience at special events in much the same way. Participant 5 explained that "the emotional part was great but the intellectual part was poor." The participant often felt "empowered for mission" or "emotionally emboldened" but did not receive real guidance or direction." Participant 5 rated spiritual encounter and transformation the highest. Participant 5 remembered "times that were life-altering." Participant 5 explained that "her life would be very different now" without those transformative events. Participant 5 explained that those experiences were directly related to "surviving hard times" in her young adult life.

Transformed by God (Christ in us)

Participant 5 explained that intellectual transformation occurred over time. Participant 5 could not attribute it to the services or events. Participant 5 explained that any transformation experienced "had been gradual, over time." Participant 5 described it as "part of the natural growing up process."

Participant 5 associated transformation with "stepping out of the box I grew up in." Participant 5 described the box as "the area I grew up in and the mindset it

represented. Participant 5 explained that "stepping away changed everything, I had to get away."

Participant 5 explained that stepping away from "the church lifestyle" helped her "connect to God's unconditional love." Participant 5 explained that stepping away help her "stop looking for the hammer hanging over her head and the struggle she had with earning it."

Mission - Sent by God (Christ through us)

Participant 5 said that both the services and the events often and substantially helped her connect to her Christian mission. These activities were intellectually poor but did emotionally embolden in substantial ways. The services and activities provided participant 5 a sense of being "pumped up." Participant 5 reported a disappointment with "the intellectual value of these activities but acknowledged that they did have relational value. Participant 5 said services always influenced how she did relationships in substantial ways.

CHAPTER SIX: ENGAGING AND INTERSECTING THE DATA

Primary research provided good insight into the dynamics that contributed to an inadequate theology of spiritual formation within the discipleship doctrine of the Western District of the United Pentecostal Church. First-hand accounts of the religious lives and spiritual outcomes of long-term Pentecostals were personally and scholastically illuminating. The qualitative value of primary research was a strength.

Much of the data resonated with the researcher's personal experience as a lifelong Pentecostal. This was a strength particularly for the researcher as he addressed his growth edges. Although the case data was subjective to the individuals, a shared experience in common settings gave the researcher an insider's view of the broader reality of Pentecost in local settings. A composited insider view added strength to the project as well.

The cases studied were informative but the limited number of cases was an obvious weakness within the research. The cases were drawn from a small geographic and ideological representation of the WDUPCI and lacked ethnic diversity which were weaknesses. A study cohort with more demographic complexity would have allowed cases to be categorized by age or specific themes. A larger number of cases could have been categorized by gender allowing for comparison and contrast to identify bias.

Themes related to specific worship practices or common leadership styles would have likely emerged by expanding the study. Once identified, these themes and practices could have been examined more thoroughly. The different geographic regions would also have to be juxtaposed allowing for the identification of unique regionally specific

sociological and historical drivers. The case studies provided rich data, but not enough to be conclusive.

Methodology Review

The project used a defined theological method to develop a Bible-centric understanding of spiritual formation with special emphasis on Acts of the Epistles and historic orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The project also reviewed allied behavioral science literature related to the embodied soul.

The literature review combined with a qualitative case study shaped the researcher's understanding of the problem. It also informed recommendations to improve spiritual formation outcomes in a local Pentecostal church. The following chapter will discuss how the data intersected and layout those corrective recommendations.

Summary of Findings

Three primary findings were drawn for the data and will be discussed. Finding 1 explored the Western District of the UPCI's lack of commitment to formal clerical education. Finding 2 explored critical knowledge gaps experienced by the case study participants. Finding 3 explored a lack of diverse and specialized ministries within the local churches. Each finding will be explored separately.

Overall, case study data revealed a contemporary Pentecostal orthopraxy which placed extreme emphasis on emotionalism, and what was described as the supernatural, but which lacked theological content. In other words, it was fervent about the move of the Holy Spirit but negligent of sophisticated orthodoxy. It further revealed a repetitive and

liturgically thin religious life which lacked specialization, creativity, and individualized contextualization.

Finding One: Lack of Commitment to Formal Clerical Education

The difficulties of doing research in the Western District were anticipated. The difficulties were due to the lack of pastoral buy-in described in Chapter Five. Explanations for the lack of buy-in were as personal as they were numerable. However, two possible explanations, supported by the research, were discovered.

First, the organization's policies reflected a devaluation of the role of formal clerical education within the life of the church. Second, the organization had a cultural commitment to a specific view of spiritual empowerment which made intellectual leadership unnecessary for successful ministry.

The poor relationship between formal clerical education and the UPCI was incompatible with the available insights from behavioral science about knowledge management and learning which posited that formalized learning is necessary for healthy intellectual, moral, and social development. It was also inconsistent with the first-century commitment to being a learning community which was a vital lifestyle element of God's historic people.

Organizational Policy

Analysis of the organization's beliefs about formalized education was not purely conjecture. This devaluation was reflected in the organization's policies related to ministry development and licensure. The UPCI owned and operated two educational institutions. The first was Urshan College and Urshan Graduate School of Theology was

the second. These schools were co-located in Wentzville, MO. Both were Candidates for Accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (hlcommission.org), a regional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education at the time of this research. The UPCI also endorsed six Bible colleges and two ministry training programs. None of which held higher levels of accreditation.

While some form of clerical education was available and not discouraged, it was neither incentivized by culture nor prioritized by ecclesiastical policy. The professionalization of the clergy through the use of formal clerical education was not emphasized. Receiving clergy endorsement from the UPCI did not require a degree from a secondary or post-secondary institution of any kind. Neither did employment as a local church pastor.

Cultural Commitment

There was also the organization's commitment to the idea that supernatural empowerment made academic intellectualism unnecessary. The commitment was exhibited in statements such as "God showed me," the Lord told me," and "the Holy Ghost revealed to me." These types of statements were common features of church services, particularly during preaching.

Primary research showed that these statements were authentically believed and psychologically compelling, whether factual or not. There was a widely held expectation that God supernaturally directed the minister. A common axiom reflective of this belief

was; "God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called."[114] Being Spirit-led, along with submission to one's elders, were the organization's decisive qualifications for ministry.

The lack of pastoral buy-in was understandable under these conditions. Studious, self-educated pastors would not see the value of a scholastic research project. It did not fit their leadership philosophy or pastoral theology. Furthermore, a scholastic research project did not fit into the culture's Spirit-led calculus which emphasized the revelation of the Spirit above learning the historic theology of Christianity.

Critical Consequences

The false dichotomy of spirituality vs. intellectualism contributed to the practitioner-level struggles described in Chapter 1. Inadequate exposure to academic processes like knowledge management and peer-review left local pastors struggling to lead with evidence-based practices. Disconnection from institutions of higher learner and professional journals created a dangerous intellectual isolation which resulted in a lack of specialized knowledge and skill. Research also showed that services with an extreme focus on the supernatural were highly emotive and sometimes resulted in climatic spiritual experiences. These services however, lacked the biblical-theological sophistication necessary for long-term spiritual growth.

Recommendations

One corrective step involved the organization confronting the idea that a conflict existed between being spirit-led and academia. Theological realignment could reconcile

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[114] Christine Caine. *"God Doesn't Call the Qualified."* February 23, 2018. Faithgateway.com. September 17, 2020. https://www.faithgateway.com/undaunted-god-doesnt-call-the-qualified/#.X2QC05NKjjF.

the need for formal education with the need to be spirit-empowered. The first several centuries of the Christian enterprise were marked by on-going, formalized learning which suggests that the necessary ideological realignment could be possible.

A realignment of this nature could be the beginning of a more thoroughgoing effort to professionalize the clergy through formal and on-going education. Such an effort could start with a public acknowledgment linking professional standards for the clergy with prayerfulness and spirituality. Finally, policy revision would be necessary to institutionalize the commitment.

Such a shift could be overwhelming for some members of the organization and inadvertently elicit an adversarial response. Practical implications of such a shift would need to be thought through. The organization would need to address ministers who do not meet the new expectations. The organization would need to deal with ministers unwilling or unable to comply. Working through disagreements and challenges like these could pose the risk of a divided fellowship.

Short-term remedies to implement a more thoroughgoing effort to professionalize the clergy while offsetting the possibilities of backlash were available. Pacing the full-implementation with a grandfathering strategy would be prudent. Additionally, a network of specialized clergy could be organized for use throughout the fellowship.

These clergy groups could work in a consultant or enabling capacity within local churches. Cooperative funding could be capitalized to ensure local churches have equal access to these specialized ministries.

Finding Two: Critical Biblical-theological Knowledge Gaps

Finding 2 centered on biblical-theological knowledge gaps revealed in the case study data. Interview 4 was forthright about this. Interview 3 also reflected these gaps when she reported having never talked about her personal Christian mission. All the participants described services involving "singing, followed by taking an offering, public prayer, and preaching." None described however an organized attempt at Christian education.

All the cases reported incidents of encounter, transformation, or mission but struggled to explain these personal experiences with biblical-theological ideas. These knowledge gaps reflected a disconnection between current and first-century orthopraxy. They also reflected a disconnection between current orthodoxy and a robust biblical view of spiritual formation.

Primary research uncovered two critical learning points about religious practices and theological learning. The first was that an emphasis on emotionalism and the supernatural did not result in adequate knowledge. The second was that culturally approved religious practices were not synonymous with biblical patterns of religious practices.

Recommendations

Research suggested that recalibrating current orthodoxy and orthopraxy to a more sophisticated understanding of first-century religious life was a necessary corrective. Conscientiousness about continuously realigning orthodoxy and orthopraxy with biblical-theological insights would be a best practice in efforts to cultivate human flourishing and good community through spiritual formation.

Closer Alignment with a First-century Form of Sacred Communication

The preaching described in the case studies was not coherent with the sacred communication we see in the Scriptures. The first-century church did not revolve around the pattern of sing-take an offering-pray-listen to the preacher. Teaching, preaching, and writing was central to the first-century practices of spiritual formation.

Teaching was differentiated from preaching by content and aim. Writing was used extensively to reinforce a consolidated and standardized comprehension. Revitalization of a biblical-form of sacred communications would be a best practice for churches committed to better spiritual formation outcomes.

Renewed Commitment to a Form of First-century Mentorship

The biblical form of partnering necessary for knowledge creation and transmission was not practiced within the churches of the case study subjects. The first-century believers characterized religious life as a learning life. The special relationship between the Apostles and second-generation believers was significant to this. Revitalization of a biblical form of learning-enabled partnership would be a best practice to adopt.

Gathering Together with the First-century Intent

Church attendance as described in the case studies was not coherent with the first-century form of gathering together which included a learning process. First-century believers were called to replace their secular worldviews of origin. Facilitating the ideological rearrangement was accomplished by gathering for learning and involved a dialectic form of sacred communication. Gathering for the same aim would be a best practice for local churches seeking the same outcomes.

Combining Ancient Patterns and Modern Means

The venues described in the research data were neither enabling nor sacred. None of the subjects report the use of art, architecture, or aesthetics as functional to the religious life of their community. Nor did they connect their religious experience with any forms of modern knowledge management strategies or information communication technologies.

Engagement with the behavioral science literature highlighted the power art and architecture have to both create sensation and direct those sensations towards particular outcomes. This ability to create and direct sensation could be used to create spaces that connect believers to the sacred and which enable learning. This would be a best practice to adopt.

Implementing knowledge management strategies within learning activities could also accelerate alignment. Knowledge management strategies such as the socialization, externalization, combining, and internalization process are just one of several strategies discovered during engagement. Teaching the intellectual process to improve spiritual formation outcomes rather than its own brand of theological content would be a best practice.

The value of information communication technologies as an additional enabler of the learning was definitive during engagement. The research process itself showed that information sharing is now nearly instantaneous. Multimedia was interactive and push features made content immediately available. Social media platforms and communication applications like Zoom, FaceTime, Google Meeting, and BlackBoard could be digitally networked and integrated to make learning in real-time possible. Leveraging these

advantages would be a best practice to facilitate human flourishing and a good community through spiritual formation.

Open-mindedness Towards Questioning

The last recommendation relating to Finding 2 was attitudinal in nature. Teaching the intellectual process would require local church leaders to be open-minded and reward questioning. Engagement demonstrated that openness and questioning were fundamental to learning while being closed-minded and punishing questioning made learning impossible. This attitudinal shift would be a best practice to adopt.

The adversarial attitude towards faith questioning discovered was unfortunate but also unbiblical and should be eliminated at all levels. Engagement of the behavioral science material showed that an organic learning culture would put believers in a better position to spiritually grow, individually and collectively. It also more closely aligned the local church with the first-century practice. Preaching, teaching, and writing in their first-century Christian forms were well suited to deal with the cognitive complexity at the heart of faith questioning.

Finding Three: Lack of Diversity of Ministry Specialties

Case study data, particularly data related to the participant's religious lives, exposed a lack of specialized ministries and evidence-based design programming. The participants described a repetitive and liturgically thin religious life lacking in specialization, creativity, and unique contextualization. A lack of specialized education along with the responsibility to be the sole program developer left the self-educated pastor at a disadvantage.

Cases 2 and 3 spotlighted children's ministry. Cases 2, 3, and 4 mentioned multilingual services. Music and singing, along with preaching represented the extent of the religious programming across all the cases. No other means or modalities of spiritual formation were reported. Typical services mirrored each other with the exception being some were hyped up or had more energy.

Case data revealed no intentionality about ministry or liturgical diversity. The data further demonstrated a lack of programming related to mental or behavioral health. The religious life experienced by the participants was disassociated from the behavioral health realities of the embodied soul and the full-orbed psychological-spiritual-moral composition of God's image-bearer.

A Critical Disassociation

This disassociation of ministry practices and the realities of the embodied soul was a critical error. Engagement showed humans to be embodied souls which move along a developmental life cycle towards an inherent teleological end-state which was hi-jacked at the fall. First-century liturgical practices used in a variety of ways combined with insights from the behavioral sciences could offset this critical disassociation. Designing programs coherent with this combination of knowledge would be a best practice to adopt.

Engagement showed that the relationship between Christian spirituality and the psychosomatic care of the individual does not have to be an antagonistic one. Behavioral sciences could be a reliable partner for religious programmatic design. A better view of spiritual formation, and practices to support it, came into a clearer view when first-century religious life was integrated with behavioral science insights.

First-century Practices and Behavioral Health Theory

Gathering

Engagement showed that the first-century religious life involved gathering into community while behavioral science showed that community of origin has a profound effect on the development of personhood and the condition of the embodied soul. It was clear from the material surveyed that a community of origin characterized by adverse socio-pathological drivers puts human flourishing at risk.

The socio-pathological nature of a religious community would naturally affect a participant's spiritual outcomes in adverse ways. The embodied soul absorbs the effects of any accumulative and compounding socio-pathological drivers in its community. These effects result in adverse psychological and spiritual content in individualized psyches of one degree or another.

Conversely, a local church at peace with an inclusive, enabling culture would accelerate all aspects of an individual's development, spiritual and otherwise. Engagement showed the importance of emphasizing the fact that grace and peace are not abstract theories but necessary aspects of God's nature that define his treatment of humanity. As such, taking these aspects as determinative guidance about interpersonal morals and ethics would be a best practice to adopt in ordering and organizing shared local church life.

Necessary to this would be expanding these aspects of godliness out of the interpersonal and pushing them throughout the local polity. This diffusion of a moral-ethical polity could ensure the local church is psychologically safe as well as spiritually safe and enabling. Ensuring these aspects resonate throughout the church's operating

procedures, decision-making process, and discipline policies would be a best practice to adopt.

Individual and Corporate Prayer

Engagement showed that the first-century religious life was deeply rooted in individual and corporate prayer. The Acts of the Apostles described the outcomes of their prayerfulness. Engagement further showed that the practice of prayerfulness was intuitively congruent with current research demonstrating the value of prayer within psychosomatic care.

Prayer was shown to be an invaluable tool within the behavioral sciences for recovering from the effects of socio-psychological pathologies. Engagement revealed that behavioral science saw prayer as more than an attempt to link with the divine. The research found a correlation between prayer and the resolution of adverse psychological content, and thus resolved, the mind/brain relationship achieved improved functionality.

Realigning the current practice of prayer to incorporate its psychological value would be a best practice for local churches seeking improved spiritual formation outcomes. Available forms of directed prayer should play a larger role in the believer's liturgical and personal religious life. Adaption and use would require that the community accurately communicated and modeled those forms.

Partnership

Engagement of behavioral science material showed that, of all the first-century religious practices informed by behavioral theory, this one offered the most value to the

contemporary Pentecostal church. It also represented the largest divergence between current orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and behavioral sciences.

Engagement showed that both the New Testament narrative and the behavioral sciences preferred partnership over individuality. Intimate, yet platonic relationships between a mentor and protégé have a profound influence on human development and behavior. The effectiveness of mentor/protégé relationships was differentiated from all the other possible types of relations by the degree of intimacy.

The implications of intimacy were so complex that those implications could not be overlooked. Engagement showed that healthy partnership results in both participants feeling known, validated, and cared for. Although this process takes time and is tenuous, nothing is as effective to cultivate personal growth as a genuine fraternity. Shifting culture and relationship strategies towards this first-century practice would be a best practice for the local Pentecostal church.

Recommendations

Engagement indicated that an improved collaboration with the specialists available from the behavioral sciences could improve the spiritual formation outcomes in a local Pentecostal church. Foregoing the practice of inviting specialists in for one-time events, as is the current practice, and putting them on staff would be a best practice to adopt. Adopting such a practice would necessitate a cultural shift but would be a best practice worth making change for.

Restructuring Ministry Organization

Implementing an interdisciplinary ministry organization would mean replacing the single pastor structure. Restructuring the ministry organization in the local church in such a way would give individuals, and the community as a whole, the benefits available from these interdisciplinary resources. Benefits critical to successful spiritual formation.

Moving away from the single pastor structure would also more closely align the local church with first-century practices. The single pastor structure was shown to be incongruent with Christ's commissioning of the disciples and sending them two-by-two. It was not reflective of the partnerships described by the Apostle Paul. It was also incompatible with biblical teaching regarding the necessary assortment of ministry gifts within the Body of Christ.

Structured and Formalized Feedback Loops

Engagement with the behavioral science material revealed the important role formalized feedback loops play within evidence-based program design and implementation. Using these types of feedback loops to solicit real-time guidance from constituents would be a best practice to adopt. These feedback loops could survey at a minimum; real-time needs within the community as well as to measure ministry effectiveness.

Needs assessments would help practitioners align ministry initiatives with actual, rather than perceived needs. Needs assessments would ensure that the right issues were being targeted thus avoiding misguided energy and resources. Measuring ministry effectiveness with objective metrics would improve spiritual formation outcomes through quality control, quality assurance mechanism.

Adopting this best practice would represent an attitudinal shift. Local Pentecostal pastors would have to be willing to accept feedback, the value of which could be extraordinary, but disguised in hard to accept language. Local Pentecostal pastors would have to be willing to consent to standards of ministry excellence measured in qualitative and quantitative ways. Such a step would begin with acknowledging that feedback has not always been welcomed in the past.

Summary and Conclusion

Summary

The number of primary research cases was small but offered meaningful insights which recommended the expansion of this project. The three primary findings identified and discussed were; the UPCI's devaluation of formal clerical education which led to critical knowledge gaps and a lack of diverse and specialized ministries. These inadequacies stemmed from; an orthodoxy that emphasizes emotionalism and the supernatural but lacked relevant intellectual content, and a repetitive, liturgically thin orthopraxy missing specialization, creativity, and contextualization.

Responding to the unfortunate relationship with formal education involved confronting certain ideas which result in a misguided culture and policy. Formal education should be seen as an indispensable ally when the work is as complex as pastoral leadership. The first-century community understood this point and their practices reflected a commitment to formalized, on-going learning.

Closing the critical knowledge gaps started with understanding first-century orthodoxy and orthopraxy better, then aligning with it more carefully. Closing these gaps involved redesigning venues to make them learning-enabled. It involved using more

effective learning processes. Closing the gap also depended on doing sacred communication more effectively and eliminating closed-mindedness which punished questioning.

Dealing with the lack of specialization and contextualization required a closer partnership with the allied behavioral sciences. The complex nature of the embodied soul should not be ignored and the existential nature of Christian spirituality must be reconsidered. All the elements of the first-century religious life intuitively lent themselves to the recovery and restoration of human well-being when rightly understood and employed.

Conclusion

The Central Work of Christ in Light of Eden

Viewing all the data in light of Eden offered a pathway to theological resolution. In the beginning, God created. The center of God's creative act was a relational juxtaposition involving three principal participants; God, man, and an ecological paradise. Rebellion ruined the vitality and beauty of the relational juxtaposition. Rebellion disintegrated the human soul and the resultant injury put humanity in a hostile relationship with God and an exploitive relationship with paradise.

The Christ solution was the remedy. It was the only comprehensive remedy to redeem and restore the vitality and beauty lost. Jesus is revealed as the only "way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). "There is salvation in none other, for there is no other name under heaven, given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Christ's vicarious sacrifice removed the curse of hostility. The power of Christ's resurrection restored the human functioning necessary to be at peace with God and others. Participating in the religious life described in the Scriptures was the process of restoring the Imago Dei, although slowly, to its teleological end. This restoration became the central work of the body of Christ.

A Dynamic Experience but an Ineffective Local Effort

Engagement demonstrated that the Pentecost experience was emotionally dynamic for case study participants but that the efforts of local Pentecostal churches were not efficient or effective at the central work of Christ. An acknowledgment that something is currently wrong would be necessary to change.

What would remain once the painful acknowledgment was made would be an exciting journey of discovery and growth. The spiritual resources necessary for change would be available. Many questions remained at the end of the project worthy of individual and concerted attention. One of the most compelling was whether the leadership of the local Pentecostal church would allow the "Holy Spirit to lead them into [ALL] truth" (John 16:13) related to facilitating human flourishing and a good community through spiritual formation in the local church.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Problem of Malpractice at the Local Level

The consequences of the neglected use of an adequate theology of spiritual formation were most acute at the practitioner-level. It was here that ministry leaders struggled to offset divorce rates, mental illness, family instability, and poverty. It is here that the inability to facilitate efficient knowledge management, Bible-centered polity, and Christ-centered outcomes most directly affected the personal wellbeing of religious adherents.

It was at the ground level of the human experience that Pentecostalism was failing to measure up to its potential. Investments in more programs and hyped-up events had proven insufficient answers to this problem. Research centered the solution to the problem on refined and cultivated leadership. Specifically, the type of leadership that can only come through spiritual formation.

Spiritual formation was defined as a biblical response to the disabling socio-psychopathologies of sin. Spiritual formation was described as the remedy to the soul-sickness and brokenness that followed the fall in the Garden. Research concluded that local ministry leaders ill-equipped to facilitate the complex and time-based process doomed members of local churches to unnecessary existential struggle.

The Initial Starting Point

This project started when the researcher was becoming increasingly aware of this reality while pastoring in Oroville, CA. The researcher could not articulate the issue as

described in this project but genuinely sensed that something was wrong with the Pentecostal experience as the researcher understood it. That uneasiness was the beginning of a transformational journey.

In May 2009 the researcher resigned from the pastorate of the church in Oroville, CA after several months of uneasy soul searching. That was the first step in a long process of revolutionary change. The completion of this project represented a decisive chapter within a personal journey of spiritual deconstruction and reformation. Although painful and frustrating at times, it was the journey of a lifetime.

The Centrality of the Learning Process

Central to this journey was the learning process. The researcher learned how to learn in an entirely different way while working through the Master of Divinity and doctorate process. The researcher recognized that it is possible to be intellectually gifted but not academically or scholastically enabled. This lengthy process put the researcher in a better place to access and use knowledge and information.

Being an enabled learner has proven valuable in several key ways. The researcher is now a better military learner. The researcher is a better criminal justice learner. Linking knowledge from disparate academic fields of learning has improved the researcher's ability to lead in secular settings by learning. It has naturally enriched the researcher's faith.

The quality of the researcher's schools played a role in this. The personalities involved with the process did as well. One critical decision was against the opportunity to do the Master of Divinity completely on-line which would have been better for the

researcher's Army career. A traditional scholastic setting, along with the essential interpersonal relationships, was intellectually richer and provided the researcher the opportunity to work through psychological and social struggles.

The researcher was blessed to have a deep experimental knowledge of God. Landmark, and therefore compelling encounters with God texturized the researcher's Christian experience from childhood. What changed was that the researcher's faith now rests upon both a subjectively real experience as well as a better-reasoned orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

Transforming Insight from the Behavior Sciences

Equally important to the journey was the exploration of the behavioral sciences. Insights gained through this process have been immensely transformative to the researcher. First and foremost, the process helped the researcher with self-discovery.

The researcher discovered that although intellectually talented, he was emotionally and therefore socially delayed. Through the process, the researcher discovered that he is border-line autistic, exhibiting classic Asperger characteristics. This unrecognized struggle, along with several unresolved childhood traumas, left the researcher delayed in key psycho-social areas.

A greater self-awareness induced in the researcher a higher degree of grace and compassion towards others. It also allowed the researcher to cultivate an improved, non-anxious presence throughout his day. As a result, the researcher's interpersonal relationships have naturally improved.

Self-discovery and psychological development also enabled a greater degree of empathy towards people's feelings. The current related term is emotional intelligence. The old fashion term was gentlemanly. Either way, people experience the researcher in healthier ways now.

Lastly, the process has impressed upon the researcher the possible and necessary depths of cathartic transparency with God and others. Repentance was paramount. The state of the soul could not be hidden. It could be disguised by fabricated personas but never truly hid. Transparency before a loving God and within a loving relationship was essential to the process.

The researcher's personal journey of spiritual deconstruction and reformation was painful but profitable. Outcomes included improved mental models about God, people, and life. Outcomes included a more stable personal identity. A clearer understanding of grace and truth now informs the researcher's management of his complex life.

Application in Ministry Context

Overall, the researcher became more conscious about how he showed up, and what he contributed to the life experience of others. Self-discovery enabled personal and professional growth with pastoral implications. One of the most significant was that the process has resulted in a much clearer understanding of religion's role in meeting humanity's spiritual needs.

Before the transformative process, the researcher's Christian experience was completely disconnected from the spiritual drivers inherent in human design. The researcher did not understand the transcendent nature of spirituality so he was unable to

differentiate spirituality from religion. With a deeper understanding of these drivers and how each intersects with the Christian experience, the researcher is now able to approach missional and evangelistic ministry in a much more informed way.

The new approach to mission and evangelism included an improved approach to the apologetic enterprise necessary to substantiate and communicate the Judeo-Christian solution. This enterprise now has much more meaning and relevance within the researcher's approach to ministry. This was especially significant since the researcher's primary ministry arenas are secular settings.

This process has also impressed upon the researcher the value of mentorship and accountability within an enabling community. Research clearly and decisively spotlighted the psychological-moral-spiritual value of relationships. The researcher did not have access to healthy accountability from a healthy community growing up. Sadly, this remained a problem for the researcher stemming from dysfunction within his broader ministry community.

Several other implications stood out during reflection that deserved mention. Professionalization of the ministry through education was not an end in itself, and could be counter-productive, without the process of spiritual direction. A commitment to an evidence-based approach to ministry should be compelling in degree. Better use of interdisciplinary expertise was a crucial design element discovered, especially moving into the 21st-century.

Application within the Researcher's Primary Vocation

The researcher's first and most important vocation was family. The realization and acceptance of that role were more clearly understood and appreciated after the transformative process. The researcher never struggled to love his wife and family deeply and completely. Loving them wisely and effectively, loving them as Christ loves was often beyond his abilities early on. Not because of ill-motive but due to immaturity, dysfunction, and ignorance.

The most important outcome of the process was a redefinition of the researcher as a husband and father. This redefinition was incomplete but it was certainly more aligned with Christ than ever before. For example, improved empathy, improved mental models of God and people, and insight into the brain/mind relationship better texturized the researcher's contributions to his family.

Additionally, the humiliation experienced through honest self-discovery became compelling. The need to fabricate false persona, the tendency to be driven by unmet childish needs, and inaccurate descriptions of spirituality lost a great deal of their psychological power over the researcher. This redefinition made the pain and frustration associated with this journey of deconstruction and reformation small prices to pay for eternal returns.

Future Study

The cases studied were informative but the limited number of cases meant that the data lacked comprehensiveness. This was an obvious weakness within the research. However, the informative quality of the data argued the value of expanding the project.

This expansion should include more cases drawn from across a wider geographic area. Expanding the project should introduce more ethnic diversity.

A study cohort with more demographic complexity would allow cases to be categorized by age and specific themes. Cases could be categorized by gender allowing for comparison and contrast to identify bias. Themes related to specific worship practices or common leadership styles would likely emerge. Once identified, these themes and practices could be examined more thoroughly. The different geographic regions could also be juxtaposed allowing for the identification of unique regionally specific sociological and historical drivers.

The source and nature of the flawed ideas at the heart of the UPCI's theological commitments should be explored more thoroughly. Expanding the project in practical terms would miss this opportunity and be short-sighted. The ideas that informed the cultural and organizational dysfunction should be considered further. Several examples stood out during engagement.

Dispensationalism was one. Rather than dispensationalism being one of several ways to understand the Scripture narrative, it was the only way endorsed within the UPCI. The UPCI's messaging related to the baptism of the Holy Spirit was another example. Initial research suggested that the narrowness of the community's explanation of this event was counter-intuitive to the work of God rather than informative of it.

The UPCI's commitment to the angel of the church doctrine was another example. This doctrine posited that the angels addressed by John in Revelation chapters two and three were specific pastors in those specific cities. This view of these Scriptures

was the basis for the single pastor polity model most common in local UPCI churches. The research discovered that this doctrine afforded the local pastor an inappropriate degree of control. The possibilities for future studies were vast. Unfortunately, the appetite within the UPCI for those studies was not equally vast, at the time of this research.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Understanding the spiritual formation experience and outcomes of long-term Pentecostals

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research project about the spiritual formation experiences of Pentecostal Christians. You were recruited because you are a committed member of your local church and (2) have more than 20 years of religious life. Over the next few minutes, I will introduce you to the project and you can ask any questions that you may have before you agree to participate.

Purpose of Project

The purpose of the project is two-fold. The first is to understand the spiritual formation experiences of long-term Pentecostals. The second is to use the information collected to develop improved spiritual formation principles that facilitate God's idea of "human flourishing" and "good community" in a local Pentecostal church.

Description of Project Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to do the following three things:

- Participate in an intake interview with the researcher prior to consenting to participation
- Participate in an interview with the researcher at which you will be asked questions about the religious life of your church and the spiritual outcomes you have experienced as a Pentecostal Christian

Risks/Benefits of Participation

There are no significant, foreseeable risks associated with project participation. You will not receive any payment or reimbursement for your participation.

Confidentiality

Data developed during the project will be kept confidential. Data includes your on-line survey and interview responses. The data will be recorded as Interview #1 and your name will not be associated with any of it. No personal identification information from or about will you will be retained.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

The decision to participate in this research project is entirely yours. You may withdraw from the project at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher in any way. You may also decline to answer any single question during the in-person interview. Additionally, you have the right to request that the researcher not use certain portions of the data developed from your participation.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

You have the right to ask questions about this research project and to have those questions answered by the researcher. If you have any problems or concerns about participation throughout the project, you may express those to the researcher who will

ensure a gracious and respectful resolution. The Researcher can be reached at 530-282-7950 or ernestkrantz@gmail.com for any questions or concerns.

Consent

Your verbal consent indicates a few things. 1) It indicates that you have volunteered to participate in the project and will complete to the best of your abilities the three things asked of you and 2) that you agreed to be digitally recorded. It also indicates that 3) you received an orientation briefing at which you were able to address any concerns or questions you had about the project and your responsibilities and rights related to it.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Title of Project: Understanding the spiritual formation experience and outcomes of long-term Pentecostal Christian adherents

Intake interview

Greetings and introductions

- My name is…
- Are you…
- Thank you for your time…
- Do you feel comfortable?
- Are you ready to begin?
    - Project introduction (consent form)
    - Project purpose (consent form)
    - Description of study procedures (consent form)
    - Risks and discomforts (consent form)
    - Benefits of participation (consent form)
    - Confidentiality (consent form)
    - Right to refuse or withdraw (consent form)
    - Right to ask questions or address concerns (consent form)
    - Verbal Consent

In-person interview

- Are you ready to begin?
- The first part of our interview will look at the services and activities you have participated in over the course of your religious life. (Complete the Ethnographic Survey)
- Please tell me the schedule of weekly services and activities you consistently participated in over the course of your religious life
    - Brief back the list of schedules and/or activities
- Activity 1 Religious Life
    - Please tell me about the agenda of this service
    - Please describe the venue this activity is held in
    - Who is in charge of this event?
    - What is their role
    - What types of religious acts do you do during this service?

The second part of our interview will focus on the spiritual outcomes you have experienced by participating in these services or activities. (Complete the Spiritual Outcomes Survey)

- Activity 1 – Encounter
    - Intellectual
        - How often do you feel like you intellectually encounter God in this activity (i.e.: understand something new, an Ah-Ha moment)? Rarely, Often, Always
        - How would you rate the significance of the intellectual encounter with God in this activity? Negligible, Moderate, Profound

- - - Can you describe your intellectual encounter with God during this activity?
  - o Emotional
    - How often do you feel like you emotionally encounter God in this activity (i.e.: excited, happy, and repentant)? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of the emotional encounter with God in this activity? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe your emotional encounter with God during this activity?
  - o Spiritual
    - How often do you feel like you spiritually encounter God in this activity (i.e.: clearly something different from your human emotions)? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of the spiritual encounter with God in this activity? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe your encounter with the Holy Spirit during this activity?
  - o Relational
    - How often do you feel like you personally relate to God in this activity (i.e.: like you relate to another person)? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of this personal interaction with God in this activity? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe your relational encounter with God during this activity?
- Activity 1 - Transformation
  - o Intellectual
    - How often do you feel like you experience a change of mind in this activity (i.e.: changes to the way you understand things)? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of any change of mind in this activity? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe any change of mind you experience during this activity?
  - o Emotional
    - How often do you feel like you experience emotional transformation in this activity (i.e.: you feel differently about something or someone)? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of any emotional transformation? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe any emotional transformation during this activity?
  - o Spiritual
    - How often do you feel like you experience a spiritual transformation in this activity (i.e.: your connection with God or

interaction with the Holy Spirit becomes different)? Rarely, Often, Always
- How would you rate the significance of the spiritual transformation you experience in this activity? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
- Can you describe any spiritual transformation you experience during this activity?
  - o Relational
    - How often do you feel like your relationship with God is transformed during this activity (i.e.: how you relate to God as a person)? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of this relational transformation? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe any transformation in your relationship with God during this activity?
- Activity 1 - Mission
  - o Intellectual
    - How often do you feel like this activity helps you understand your Christian mission better (i.e.: your work for God and how you do)? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of this help on your understanding of your mission? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe how this activity helps you understand your Christian mission?
  - o Emotional
    - How often do you feel strong emotions about your Christian mission during this activity? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of these feelings on your participation in your Christian mission? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe how this activity makes you feel about your Christian mission?
  - o Spiritual
    - How often do you feel spiritually empowered for your mission in this service? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the value of this spiritual empowerment? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe how this activity spiritually empowers you for your Christian mission?
  - o Relational
    - How often do you feel this activity influences how you do relationships? Rarely, Often, Always
    - How would you rate the significance of this influence on how you create relationships? Negligible, Moderate, Profound
    - Can you describe how this activity influences the way you do relationship as part of your Christian mission?

Provide participant the opportunity to add anything to the data

Provide participant the opportunity to ask any questions or address any concerns

Closeout research relationship

APPENDIX C: RELIGIOUS LIFE ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnographic survey – Religious Life

Schedule of services/activities	Aspects of religious life	Participant Responses
Activity 1	Agenda and/or program of this activity	
	Venues and spaces	
	Who is in charge?	
	What is their role?	
	Religious acts	
Activity 2	Agenda and/or program of this activity	
	Venues and spaces	
	Who is in charge?	
	What is their role?	
	Religious acts	
Activity 3	Agenda and/or program of this activity	
	Venues and spaces	
	Who is in charge?	
	What is their role?	
	Religious acts	

APPENDIX D: SPIRITUAL OUTCOMES ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnographic survey – Spiritual Outcome

Schedule of services/activities	Aspects of spirituality	Human aspects	Participant Descriptions	Rate the significance	Rate the regularity
Activity 1	Encounter (Christ with us)	Intellectual		Negligible / Moderate / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Emotional		Negligible / Moderate / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Spiritual		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Relational		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
	Transformation (Christ in us)	Intellectual		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Emotional		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Spiritual		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Relational		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
	Mission (Christ through us)	Intellectual		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Emotional		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Spiritual		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always
		Relational		Negligible / Substantial / Profound	Rarely / Often / Always

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