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Word and Deed:
An Integrated Approach to Discipleship for a
Missional Change in a City Congregation

A Thesis
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of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Ministry
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by
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**I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father
Judge Isidro Carrasca Gumtang (1928-2000)**

and

**my spiritual mentor Rey Anastacio Campo Yap (1951-1996)
who shared 15 years of his earthly life with me.**

They will always be there.

ABSTRACT

This project introduces a missional approach to discipleship that balances two components, Word and Deed, or integrating Scripture study and community service. The strategy aims to contribute to the spiritual formation of congregants as they simultaneously engage their neighbours. Using action research, sixteen members from a small congregation in Toronto were invited to participate and to view their life as a context for mission. They studied Matthew's gospel and reflected on the *missio Dei*, God's missionary character and initiative to redeem all of creation, as modeled by Christ's life. Then they partnered with several agencies to initiate community service, which included a bread ministry, creation care, home visitation and evangelism. There is conclusive evidence that combining study of God's Word with engagement is an effective discipleship tool in the spiritual formation of city congregants.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Historical Background	1
Ministry Context	3
Start of Discipleship Series	3
Inreach-Outreach Polarity	4
Managing the Polarity	5
The Opportunity at Thorncliffe Community.....	5
Response to the Opportunity: Word and Deed Project.....	6
Significance of the Project.....	7
Significance to the Researcher.....	7
Significance to Churches in an Urban Setting	8
Key Terms.....	9
CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.....	12
Missional Discipleship in Matthew's Gospel	12
Christology: Portrait of the Son of David, King of the Jews, Emmanuel	12
Discipleship: A Call to Participate in Christ's Mission	13
Mission is God's.....	15
Discipleship: The Church's Missionary Obligation	16
Community: The Context of Discipleship	18
Good News and Good Works: Inseparable.....	19
Summary	23
CHAPTER THREE: PRECEDENT LITERATURE AND CASES	25
Developing a Missional Framework.....	25
The Church: Transitioning to a Missional Era.....	26
Action Steps for a Missional Move	28
The Church: A Spirit-filled People Gathered and Sent	29
Three Related Research Projects	30
Bown's "Change to Missional Congregation" Project	30
Eckert's "Service Learning" Project.....	33
Thomas' "Missional Approach to Discipleship" Project.....	34
Six Reflective Questions for Neighbourly Missional Engagement	35
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT	37
Action Research Defined	37
Rationale for Narrative Inquiry.....	38
Action Research: Word and Deed Project	38

Planning and Construction of Discipleship Curriculum	39
Selection of Participants and Communication Strategy.....	41
Project Implementation in January: Word Component	42
Launching of Bread Ministry in February: Deed Component	42
New Service Projects in April: Deed Component	44
Implementing with Partner Agencies: Deed Component	45
Reflection and Observation through Narrative Inquiry	46
Evaluation of Interviews and Shared Reflections	47
Facilitator, Resource Persons and the Official Board.....	48
Facilitator and Resource Speakers	49
The Official Board of TPUC.....	49
Ethical Review	50
Approval of Research Proposal	50
Roles of the Researcher	50
Management of Potential Risks	51
 CHAPTER FIVE: OUTCOMES AND INTERPRETATIONS	53
Sources of Data.....	53
Profile of Participants	54
Age Profile	54
Language Facility.....	54
Faith Journey.....	55
Responses to Pre-launch Survey	56
Bread Ministry: Engaging the Community.....	58
Observation: Impact of Word Study on Bread Ministry.....	60
The Action Research Cycle Continues	60
Creation Care, Home Visits, Prayer and Evangelism.....	61
Reflections: Impact of the Project.....	62
Researcher's Observations and Reflections.....	64
 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS	66
The Power of God's Word.....	66
The Power of Group Reflections	67
The Power of the <i>Missio Dei</i>	68
The Power of Partnership in Inter-Cultural Engagement	69
The Power of Intersecting Spiritual Practices.....	70
The Power of Prayer and Divine Intervention	71
Further Research: Evaluating Strengths and Weaknesses	72
Next Steps	73
Researcher's Final Thoughts.....	73
 APPENDICES	75
APPENDIX A: Word & Deed: An Integrated Approach To Discipleship Curriculum for 20 Sessions.....	76

APPENDIX B: Letter of Invitation to Participate in “Word and Deed” Project	111
APPENDIX C: Letter of Information on Research Project	113
APPENDIX D: Consent Form	114
APPENDIX E: Questionnaire before Service Learning	115
APPENDIX F: Ethical Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel within the United Church of Canada	116
REFERENCE LIST	119

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: Movements of the missio Dei (<i>cf</i> Bosch 2011, 399)	16
Table 1: Age of participants.....	54
Table 2: Religious affiliation background of participants before attending TPUC	55
Table 3: Pre-launch survey responses Questions 1–4A (January 2017).....	56
Table 4: Pre-launch survey responses Questions 4B–5 (January 2017).....	58
Table 5: Notes on Bread Ministry by apartment buildings.....	59
Table 6: Notes on Bread Ministry by community groups.....	59
Table 7: Indicators of spiritual growth based on responses	63

All Bible references in this project-thesis are from *The New Women's Devotional Bible: New International Version*. 2006. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Used by Permission.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

This project Word and Deed was a derivative of the Discipleship Series at Thorncliffe Park United Church (TPUC). The researcher began this series in 2015 after graduating with a Master of Divinity in Global Mission and Intercultural Studies at Tyndale Seminary and started her ministry as Chair of the Christian Development Committee at TPUC. A text from Matthew's gospel inspired this project: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16; Unless otherwise indicated all Bible references are to, *The new women's devotional Bible, The new international version 2006*).

Historical Background

As a faith community, TPUC belongs to the United Church of Canada (UCC) and understands its position in the denomination's diverse history. The UCC began on June 10, 1925 in Toronto, Ontario when four denominations, each with its own history, entered into a union: the Methodist Church of Canada, the

Congregational Union of Canada, seventy per cent of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and the General Council of Union Churches.

“The movement for church union began with the desire to coordinate ministry in the vast Canadian northwest and for collaboration in overseas missions” (United Church of Canada 2016). This historical note in the 1920s is important to appreciate in that there has been an effort in the UCC to spread the Gospel and also serve communities both in Canada and abroad.

As the denomination continued to expand in Toronto, Thorncliffe Park United started in 1962 with ninety-four Charter founding members and grew to 200 members in the ‘70s. The congregational size stayed about the same in the ‘80s and ‘90s. A new minister took over in 2000 as the demographic profile of the community also changed. Church attendance has declined since then. Today, an average of fifty people occupy the pews, which is one-fourth of its seating capacity.

Senior congregants who have lived here since their youth have recalled the vibrant presence of this “Chapel in the Park,” an endearing name for TPUC in the ‘60s. It used to have a drop-in centre for seniors. United Church Women (UCW) and the community together maintained the nearby gardens of Leaside, Seton, and Burgess parks. Like other city folk, their stories tell how quickly this neighbourhood has changed; the church has had fifteen ministers in thirty-eight years (1962 - 2000). In the next decade, the congregants had minimal contact with new neighbours, who are mostly Muslim immigrants. The Matthew 5:14-16

passage echoes what several long-time members have expressed: the church must continue to be a light to Thorncliffe community of East York, now part of Toronto.

Ministry Context

Like a city on a hill, TPUC sits on an elevated area of the Don Valley. The researcher settled in Thorncliffe as an immigrant and became a member of the congregation. Since 2009, she has observed how leaders struggled to keep the number of congregants from declining in the midst of changing population. Most members' involvement was limited to attending worship services and holding fund raising projects. Many of the public activities of the church were inwardly focused. By 2011, the Sunday school ceased due to lack of teachers and students. Church discipleship activity had greatly diminished.

Start of Discipleship Series

The researcher took leave from the church for two years to fulfill a seminary internship in Dokis First Nation, Ontario and to complete overseas mission trips to Honduras and the Philippines. Those two years of mission work with another faith organization were pivotal in shaping the vision for this project at TPUC. Upon her return, a Discipleship Series (DS) was begun consisting of the Alpha Course: Explore Life (2015), Growing in Christ (2015), Prayer and Power Clinic (2016), *Lectio Divina* or Holy Reading (2016), and others. In conversations with DS participants, church leaders heard of the need to be a missional church, to

balance knowing God with an understanding of the mission of God (*missio Dei*) by putting faith in action, to connect with the Thorncliffe community and engage their neighbours.

Church leaders, together with the researcher, began to consider key questions. Had the church become focused only on meeting the needs of its members? Should members reach out to those beyond the church walls? How could the church light shine in Thorncliffe, as Jesus Christ commanded in Matthew 5:14-16? What did it mean to be and to grow as disciples of Jesus? These questions continued to surface during the progression of the Discipleship Series.

Inreach-Outreach Polarity

Like other city churches, TPUC had been attempting to thrive in the midst of its changing demographics. In a leadership meeting about the use of dwindling resources, there was an evident tension between two opposing forces called “inreach” and “outreach.” Inreach is a focus on pastoral care for the physical and spiritual health of one’s own members, while outreach is focused on sending out members for evangelism with social action or service to others. These forces could be considered a polarity. Oswald and Johnson defined polarity as a pair of truths that are together needed to complete the whole truth: “When faith communities struggle between two poles, leaders must manage the polarity and recognize that both sides are needed to experience the whole truth. When this

polarity is well managed, individuals and congregations are most faithful to the callings we have received from God” (Oswald and Johnson 2010, 113).

Managing the Polarity

One way to manage the polarity of inreach (focus on members’ growth needs) and outreach (focus on engaging the community) is through integration using a service learning approach in discipleship. In this project, the objective was to integrate spiritual formation through Scripture study merged with social action, and to determine if the strategy would impact the participants in their growth by developing a missional mindset.

The Opportunity at Thorncliffe Community

The Thorncliffe community of Toronto today has a significant population of refugees and new immigrants. Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office (TNO), a semi-government agency claims that,

Thorncliffe Park has always been a first stop for newcomers to Canada. Built in the 1960s, it was a Planned Community of the Don Valley in Toronto East for families of the baby boomer generation. Designed for only 12,000 residents, its population has risen to 20,000. (Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office 2015)

Based on 2012 Census, Islam is the major religion of residents. One-fourth of the population do not speak English at their homes.

Twenty-eight per cent of the residents speak a language at home other than English, with the most frequent being Urdu and Gujarati. Yet, English is the most popular language of social interaction. Based on the 2012 Census, the most visible minority groups are: South Asian – 63.5%, Filipino – 21.2%, African-American – 4.1%, Arab/West Asian – 3.4%, and Chinese – 1.4%. (Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office 2016)

In *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World*, Thorncliffe is described as one of the thriving, successful arrival cities of the world in our generation. The term *arrival city* refers to places that “propel people into the core life of the city and send support back to the next wave of arrivals” (Saunders 2010, 18). A TNO director described Thorncliffe as morphing from a transient zone to one where people want to be. “This is not a place where people feel stuck. It’s a place where they feel comfortable. Thorncliffe is unmatched for its sense of community” (Saunders 2010, 315).

A sense of community is achieved when members feel they belong. It is a perception that members matter to one another and to the group. It is also a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together with a mutual respect for each other in spite of their differences.

Response to the Opportunity: Word and Deed Project

This sense of community at Thorncliffe could open opportunities for engagement to TPUC congregants. It led the researcher to explore the question: *would a six-month service learning initiative, which integrates a reflective study of God’s Word and a ministry of engaging one’s neighbours, influence a person’s spiritual growth?* The six-month duration was deemed sufficient for the study of *missio Dei* theology as reflected in the life and ministry of Christ in Matthew’s gospel, and the participants’ initiative to engage their neighbours. Chapters Two and Three of this document provide the theological rationale and resources for the

project. A presentation and analysis of participants' projects and reflections in Chapters Four and Five show that an integrated discipleship had an impact on the spiritual formation of city congregants. Conclusions are summarized in Chapter Six.

Significance of the Project

The Word and Deed project is significant to the researcher and to churches, which are looking to build discipleship and reach out into their communities.

Significance to the Researcher

In 2009, there was no organized Sunday school, home Bible study, prayer meeting, or a discipleship group that reached out to the Thorncliffe community as I observed. I have had the privilege of building strong bonds with the congregants when I coordinated the Worship and Music ministry, and later the Christian Development Committee (CDC). Since then, I have been desiring to see the members grow in the knowledge of Scriptures, participate in the *missio Dei*, and to be identified as disciples of Jesus together in how we live in community and serve others. My initial plan was to start an Alpha program and to have a weekly Bible study. This plan was soon put on hold as it became apparent that the congregation was not quite ready. In 2011 while at seminary, I felt a burden to lead a few members in the study of God's Word, integrating knowledge with praxis, praying for and engaging our neighbours. The opportunity arrived when I

became Chair of Christian Development in 2014. This project allowed me to initiate service learning with a group. It has enriched my perspective on integrated discipleship and the missional impact it would have on a congregation in an urban setting like Thorncliffe in Toronto. It was hoped that the conclusions drawn from this research would guide TPUC's "visioning" conversations into the future.

Significance to Churches in an Urban Setting

The Word and Deed project has shown two things:

1. that it can be a missional model for a city congregation even in a fast-changing urban landscape; and
2. that transformation is more effective when an integrated approach to discipleship is employed in connecting the church to the community which it serves (see Chapter 6).

As congregants become more confident of God's Word and the *missio Dei*, they experience spiritual growth. Consequently, a desire grows in them to participate in God's redeeming work in the world in their generation. While the focus of this project was serving the Thorncliffe community of long-time residents, new immigrants and the recent arrival of Syrian refugees, other service initiatives could be set up as congregants become active in making disciples. The model of integrated discipleship, combining Word and Deed, could be used to have an impact when Christians consider their lives as an opportunity for mission. This integrated discipleship model would be transferable to other churches using

their own contexts and would encourage a missional perspective for city churches that are faced with challenges of changing urban demographics.

Key Terms

Missio Dei is a Latin term for the sending movement of the Trinity.

This project takes the concept in its broadest sense – God is a sending God and moves people to respond and participate in the divine work of redeeming all of creation. David Bosch described it as the source of remembering...

That neither the church nor any other human agent can ever be considered the author or bearer of mission. Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate. (Bosch 2011, 402)

Christopher Wright defines it as the missionary initiative that comes from the Father who sends the Son who sends the Holy Spirit. All three Persons of the Trinity send the church to the world (Wright 2006, 62).

Discipleship has many aspects. This paper has taken the view that discipleship at its core is a life-long process of identification with Christ and the *missio Dei*. Kristopher Norris compares this process of identity to a pilgrim's journey. It is “a journey *to* God and *of* God's mission that ultimately ends with the reign of God, with all things made new” (Norris 2012, 4). Randolph Ferebee agrees with Norris that discipleship happens within the context of a community (Ferebee 2012, 47). Discipleship is “a journey of transformation, a sacred journey with others toward God's ultimate redemption of all humanity” (Norris 2012, 5). The objective is to transform people to a Christ-like character as they participate

together in God's mission. This transformation is the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of Jesus' disciples as they become powerful witnesses for Christ (Acts 1:8).

Spiritual practices are necessary for transformation. ***Integrated discipleship*** is the description used here to describe the linking of certain spiritual engagement such as the study of God's Word, personal and group reflection, prayer, fellowship and service to others. Matthew Eckert's view is that these practices need not be compartmentalized in their engagement. Integrated discipleship means "allowing the spiritual disciplines to simultaneously build on each other and that those who pursue discipleship are missional leaders in our churches today" (Eckert 2012, 17).

Discipleship Series refers to the ongoing ministry at Thorncliffe Park United led by the Christian Development Committee (CDC) that aims to develop missional awareness. CDC started the series in 2015 with the Alpha Course and continues to plan, implement and evaluate strategies for spiritual growth. One of the requirements for participants in the Word and Deed project of 2017 is attendance in at least one Discipleship Series from 2015 to 2016.

Alpha Course started in the Anglican Church, it is an evangelistic program which seeks to introduce the basics of the Christian faith through a ten-week format of talks and open discussions. The original organisers in the United Kingdom described it as "an opportunity to explore the meaning of life" (Gumbel 2006) It was used as the first course in TPUC's Discipleship Series.

Official Board refers to TPUC's leadership circle, which is composed of the minister (*ex-officio* member), all chairpersons of different committees and five directors who are elected during the Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) every February.

Christian Development Committee (CDC). In 2015, the Christian Education and Nurture Committee, which supervised the Sunday school before, was renamed or replaced by the CDC with a broader scope. It is composed of a Chairperson elected during the ACM. The members of the CDC are nominated by the Chair and elected by the congregation.

CHAPTER TWO:

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

For almost two decades, TPUC has been challenged to stay in touch with its neighbourhood. Changes in the urban landscape such as the steady flow of immigrants, and in church organization, the turnover of its ministers, contribute to the situation. Word and Deed, an integrated discipleship approach, focused on congregants who are willing to engage. Participation in this project has helped them become missional leaders to move this city church from being inwardly focused to developing a missional perspective. The researcher chose to use the gospel of Matthew in the Word component, and acts of service to Thorncliffe community as Deed component.

Missional Discipleship in Matthew's Gospel

Matthew's gospel was chosen for the Word component due to its theology of discipleship that revolves around the life and ministry of Christ.

**Christology: Portrait of the Son of David,
King of the Jews, Emmanuel**

Matthew's gospel introduces the genealogy of Jesus, stressing that he is the royal Son of David whom Israel was expecting (Matthew 1:1, 6) and was

prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 9:6). As son of Abraham, his Jewish heritage was directly mentioned. At the beginning of the gospel, the magi from foreign lands came to Bethlehem in search for the newborn king of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-2). In the infancy narrative, the mission of Jesus was clearly stated in the work of the Trinity. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary's virgin womb. As God's Son, he was sent by the Father to save his people from their sins. He shall be called Emmanuel, which means "God is with us" (Matthew 1:20-23). These titles of Jesus in the gospel point to his mission, which was to proclaim the good news of salvation and the arrival of the kingdom of heaven. After establishing the genealogy and person of Christ, Matthew's gospel focuses on its central theme of discipleship.

Discipleship: A Call to Participate in Christ's Mission

After choosing his first few followers, Jesus delivered his sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7). He began to describe the kingdom of heaven and what it means to be part of it. Matthew's gospel shows that Christ integrated the spiritual disciplines of engagement. Authentic discipleship requires putting one's faith to action. Jesus teaches, "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Discipleship is lived not individually but with others in community. Hence the gospel deals with authentic relationships in God's kingdom and stresses the necessity for mercy, love and forgiveness (Matthew 5:23-25).

J.R. Woodward wrote that throughout his ministry, Jesus would invite people into God's kingdom, which was a new social order that he inaugurated (Woodward 2012, 114). Missional discipleship is a call for people to participate in advancing God's reign as they multiply disciples, groups, ministries and churches (Woodward 2012, 123). Interestingly, it is in Matthew's gospel that Christ first mentioned the church (*ecclesia*) or the assembly of people he has gathered for God's kingdom (Matthew 16:6).

Bosch writes, "The theme of discipleship is central to Matthew's gospel and to Matthew's understanding of the church and mission" (Bosch 2011, 74). He argues that the Matthean paradigm has unique elements that make it a gospel of missional discipleship (Bosch 2011, 81-84).

Discipleship is centred on God's mission. Jesus demonstrated this when he first sent out his twelve disciples to preach the good news of salvation to the house of Israel (Matthew 10). Later he appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go (Luke 10:1). Just as the Father sent his Son to save us, Jesus sends his disciples to participate in the redeeming work of God.

Matthew's gospel concludes with the Great Commission. Christ sent out his first disciples to the world: "Go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19a)." While disciple-making is a command originally for the Twelve to fulfill and pass on to the next generations of disciples, it must be emphasized that God is the missionary, and the *missio Dei* is his.

Mission is God's

The mission of God does not refer to any church activities that are parts of the missions program but Bosch described it as “Mission ... being derived from the very nature of God” (Bosch 2011, 399). The Latin term for it is *missio Dei*, that is, “God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, (it is) the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate” (Bosch 2011, 10). The Church has a history only because God has given to it the privilege of participating in his own mission. It is only from this point of view that its history can be seen to have a meaning and a purpose. The classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another movement: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world (Bosch 2011, 399). There are three movements in the *missio Dei* theology or doctrine illustrated by this diagram (Figure 1).

Diagram 1 illustrates the Triune God as the missionary and the *missio Dei* gives purpose and meaning to the church. God is the source of power and authority to send the Church into the world and participate in redeeming it. Bosch suggested in the light of *missio Dei*, that the church's mission or *missio ecclesiae* should be continually renewed and re-conceived to show God's love in every context, in every culture and in every generation. Our understanding of *missio Dei* informs us how mission ought to be in the twenty-first century. Thus, the church's

role is best understood as our participation and a response to God's initiative (Bosch 2011, 400).

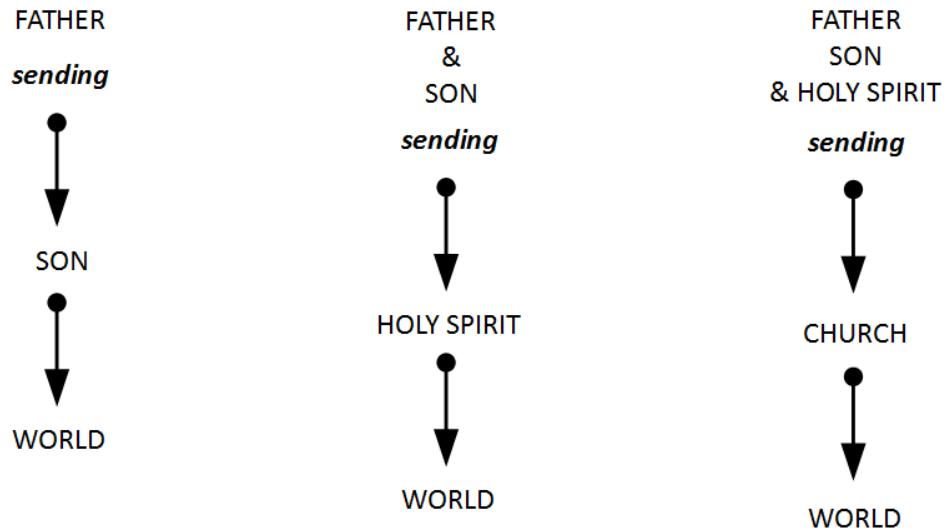


Figure 1: Movements of the *missio Dei* (*cf* Bosch 2011, 399)

Discipleship: The Church's Missionary Obligation

The Great Commission is the mandate of the church to make disciples of all tribes and nations in every generation until Christ returns.

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV])

Christ's first disciples were also called apostles (sent ones) because they were sent by God to help create a discipleship ethos and to call people to participate in God's kingdom. The gift of apostleship is “helping others

understand and live out their calling as sent people in the world for the sake of the world” (Woodward 2012, 126).

The will of God is and always has been to seek out, gather together and transform all people who are alienated by sin from God and fellow humans. It was embodied in Christ and will be completed in Christ; God also sends forth the Holy Spirit. “By the Holy Spirit the Church, experiencing God’s active love, is assured that God will complete what he has set his hand to in the sending of his Son” (Goodall 1953, 241). Those who are sought out, gathered together and transformed by Christ are the Church. As the Body of Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission. “There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission to the world” (Thomas 1995, 103).

Darrell Guder believes that the responsibility of the Church today has both local and global aspects as a community that re-presents the reign of God. Central to this theology is a shift from the old Christendom model of a church to a missional one. The Christendom model is a church-centred understanding of mission, which was an activity or a program to spread the gospel, establish European-looking churches, and inculcate the benefits of Western civilization in needy cultures. Alan Hirsch also calls this view as “the attractional model which assumes that to bring people to Jesus we need to first bring them to church. This mode of engagement was birthed during the Christendom period of history when the church was perceived as a central institution of society” (Hirsch 2006, 275).

On the other hand, a missional-incarnational view of discipleship operates on the assumption that making disciples is a process, not a church program. “Discipleship takes place when we are with people like Jesus was with the Twelve; it becomes personal and powerful in the informal daily rhythm of life” (Hirsch 2006, 127). The emphasis is on a theocentric paradigm of mission based upon *missio Dei*, the ”mission of God.” In this sense, “mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation” (Guder 1998, 4).

The Church exists because God is a missional God, and is itself God’s sent people. When the Church is missional, Jesus is the primary focus of all endeavours, and it is the Holy Spirit that fills and fuels the actions and interactions of the Church. Guder notes that this communal reality encourages holy living, mutual support, and sacrificial service; what the New Testament calls *koinonia*. The Church plays a central role in developing this culture. The objective is to create a culture that represents the *koinonia* or fellowship. In doing so, the Church develops an alternate way of life that reflects the kingdom of God (Guder 1998, 145).

Community: The Context of Discipleship

Lois Barrett builds upon this theology by expanding the vision of the Church as the messenger to the world. She writes:

The Church exists as community, servant, and messenger of the reign of God in the midst of other kingdoms, communities, and powers that attempt to shape our understanding of reality. The world of those kingdoms, communities, and powers often opposes, ignores, or has other priorities than the reign of God. To that world, the missional church is the apostle – sent out on behalf of the reign of God. (Guder 1998, 110)

To fulfill this mandate, congregants must recognize that ultimately the Church's mission is God's, and that discipleship aims to transform people into a family of faith. Their participation in making disciples can be manifested in “being Christ to their community” (the incarnational model of Christ).

Ferebee postulates that discipleship is not our own doing as it is making space for God to act upon us, in us and through us. “One of the essential ways we make space for God is to interact with the story of who God is, who we are and how God is present in our community” (Ferebee 2012, 47). He defines a disciple as a life-long learner. “Because of our need for continual renewal and refreshment, and God is always present, we never leave the posture of being Christ’s disciple. This sets loose in us the desire to align ourselves with the story of God’s love engaging the world” (Ferebee 2012, 47). Thus, he concurs with Norris that discipleship happens in community.

Good News and Good Works: Inseparable

In this project, a balance between Word and Deed is at the centre of an integrated discipleship framework. In 1989, an international conference sponsored by the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization (LCWE) was held in Manila, Philippines. It was attended by 3,000 Protestants who affirmed that good

news, which is the proclamation of the Word, and good works or social action are inseparable.

Called the Manila Manifesto, the twenty-one affirmations of the document included the urgent need for churches, mission agencies and other Christian organizations to cooperate in evangelism and social action. The Manila Manifesto was quoted by Ronald Sider when he wrote about the contextual incarnational model of Jesus. According to Sider, genuinely biblical evangelism provides a theological framework that shows evangelism is inseparable from social action (Sider 1993, 173).

Genuine evangelism will be an incarnational, contextual evangelism that applies the gospel to the whole context of the person addressed. Jesus did not throw words at sinners from afar. He lived among them and modeled how the Good News of the kingdom brings radical transformation of the status quo. (Sider 1993, 174)

Sider believes that Biblical evangelism promotes social action, and social action has an evangelistic dimension (Sider 1993, 179). In another book, Sider challenges the imbalance he observes in most evangelical churches.

As evangelicals we claim to embrace the Bible as our final authority. One of the most common themes in the Scriptures is that God and his faithful people have a special concern for the poor. Why this blatant contradiction between belief and practice? (Sider 2005, 22)

However, in some churches, there are attempts to care for others through social action; but often their actions are the only aspect to their engagement. Speaking about Christ and the good news to meet the needs of the heart is lacking. Clearly, the Word component isn't there.

A prevalent myth in many churches is that if you give non-Christians a chance to rub shoulders with Christians, they'll catch a dose of the gospel. This myth is sometimes used to justify not making any special effort to provide evangelism programs or training. It allows churches to feel that they are obeying the Great Commission just by doing good deeds for Christ's sake. (Sider 2002, 63)

A balanced view of the gospel of Jesus means that practical needs are met and that the message of salvation is proclaimed. This is also the theme of C. Rene Padilla, a theologian in Latin America. Padilla gives us a glimpse of the kind of discipleship that we need today – a missional one. He calls for "a new stress on Christian discipleship as involving the placing of the totality under the lordship of Jesus Christ" (Padilla 2010, 148).

He also emphasized the importance of forming a strong missional perspective in the life of a disciple. "It is not surprising that the more integrated and Biblical paradigm of mission should take time to be established" (Padilla 2005, 47). In addition, Padilla writes that in some circles, "The cross has lost its offense, since it simply points to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us but does not present a call to discipleship" (Padilla 2005, 40).

Then Padilla challenges church leaders to take a stand. "Pastoral work, therefore, must choose between a minority that accept the demands of the gospel and a consumer majority that is falsely committed to Christianity" (Padilla 2005, 75). Finally, he would agree that we need to embrace a new journey that will inevitably lead away from our comfort zones - or into the "borderlands" as Gary Nelson argues in *Borderland Churches*.

Nelson writes: “the borderland church understands that it is primarily a missional community of people being trained and equipped to live among the world as missionaries. Borderland Christians see their primary role as missionaries” (Nelson 2008, 132). Nelson quotes Rodney Clapp who prophetically calls for churches to know who they are.

I am arguing that the church should be distinctive, that it should live its own understanding as a community constituted and sustained by the lordship of Christ. And according to that very self-definition, the Church does not exist for itself, but for its mission and witness to the world on behalf of the kingdom. (Clapp 1996, 116)

Since the Word became flesh, the only possible communication of the gospel is that in which the gospel becomes incarnate in culture in order to put itself within the reach of people as cultural beings. To be incarnate means to be in-the-flesh real and in touch with the common man. Lesslie Newbigin explains:

If the gospel is to be understood, if it is to be received as something that communicates truth about the real human situation, if it is, as we say, to “make sense,” it has to be communicated in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols, which are meaningful to them. (Newbigin 1989, 141)

Padilla agrees with Newbigin that “All authentic communication of the gospel is patterned on Biblical communication and seeks to find a point of contact with people in their own culture” (Padilla 2005, 112).

Finally, the Apostle James reminds believers to integrate their faith with acts of good deeds toward a brother or a sister.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:14-17 [NIV])

Jesus modelled the approach of Word and Deed in his earthly ministry. He did not stay in one place to teach theoretical truths about God. Instead, he went about the towns and villages with his disciples and ministered to the needs of the people by teaching, healing, casting out demons and raising the dead. His disciples learned firsthand what was to combine Word and Deed. After Jesus had risen from the dead and sent them out, they too modelled this approach. And so the early Church in Acts 2:42-47 as followers of the Way, who were later called Christians, sold their property, shared their possessions and took care of other people's needs so that no one lacked anything.

Summary

With this theological framework, Word and Deed is a response to *missio Dei*'s invitation and call for TPUC congregants to grow in their discipleship and to make disciples among their neighbours. This project sought to be an integrated and missional approach to discipleship in the context of an urban community. With the involvement of selected members of the congregation, the project set out to combine Scripture study of discipleship and participation with the *missio Dei* by engaging with Thorncliffe neighbours. What that engagement would look like

in the six-month period would be shaped by the participants' observation of God's presence in the community and their prayerful waiting on the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER THREE:

PRECEDENT LITERATURE AND CASES

As this action research project was being developed, several resources became essential. This chapter explores how some resources inform a missional and integrated approach to discipleship. Also, three doctoral theses that are similar to this are presented here. Strengths and weaknesses of these resources are identified in light of the thesis of the Word and Deed project.

Developing a Missional Framework

A proper understanding of what Christian discipleship looks like and the characteristics of a missional mindset are important to this action research, set in an urban setting like Toronto where socio-political changes take place in a fast pace. This project posits that an integrated approach to discipleship is the key to developing a missional awareness among the participants.

In the Word and Deed project, a missional mindset means to be committed to God's reign through Scripture and practice. In the gospels, Jesus is calling his disciples to action, to respond to making God's kingdom a reality. A weekly study of the gospel of Matthew as the Word component taught the participants to view their life in God's kingdom. Jesus has ushered it in and calls his disciples in every

generation to live into its reality. God invites his people to live from the text called Scriptures. Hence, the Bible represents a call to action, not just a lesson to be studied.

Reggie McNeal writes, “For the Church, the Bible serves as a narrative to help the people understand God’s mission in the world and their role in it … and (the Bible) conveys God’s hopes for humanity, his dreams of how people should treat one another and what life in the kingdom looks like” (McNeal 2009, 27).

The mission of God is the unifying theme of the whole Scriptures, or what Christopher Wright calls the Bible’s grand narrative. “We could as meaningfully talk of the missional basis of the Bible as of the Biblical basis of mission” (Wright 2006, 29).

The Church: Transitioning to a Missional Era

Ferebee’s *Cultivating a Missional Church* has challenged churches in North America today to enter the missional era of the twenty-first century, and to assist their congregations in the transition “to move out of a place of privilege in the old Christendom model of church and move into this New Apostolic Era” (Ferebee 2012, 39). Alan Hirsch described the Church in the West as facing a massive adaptive challenge that constitute a threat to Christianity if it is still locked into the prevailing Christendom form with all its associated institutional rigidity (Hirsch 2006, 151).

The movement from the old Christendom model to a missional church is discussed in *Missional Renaissance* which describes a three-part transition (McNeal 2009). These three transitions are:

1. *From internal to external focus.* In Chapter Four, the author described the first transition as moving away from an internal focus toward an external focus, a deep community engagement that goes beyond doing charitable acts. It involves mission as a way of “being Church,” or being Christ in the world.
2. *From program development to disciple-making.* The next transition is discussed in Chapters Five and Six as a move from being program-driven to developing God’s people as disciples of Christ. Disciples are those who constantly seek growth in the spirit and can confidently discern God’s movement in the world and participate in it.
3. *From clergy (church-based leadership) to missional (kingdom-based) leadership.* This transition in Chapter Seven is from a clergy leadership to a missional leadership that continues to discern, to work for and to join the reign of God in their community. “A church-based leadership is oriented to maintenance and status quo; missional leadership is oriented toward the community where God is already present” (Ferebee 2012, 40). These three transitions are long-term goals that now inspire city churches like TPUC. This is the reason why Word and Deed project is focused on missional discipleship, not as a church program but as a way of life.

Action Steps for a Missional Move

Shaped by God's Heart by Milfred Minatrea offers concrete action steps to consider in a church's move to become missional (Minatrea 2004, 180). Some of these suggestions were considered or adapted by the participants in the Deed component of the project:

1. Compare the population of the congregation with that of the community to assess their effectiveness in penetrating the mission field
2. Acknowledge both their desire to connect with the community and their seeming inability to do so
3. Make a decision to offer resources (people or facilities) to community service providers
4. Keep communication going with other church members and deal with internal issues as they arise
5. Celebrate the arrival of new faces into the church facilities, establishing relationships with many of them
6. Abandon forms and structures whose continuance is done from a sense of obligation
7. Encourage "what if we..." discussions and incorporate new ways of being church into practice
8. Accept any failure as a step toward success, and keep trying

The Church: A Spirit-filled People Gathered and Sent

Darrell Guder's book inspired this project. *The Missional Church* (Guder 1998) brought together a team of theologians who would set the vision for a missional church in the North American context. The most helpful sections for the Word and Deed project were the two explanations of the missional vocation of the Church grounded in the Triune God and cultivating communities of the Holy Spirit.

First, the concept of missional vocation requires understanding the nature of the Church. Guder quotes the definition by David Bosch to describe the local church as “a community, a gathered people, brought together by a common calling and vocation to be a sent people” (Bosch 2011).

Reframing the missional responsibility in every cultural context situate the church as “called and sent to represent the reign of God” (Bosch 2011, 77). The local church is to be the community that lives under the sovereignty of God, and the lordship of Christ. When the church is living in this manner, then Jesus is the focus of all missionary endeavours. From this theological framework the local church can be the “sign and foretaste” of the reign of God, fulfilling our missional vocation (Bosch 2011, 101).

Second, the missional church should be filled with the Holy Spirit. The power of the Spirit fuels the actions and interactions of the church. Justice and compassion are central to the reign of God. The church develops an alternate way of life that reflects God’s kingdom. Baptism, gratitude and generosity, mutual

accountability, discernment, and hospitality are practices identified to cultivate a missional community of the Holy Spirit (Guder 1998, 159-181). These characteristics testify to the reign of God, leading the church to become a vital witness to it. This is a foundational theological text that establishes the vision for a missional church, expecting the modern-day reader to reflect on the cultural nuances necessitating a missional response. While some practical steps are offered by the authors for the North American context, the strength of this text is based in a deep reflection on God's mission, a realistic exploration of current circumstances, and a clear invitation to action.

Guder is clear that mission is not about church growth or church health. It is primarily about the kingdom of God. If the intention of the missional vocation is to live as people who are “called and sent to represent the kingdom or reign of God, leaders will need to translate the content of missional church into daily ministry” (Guder 1998, 77).

Three Related Research Projects

Three related doctoral research projects within the North American context helped to visualize the process for the Word and Deed project.

Bown’s “Change to Missional Congregation” Project

The first research project we will review is Jessie Bown’s 2012 *A strategy to move from a traditional church to a missional congregation: An experiment in*

implementing the Roxburgh Missional Change Model in a Newfoundland and Labrador United Church (Bown 2012).

Bown's project within the denomination of the United Church of Canada (UCC) focused on moving a traditional church to being a missional congregation. He implemented the Missional Change Model (MCM) at Victoria United Church in Newfoundland and Labrador within eight months. The MCM developed by Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk was designed to assist a congregation in implementing change from the members up to the church leadership.

As a methodology, MCM incorporates Action Research and Appreciative Inquiry. Roxburgh and Romanuk describe the MCM at different stages where a congregation progresses from missional awareness to a better understanding of *missio Dei*, then to an evaluation of their contexts, to missional experimentation and finally a solid commitment to find new ways of being Christ's presence (incarnational) to the community when new times call for innovations. In the language of the authors, the MCM helps the church to move from a performative reactive zone to an emergent culture (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 84-102).

For Bown to determine the missional readiness at Victoria United, a congregational 360 assessment and a pastor/leader 360 assessment were completed as part of the initial stages. An analysis of the congregational 360 revealed that his church was prepared to engage the missional discussion while the pastor 360 showed a trust in the pastor to lead missional change. Then the implementation of the MCM occurred over an eight-month period. Fifty people

met once a month to hear missional teaching, to talk, to listen to and to discuss what is a missional church. In the process, missional awareness and understanding was created. From there, the participants explored what they could do to become acquainted with the neighbourhood of Victoria United Church and be the presence of Christ. As a result, nine missional experiments were initiated involving twenty-five people.

Eight of those people wrote about their experiences. The missional experiments and experiences demonstrated that participants were motivated to move into their neighbourhood to be the presence of Christ. Bown concluded that the MCM has been an effective tool in leading a church into its neighbourhood and enabling it to grow in its missional identity.

There are some cases of UCC congregations that have moved from a traditional mindset to becoming missional. Two UCC congregations mentioned by Bown, which conducted missional experiments are Calgary Central United in Calgary, Alberta and Alderwood United Church in Toronto, Ontario. Bown also mentioned Wellington Square United in Burlington, Ontario led by Rev. Orville James. This church got involved with agencies that work to meet the needs of a wide range of organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Hands and Hearts for Africa (Bown 2012, 58).

Eckert's "Service Learning" Project

The second research project we'll review is Matthew Eckert's *Transformative Journeys: An 8-month engagement of integrated discipleship through service learning* (Eckert, 2012).

Eckert's project looked at the impact of an eight-month discipleship initiative following the pedagogical framework of service learning and used the integration of personal and group reflection, Scripture study, classroom learning about social concerns and hands-on service to marginalized people while partnering with non-profit organizations. The five issues or concerns that Eckert's church participated in were homelessness, refugees, unplanned pregnancy, disabilities and non-profit board of directors.

The initiative demonstrated significant formational impact including an understanding of one's spiritual gifts, an increased appreciation for the value of scripture and the realization that unresolved tensions are part of spiritual formation. Using narrative research, it gave participants the opportunity to express in their own words what their transformation looked like. It indicated that when various activities intersect each other, there is an increased formational effect. Eckert drew seven conclusions about service learning that were articulated with implications for the local church.

Thomas’ “Missional Approach to Discipleship” Project

The third related project-theses written within the North American context is *A missional approach to discipleship in the United Methodist Church* by Sara Thomas (Thomas 2014).

Thomas’ project introduced a missional approach to discipleship to two audiences: to her congregants in Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church (UMC) in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA and to members of the UMC with internet access who would participate in a fifty-day online experience of discipleship called “The Ultimate Adventure” (Thomas 2014, 84). Her approach was to integrate spiritual practices she calls a three-fold rhythm of Scripture, service, and celebration.

Thomas used one-day service opportunities called “Ignite Days.” Participants were provided a daily Scripture reading, written reflection from the Gospel of Matthew, a suggestion for serving, and an opportunity to debrief at the end of the day through a celebration question.

Her sermons on seven Sundays were focused on the weekly theme from “The Ultimate Adventure.” Contextualization is an important component to a missional approach to discipleship. Hence, the one-day service experiences focused on people connected to Hyde Park Community UMC. Some participants responded to the service challenge one time, others responded multiple times through the Reflection Sheet. Her objective of introducing a missional approach to discipleship was achieved in that individuals from multiple contexts and life

circumstances engaged in the three-fold rhythm through “Ignite Days” and “The Ultimate Adventure” (Thomas 2014, 86).

To take this process further, Thomas believes that assisting people in identifying ways they can serve in any stream of culture is necessary. This work has continued in a new context and was utilized in teaching students through an online course. Thomas concluded that refinement to online learning will enhance the ability to guide participants in contextually appropriate ways to take a missional approach to discipleship.

Word and Deed as an action research has a similar objective with the three theses - to lead congregants to a strategy that will develop an outward focus of service and engagement in an urban community. The difference is that in Word and Deed, the participants were the ones who conceptualized, planned and implemented their group projects. They also came up with their questions, weekly action points or deeds that would reveal or measure their engagement with the Thorncliffe neighbourhood (see Appendix A: Discipleship Curriculum).

Six Reflective Questions for Neighbourly Missional Engagement

Finally, an article by Karina Kreminski, an Australian missiologist and lecturer at Morling College in Sydney, influenced this research that one’s progress in missional spirituality can and must be measured through personal reflections. Adapted from Kreminski’s article (Kreminski 2017), these reflective questions

were considered by the Word and Deed participants as they wrote in their journal.

The six questions were:

1. How am I loving others in my Thorncliffe community?
2. How am I paying attention to the “least of these”, my city neighbours?
3. What faith conversations am I having?
4. With whom do I “break bread” or who do I invite to my dinner table?
5. How is God’s reign growing in our neighbourhood, and in Toronto?
6. Am I inviting people to join me in visioning God’s reign in this world?

The literature and three related cases discussed have provided significant resources for the development of a Discipleship Curriculum (see Appendix A) This component was integrated with community outreach projects allowing the participants to experience both Word and Deed in the context of the Thorncliffe community and their local church.

CHAPTER FOUR:

METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT

To introduce and evaluate an integrated approach to discipleship, this project, Word and Deed used the methodology of both Action Research (AR) and Narrative Inquiry (NI).

Action Research Defined

Action Research is a way of learning by doing or learning in action and is “intended to combine research, which is an exercise in producing knowledge, and action, which can contribute to or be derived from such knowledge; it is cyclical and is concerned with practices in social situations, more than developing a theory” (Hartas 2010, 131-132). The objective is “to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (Carr and Kempis 1986, 62). The continuous cycles are planning, acting, evaluating, and reflecting on what has been learned. “Action research is participatory and transformative; change does not come from the top down but through collaboration and negotiation in the community” (Coughlan and Brannick 2010, 9-10). Participants are able to ask questions that relate to their own community and culture (Martin 2001, 274). The

AR cycles of the Word and Deed project are discussed in this chapter: Planning and Construction, Implementation, Reflection and Observation, and Evaluation.

Rationale for Narrative Inquiry

Since the project has both researcher and participants interacting constantly in a weekly scripture study and community service engagement, resulting narratives are an important source of data during group reflection sharing.

By definition, Narrative Inquiry (NI) is "a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. Narrative inquiry is 'stories lived and told'" (Clandinin 2000, 20).

The methodology of NI allowed the Word and Deed participants to express experiences and reflections in their own words. It does not force them to fit into a list of pre-set words and phrases typical of quantitative research. In addition, narrative inquiry involves me as the researcher in the process. "Narrative recognizes that the researcher is part of the discussion. The stories of those being researched intersect with that of the researcher as they experience the journey jointly" (Eckert 2012, 64).

Action Research: Word and Deed Project

The following sub-sections describe how the cycles of AR were initiated and applied in the project. Its planning, preparation, implementation and

evaluation lasted for about a year commencing in September 2016 and in consultation with TPUC leaders.

Planning and Construction of Discipleship Curriculum

In September 2016, the project was presented to and approved by TPUC's Official Board in a regular meeting. The Chair of Christian Development provided details on the project's objectives. Because of their work with Muslims at Thorncliffe, Jesus Network (JN) was the partner agency suggested by the Board so that an initial meeting with JN leaders was set in October. Another meeting with Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office took place in November, which provided a database of the most recent census and demographic profile of Thorncliffe residents. In December 2016, construction of a discipleship curriculum began, which included a theological framework on *missio Dei* (see Figure 1); and lesson outlines of Matthew's gospel with each lesson ending with an assignment portion called Deed/Action Point for Reflection and/or Community Engagement. These Action Points were added later, or after each session and mutually agreed upon by the participants and me during project implementation in 2017.

Some of the review questions on Matthew's gospel were adapted from various discipleship curricula found in print and websites such as http://executableoutlines.com/matt_sg.htm (accessed on December 15, 2016).

In addition to Matthew's gospel, ten-minute video clips were chosen to supplement the curriculum. Those short clips were taken from three DVDs:

Becoming a Good Samaritan, hosted by John Ortberg (World Vision 2007); Michael Frost's *Being a Missional Church* (Frost 2007); and *Mission: God at Work, Faith in Action* directed by Steve Saint and Diane Becker (Saint and Becker 2004).

Becoming a Good Samaritan explores some aspects of the social justice component of the Gospel intended to speak to the generation of Millennials, born from 1981 to 2000. The collection of six sessions were designed to help churches, small groups and outreach organizations to inform, train and inspire individuals to put their faith in action. The specific video clip chosen for Word and Deed project was on "Tending to God's Creation: Why environment stewardship is Biblical and beneficial." It was produced by Zondervan for World Vision in 2007.

Being a Missional Church was a live streamed message of Michael Frost in 2007 to the plenary session of the Annual Presbyterian Global Conference. Frost spoke of three concepts: every person as *imago Dei*, the Church as *Corpus Christi* and *missio Dei* as the mission or sending of God.

Steve Saint, a missionary pilot and entrepreneur, with Diane Becker collaborated to produce several short video clips of mission organizations reaching out to native tribes and unreached peoples of the world. Only a few short clips were shown from *Mission: God at Work, Faith in Action* (Saint and Becker 2004).

From November to December 2016, development of teaching components continued. Lesson outlines were printed. Two city-based missionaries were

contacted to share narratives of what inner city mission looks like: a couple from Jesus Network for their ministry among Muslims in Thorncliffe, and a lady staff of Fight4Freedom, for their rehabilitative work among women who were former victims of sexual abuse and human trafficking in Toronto.

Selection of Participants and Communication Strategy

Of the weekly average of fifty-six congregants on a regular Sunday worship at TPUC, forty per cent have attended one or more Discipleship Series (DS) topics since 2015. These were the “candidates” for Word and Deed project. The Christian Development Committee based its pre-selection process on these criteria: their availability on a weekday for Word study, previous DS attendance indicating teachability, and a continued interest in personal growth and in trying out innovations like engaging the community. Letters of invitation with information and consent forms were sent to those who were pre-selected (see Appendices B, C and D).

The project was communicated using two strategies: by email and the announcement section for Discipleship Series in the printed bulletin distributed for the ten o’clock Sunday worship service. By eleven o’clock each Sunday, the people congregate in the Fellowship hall for Tea & Coffee hour. This time was used to connect with the participants before and during the launch of the project in January 2017. Twelve participants came during the first meeting, and four joined

in subsequent meetings, for a total of sixteen participants. They were asked to read the Gospel of Matthew before the chapter-by-chapter study commenced.

Project Implementation in January: Word Component

The Tuesday Scripture study lasted for twenty weeks from January to June 2017. The project launch began with welcoming of participants, orientation on objectives, and a brief overview of the Gospel of Matthew and the *missio Dei*. Participants were encouraged to write their personal reflections in their Growth Journal, or the 2017 Devotional Day Planner provided by a sponsor from Bible League of Canada. Sessions started with refreshments at 5:30 PM for those coming from work. Scripture study began at 6:00 PM and ended promptly at 7:15 PM. Although the curriculum served as a guide, questions and answers (Q&A) were part of the course (see Appendix A for Curriculum contents). The venue was the Seniors Lounge of Chapel Court Apartments adjacent to the church building.

Launching of Bread Ministry in February: Deed Component

When participants started the Word study, they did not yet have any community service in mind. An opportunity arose when the senior pastor of Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas (IEMELIF) in East York emailed an invitation for TPUC to take their assigned spot for day-old bread pickup at COBS bakery in Bloor St. West, Toronto. It was followed up by a phone call, “Come and I will explain to you this bread ministry.” Two participants,

intrigued by the pastor's use of the words "bread" and "ministry" together, went to meet him. The website of Cobs Bread revealed a global bakery network of over 700 locations with its first franchise in Canada in 2003. Known for its quality breads, Cobs' motto, "Bake today, sell today", tags itself as a community bakery. Cobs claims that their breads have no preservatives in them; what they sell each new day are baked early that same morning (Cobs Bread 2017). For those reasons, all unsold bread by 8:00 P.M. goes to charity like churches, shelters, etc. to be distributed free as soon as possible. The Filipino pastor shared that when his congregation got Cobs' free loaves, they were able to create an outreach program by distributing strategically to homes, schools and parishioners, especially to those in need. With this ministry, IEMELIF congregants were able to connect with their Danforth community, intentionally have faith conversations, pray for people's needs, share the gospel and invite others to worship God with them.

Word and Deed participants realized the potential of a bread ministry to reach out to their Muslim and other neighbours, especially refugees from Syria who arrived at Thorncliffe in November 2015 until February 2017. Dakshana Bascaramurty, a news writer, revealed that Costi Immigration Services, a settlement agency had recently housed twenty-eight government-sponsored refugee families from Homs, Syria in the Leaside Towers of Thorncliffe. That is approximately 150 refugees in those twin towers, just two out of the thirty-three apartment buildings of Thorncliffe where more privately-sponsored refugee families have been settled (Bascaramurty 2017).

Participants recalled in Matthew 14:13-21 that Jesus fed 5,000 men in Bethsaida with five loaves of bread and two fish; and in Matthew 15:29-39, 4,000 at Gerasenes. Bethsaida was a Jewish community while the Gerasene region was mostly Gentiles. The passage spoke to the participants how they can use Cobs bread to share God's love to all, regardless of race or faith.

By February 2, the Bread Ministry began. Eight participants were involved in collecting from the bakery, repacking the breads into fifty to 100 smaller packs and distributing them to needy families. The distribution strategy was to have a key contact person in each of the thirty-three apartment buildings, who would look for families who need to receive bread.

New Service Projects in April: Deed Component

From April to June 2017, more community projects were launched. Creation care, home visits, and prayers for the sick began as the bread ministry continued. Three city gardens are within 500-meter walking distance from TPUC: Burgess, Seton and Leaside Parks. In April, participants started creation care project through the cleanup of Burgess Park, reminiscing how in the 1960s the church was involved in beautifying those gardens. On a Saturday, they involved other church members and the community to collect litter in the park, distribute bread to families and passers-by, pray for and initiate conversations with neighbours and invite them to TPUC's community dinners in May and June. All these were held to introduce the church to new arrivals in town. Through these

service projects, Word and Deed participants were able to exercise missional leadership, speak about Christ to their neighbour-friends, visit or meet them at the nearby mall or in their homes, and engage people in faith conversations.

Implementing with Partner Agencies: Deed Component

Various agencies were leveraged for the Deed component of this project.

Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office (TNO), a semi-government agency connected with United Way, welcomes thousands of newcomers each year from more than a dozen countries (Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office 2017). A staff member provides data so that participants could know the population density of each of the apartment buildings. TNO provides updates about the demographic profile such as the language/s often used at home. This has enabled Jesus Network to prepare free Bibles in those languages. Two participants were able to give out Bibles in Urdu to a family that requested them.

Jesus Network (JN) began its inter-church or inter-denominational ministry to Muslims at Thorncliffe in 2007. JN hosts at least two dinner events annually for Muslims. In one event, JN introduced Word and Deed participants to families of new Syrian refugees who arrived here in 2015-2017.

Cobs Bread (CB) at Bloor Street West, Toronto provided packs of assorted fresh bread and pastry for free to TPUC on a weekly basis. When distributed, the CB packs bear an expiry date, a tag that says, “Compliments of Thorncliffe Park United Church” and an invitation to visit.

Muslims for Humanity Resource Centre and Food Bank or simply Muslim Food Bank (MFB), led by a mathematician and English tutor, assisted the participants in bread distribution. The MFB distributes goods twice a week both to Muslims and non-Muslims in the neighbourhood.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). There are two AA groups that meet at TPUC. Their leader, a church member, also assisted in the bread distribution to their own clientele at Thorncliffe.

City officials got involved, too. In April, the participants' clean-up of Burgess Park, a Creation Care project with their neighbours, was approved by Toronto Parks and Recreation office and assisted by local councillors. By partnering with community care organizations, Word and Deed participants were able to recover this sense of community engagement, and to be known once again as the little Chapel in the Park.

Reflection and Observation through Narrative Inquiry

Each week, participants reflected on the *missio Dei* and discipleship in Matthew's gospel, and closed the time in prayer for their community. In each session, participants shared their stories to the group, their challenges, insights and observations in the assignment or Deed Component/Action Point. Through narratives, personal transformation or change, if any, were noted.

A rhythm of activities was established throughout this project: The WORD Component on Tuesdays involved a Study on Matthew's gospel and

involved Personal Reflection, Group Reflection, Growth in knowledge, and Continuous Study on Discipleship. The Simultaneous DEED Components during the week involved the Bread Ministry and included Meet neighbours, Faith Conversations, and Engage; it also involved the Creation Care/ Other Projects which included Learning issues/needs, Praying for others, Engaging church and community, Growth in Character.

Evaluation of Interviews and Shared Reflections

The focus of the project was to explore how a six-month offering of a service learning experience would have an impact on each participant's spiritual formation. To measure this, a sample questionnaire was presented to them during the orientation and those who were willing to be interviewed signed the consent form (See Appendix B). After six months, ten of the sixteen participants volunteered for the post-project interview. From July to August, they shared with the researcher their reflections either from memory or read from journal entries. Some participants chose to email their reflections instead. These pre-project and post-project interview notes were kept confidential.

There were two rounds of interviews: the first was a survey in January 2017, before the Deed component took off on February 2nd, and the second was after the project ended in June 2017. Two participants went out of town at the end of the project, hence their responses to the questions were sent by email. I informed the interviewees that I will be taking down notes while listening, and

they would have an opportunity to review those notes. This process of data collection, coding and analysis took three steps.

The first step was to choose the venue of the interview where the participant would be most comfortable: either at their home, church, or office. Some preferred a phone interview. During this time, I listened and wrote notes in a logbook.

The second step was to show my notes from the interview to the participant if he/she would want to read them. In this process, some answers were clarified or expanded to add value before I finalized my data for coding and analysis.

The last step was coding or categorizing the responses to look at similarities and analyze if there was a trend. There are four big categories: A, B, C and D with sub-categories under each one. Category A responses were those which indicated growth through the Word component; Category B responses were those who experienced growth more through the Deed component; Category C were those who experienced growth through both Word and Deed; and category D were other different responses, if any. Details of the spiritual growth components are presented in Chapter Five.

Facilitator, Resource Persons and the Official Board

Aside from the participants, there are other stakeholders and agents that were utilized in this project.

Facilitator and Resource Speakers

As the Chair of Christian Development Committee, I facilitated the study on *missio Dei* and the gospel of Matthew. I also showed short missionary clips in DVDs. To share what mission is like, some missionaries were invited to speak. One couple from Jesus Network shared how they reach out to Muslims at Thorncliffe. Another missionary is a lady staff member of Fight4Freedom, a Canadian faith-based agency reaching out to women in Toronto who had been victims of sexual abuse and/or human trafficking. She has been recently assigned to set up a Fight4Freedom chapter in Asia based in Manila, Philippines and has started rehabilitative programs for women and youth.

The Official Board of TPUC

The church official board is an important stakeholder. Word and Deed project was approved in a meeting by the Unified Board of the Don Mills-Thorncliffe Park Pastoral Charge under the UCC Southeast Presbytery, Toronto Conference (Don Mills-Thorncliffe Park 2017). The Official Board of TPUC is composed of the Minister (*ex-officio*), five Directors and six Chairs of Committees: Finance, Building/Administration, United Church Women, Pastoral Care, Worship and Music, and Christian Development. The Tuesday sessions were directly supervised by the Chair of the Official Board who attended all meetings. The minister had been regularly informed of the Discipleship Series, particularly the Word and Deed project of 2017, and about the Bread Ministry.

Ethical Review

Word and Deed project has sought to adhere to the guidelines of both *The Ethical Standard of Practice for Ministry Personnel* of the United Church of Canada, which was adopted by the 38th General Council in 2012 (see Appendix F), and the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2) with core principles of Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare and Justice.

Approval of Research Proposal

The abstract and aims of this project were presented to the Official Board on September 19, 2016 at the minister's office. Then an “Application for Ethics Review of Student Research” was submitted to the Research Ethics Board (REB) of Tyndale Seminary. Attached with the application were a Letter of Information, Consent Form, and a questionnaire for “Word and Deed: An Integrated Approach for a Missional Change in a City Congregation.” The research project was approved by the Tyndale University College and Seminary REB on January 12, 2017.

Roles of the Researcher

Since the researcher is the Chair of Christian Development and a member of the Official board, a concerted effort was made to ensure that her position or authority was not used to coerce or manipulate participants in any way in the study. Since the congregation has less than 100 members in its current roster, the researcher has a close relationship with all participants. Together, they have been

attending worship services for many years and the Discipleship Series since 2015. To address the issues of conflict of interest and power, other members of the CDC chose and invited the participants to the project. Human rights and dignity of the person were protected in the undertaking of the project by not influencing their responses to the interview questions. Confidentiality of answers and privacy of the participants are of utmost importance. Hence, each respondent's name was assigned a pseudonym/number during the writing of the final report. The records are kept in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed once the project thesis is approved.

Management of Potential Risks

As with any research project involving human beings, there are risks of injury, yet in this project these risks were considered to be low. They are enumerated here with a specific strategy on how to minimize or manage each of them.

Physical danger. Participants who travel to Cobs Bread at west end of Toronto may encounter heavy traffic going to and from Thorncliffe during the 25-minute drive on Thursdays. To minimize risk, a designated driver would take only two co-workers to the bakery. The rest of the participants wait at the church to repack the bread and finish the work before 9:00 PM.

Verbal and physical encounter. Participants may encounter opposition from the neighbours during the bread distribution or home visits to recipients. To avoid this, the recipient families were informed of the pick-up time inside the

church, or at a designated place in the mall, or in their apartments. A neighbour's verbal consent was sought for any home visitation.

Confidentiality. Although participants were exhorted to maintain confidentiality with respect to what other participants shared, there was a risk that such confidentiality might be inordinately breached causing hurt feelings or embarrassment. The researcher continually emphasized the importance of confidentiality in meetings. In addition, their journals were kept confidential, and stories that were willingly shared were under the admonition that they remain within the group. The participants' consent was obtained to include their stories and feedback responses in this research, with the understanding that their names would not be revealed (see Consent form – Appendix D).

CHAPTER FIVE:

OUTCOMES AND INTERPRETATIONS

This project developed an approach to discipleship integrating the study of God's Word with community service that was implemented in a city church. The premise is that integrating Word and Deed components in the discipleship process will facilitate growth and a deeper understanding of the *missio Dei*. The aim was to examine the experience of participants in the hope of gaining insights and knowledge that will enlarge understanding of how congregants can be "lights of the world" as mentioned in Matthew 5:14-16. It answers the research question: *did the integrated approach broaden their understanding of missional discipleship and lead them to spiritual growth?*

Sources of Data

The four bases for data analysis and interpretation were:

1. the participants' responses to a survey before the project began
2. the researcher's notes or ethnographic data as participant-observer in the Word study, sharing of reflections and during community service
3. some of the participants' journal entries that they shared to the group
4. the participants' responses to the individual post-project interview

Profile of Participants

There were four men (25%) and twelve women (75%), or a total of sixteen adult participants engaged in the project. Ten of them were willing to be interviewed at the end of the six-month discipleship curriculum.

Age Profile

As shown in Table 1, the ages of participants range from thirty-five to seventy-five years old. Interestingly, these percentages closely represent the age distribution of TPUC congregants.

Table 1: Age of participants

Age Range	n	%
35-45	4	25
45-55	2	12.5
55-65	4	25
65-75	6	37.5
Total	16	100

Language Facility

All participants are first generation immigrants to Ontario, Canada. Their facility of English is good, especially those who came from Jamaica, England and Scotland. Some can speak the native languages of their country of birth: Filipino, Tagalog and/or Visayan (Philippines), and Portuguese (Goa, India). They decided to settle at Thorncliffe where English is the medium of social interaction

Faith Journey

The denominational backgrounds of the subjects were diverse (see Table 2). All participants mentioned the influence of a relative or parents in their faith journey as they continued attending either Roman Catholic masses or Protestant worship services from youth until adulthood. Two participants (12%) experienced a break in church attendance when they got married due to religious differences with their late spouses. Six participants (37.5%) considered coming back to church a welcome experience during their retirement years. Only five (31.5%) had attended Sunday school or scripture study in their youth, but vaguely remember the bible lessons that were taught in class.

All indicated that attending the Word and Deed project of 2017 was a unique experience for them due to the integration of community service and Scripture study. The *missio Dei* was a new concept to everyone.

Table 2: Religious affiliation background of participants before attending TPUC

Religious Background	n	%
United Church	6	37.5
Roman Catholics	5	31
Methodist	2	12.5
Presbyterian	1	6
Anglican	1	6
Baptist	1	6

Responses to Pre-launch Survey

A survey was done before the Word study began to give an insight into the sixteen participants' initial view on discipleship and spiritual practices.

**Table 3: Pre-launch survey responses Questions 1–4A
(January 2017)**

Responses:	n =	%
	16	
1. Which Discipleship Series have you attended in church - TPUC?		
Alpha: Explore the meaning of Life (2015)	8	50.00
Growing in Christ (2015)	6	37.50
Prayer Clinic (2016)	10	62.50
<i>Lectio Divina</i> (2016)	8	50.00
Genesis 1-11: Science and Creation Lecture (2016)	12	75.00
2. What does being a disciple of Christ mean to you?		
Following Christ's teachings	6	37.50
Coming to church regularly	2	12.50
Worshipping God	8	50.00
More than believing, means doing or obeying Christ's commands	2	12.50
Helping others	2	12.50
Knowing God's Word, the Bible	1	6.25
Living faithfully for God	1	6.25
Spreading the good news of salvation	2	12.50
Attending to the poor	1	6.25
Living simply like Christ	1	6.25
Obeying authorities/leaders	1	6.25
Not judging others and see the good in each one	1	6.25
I am not sure	1	6.25

Responses:	n =	%
	16	
3. What spiritual practices/activities must a Christian do or be involved in, to grow in faith?		
Reading the Bible	8	50.00
Having devotional time	2	12.50
Praying to God	6	37.50
Attending church/ religious activities	4	25.00
Performing acts of charity/ helping a neighbour	4	25.00
Watching current events	1	6.25
4A. Have you had a chance to serve someone/ a group you can call “less fortunate” than most people?		
Yes	6	37.5
No	8	50.00
Not sure	2	12.50

The researcher noted that question 4A may have caused hesitancy or a slight embarrassment for some in having a “No” or “Not sure” answers. Eckert had a comment about this in his thesis on *Transformative Journeys*.

I would surmise that it is a painful yet beneficial part of the Christian journey to have God reveal areas of life to you that you have been missing. Each person needs to understand that it is not so much the revelation as it is the response to the revelation that is important. (Eckert 2012, 85)

Table 4 gave the researcher an insight that despite the participants' exposure to DS sessions in 2015 and 2016, most of them were still in the traditional model of a church-focused discipleship. Only six of the sixteen participants (37.5%) were keen on being Christ to the community.

**Table 4: Pre-launch survey responses Questions 4B–5
(January 2017)**

4B. If Yes (see 4a), kindly describe that experience briefly. (for 6 participants only)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting prisoners and I loved talking to the professional ones • Keeping the homeless off the streets especially during winter • Raising funds for orphans in Toronto • Helping a new immigrant open a TD bank account • Happily gave household items to a refugee family • I took in a stranger for a month, a Muslim friend of my classmate, because he was uncomfortable in a shelter • Caring for the sick or shut-ins, but I got paid for it
5. What is/are your expectations in participating in this project entitled “Word and Deed: An Integrated Approach to Discipleship”?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To become a true disciple of Christ or grow in faith • To study Matthew’s gospel more thoroughly in the sessions • Be a supportive participant of Word and Deed project • Get to know better our Thorncliffe neighbours, like the Muslims • To go out and share the good news of our Lord and Saviour

Bread Ministry: Engaging the Community

The Bread Ministry was the main Deed component of this project. By June 2017, eight participants (renamed P-1 to P-8) had befriended key contacts residing in twelve out of thirty-three Thorncliffe apartment buildings. For six months, participants provided bread weekly and made friends with Thorncliffe families that they do not normally meet (see Table 5 and Table 6).

Table 5: Notes on Bread Ministry by apartment building

Apartment Building Number	Number of Families who received bread	Notes by Participants (P-1 to P-8) on Bread Ministry
11	4	P-6 partnered with Jesus Network; A family joined creation care later
12	2	P-1 visited and prayed for shut-ins
18	4	P-5 and P-8 made friends with building supervisors, neighbours
35	4	P-3 worked with a pastor resident to give bread to Muslim families
42	6	P-1 hosted Moms & Kids Play Day
44	1	P-7 joined P-1 and P-6 in home visits/ praying for sick neighbours
53	2	P-3 gave to a bible study group
56	10	P-2 drove seniors to doctors/clinic
58	2	P-2 visited/prayed for a sick man
79	8	P-1 gave bread to refugee families
85	1	P-3 assisted a mom with one child
95	1	P-3 assisted a family with children. Assisting means minding their child occasionally when requested.

Table 6: Notes on Bread Ministry by community groups

Groups	Number of Persons who received bread	Notes by Participants
Montessori	3	P-2 gave bread to school teachers
Two AA's	20	P-4 gave to Alcoholics Anonymous at Thorncliffe
Cleaning Staff in Thorncliffe Mall	12	P-5 befriended staff of East York Town Centre (also known as Thorncliffe mall)
Youth Group	6	P-1 spoke on Care of Environment

Observation: Impact of Word Study on Bread Ministry

Based on these data, the participants' study of Matthew and the *missio Dei* gave them the confidence to step out of church and step into the Thorncliffe community. These are some of their comments:

The Matthew study showed me that names are important. Names have stories. I will continue getting to know my neighbours.

It is shocking to me to learn that some are quite hard up. The bread we give is their meal for the day! Something in me has changed - an eye opener to be more attentive to those who have less in life.

Through this project the Holy Spirit gave us a way of stepping out from church to stepping into the Thorncliffe community – learning while we serve others. The bread ministry was one of many ways.

Jesus not only preached; he walked the talk - healing, feeding, making friends. As Christians we must follow his footsteps.

Now I understand what the great commission is for us. The church needs to raise up disciples of Christ in Toronto where we are.

We need to pray for more workers in the ministry of the gospel. Our congregation is small but we can work with other Christians even if we don't belong to the same church, can't we?

The Action Research Cycle Continues

From the narratives of participants who went through the Word study and then the Deed/Action point in every chapter of Matthew, from classroom learning to community service, there is an interactive impact of wanting to know more and do more. The weekly encounter with the neighbourhood through bread

distribution taught them how to “be Christ’s presence” at Thorncliffe. They constantly re-adjusted the strategy to broaden their ministry.

Creation Care, Home Visits, Prayer and Evangelism

While the Bread Ministry continued, participant P-1 spoke on caring for the environment to a youth group outside the church (see Table 4.2, page 55). This sparked the interest of TPUC congregants in an Earth Day project called creation care.

Creation Care. The project was a clean-up operation on April 22 at Burgess Park, located 500 meters from TPUC. The six participants who were not able to assist in the bread ministry joined hands to lead six groups of four members each. It became a partnership between church and the community. It is noteworthy that two neighbours from Baptist churches also joined the park clean-up. They decided that Creation Care will be made into an annual activity.

Home Visits. The Creation Care project became an opportunity to meet thirty neighbours who were passing by the park to go into Thorncliffe Mall. Bread loaves were distributed in the park after the clean-up. There was a sign-up sheet where people indicated that they would like to be contacted or visited in their apartments to receive bread regularly. Thirty-three residents wrote their names and phone numbers. Only a few homes have been visited by June.

Prayer and Evangelism. Some have had faith conversations with the participants. An African couple who recently arrived in Thorncliffe were prayed

for. Since March 2017, they have come to attend TPUC's worship services. A participant commented, "One good deed (the bread ministry) gives birth to another" (caring for the parks, praying for others and witnessing for Christ to neighbours). The participants prayed before and after each study session. During those moments, they prayed for a list of sick neighbours, asking God for healing; other prayer requests were also items for intercession. Answers to prayer gave participants confidence in a prayer-answering God.

Reflections: Impact of the Project

For the post-project interview, the coding of responses/reflections are in four categories: A, B, C and D with sub-categories under each one (see Table 7).

- Category A - indicated their growth through the Word component
- Category B - experienced growth more through the Deed component
- Category C - experienced growth through Word and Deed components
- Category D - other response/s different from A, B or C

Table 7: Indicators of spiritual growth based on responses

Category	Sub-categories of Participants' Responses	Number
A	GROWTH THROUGH WORD COMPONENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual knowledge gained from the gospel • Questions about Jesus/Christianity addressed • Bible study/ devotional methods learned • Felt God's love for me and his forgiveness, so I must forgive others also • Bible reading became a regular practice • Prayer understood as talking with God • Significance of the sacraments (baptism and communion) appreciated <p><i>Researcher's Notes</i></p> <p>The enthusiasm of participants in attending the Word study was demonstrated in their lively discussions. However, not all who were enthusiastic in Word study were as enthusiastic in the Deed component.</p>	3
B	GROWTH THROUGH DEED COMPONENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends gained by asking story of their names I will continue getting to know my neighbours • Loving God is loving my neighbour in need • Gained Spirit-confidence via bread ministry • My eyes opened that poverty is real here • Great feeling to have friends from other faiths • We mature better spiritually when we engage <p><i>Researcher's Notes</i></p> <p>These were participants who often skipped the Word study due to changes in schedule of job/ classes/ family life. Yet, they were more enthusiastic in the Deed component of this project. They also belong to the younger set of participants.</p>	4

Category	Sub-categories of Participants' Responses	Number
C	GROWTH THROUGH BOTH WORD and DEED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit gave us a way of stepping out from church to stepping into the Thorncliffe community. Faith works with good deeds. The study on <i>missio Dei</i> taught me to appreciate my visits to a shut-in lady, feeding her cats, giving her bread and praying for her I used to be shy. I gained confidence in making friends, inviting them to worship <p><i>Researcher's Notes</i> These participants also echoed comments in A and B</p>	8
D	OTHER RESPONSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six months is too short for a project like this. Project must continue 2 years to have impact. 	1

Researcher's Observations and Reflections

This section contains some personal reflections as Word and Deed project progressed from planning, constructing, implementing, evaluating and moving once again to the Action Research cycle components. It has been a journey of growth for the participants and me. It has been observed that the church has experienced a bit of renewal through the participants and is on the path to becoming missionally aware. Personally, I experienced spiritual growth in my conviction, commitment to the ministry, compassion for the least of our neighbours at Thorncliffe and competency in social research.

I am convinced that the Holy Spirit has guided the timing of the project because it was received well by the church leaders and the participants. The positive attitude of the participants and the Thorncliffe community showed that they were ready for this form of engagement. Every step of the process was

bathed in prayer, week after week. As the participants followed the discipleship of Jesus in Matthew's gospel, the mission of Christ became clearer to them and so did their commitment to the *missio Dei*.

There was also a conviction of sin: the sin of initial indifference toward the community was exposed and the church started to name that in a Prayer of Confession in a Sunday worship service. From then on, the participants' compassion for the marginalized, the sick and the poor in our neighbourhood grew. The church became attentive to the neighbourhood like never before.

As researcher, I have learned skills in social research through this project. Yet, I am aware of my limitations. I should have asked more questions in the pre-survey to measure missional awareness of the participants and improved on my instruments. Perhaps, I would embark on a follow-up project in the future to see if this missional awareness at TPUC would grow into deeper missional understanding, create more missional experiments and build a strong missional commitment to God's redeeming work. If time permits, the five-year period suggested by the Missional Change Model (MCM) in *The Missional Leader* could be implemented at TPUC (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 79-84).

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSIONS

Word and Deed project has been an engaging, transformative journey for the participants and the researcher. The posture of being a missionary, Christ's representative to the community empowered each participant to see himself/herself as a disciple in the twenty-first century. Although urban missiologists and seminary students have written about this integrated approach to discipleship, it is quite a revelation to the congregation of TPUC because of its impact in the ministry, life and witness of a city church. The initial results of integrating community service with the study of Scriptures in the Discipleship Series of 2017 were encouraging. Church leaders and participants wish to continue what they have started: a service learning initiative or an integrated approach to discipleship that puts faith in action. These are the conclusions drawn from the action research project.

The Power of God's Word

In the Great Commission, Christ's command to go and make disciples included two present participles (verbs that describe how to make disciples) “...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Spirit", and "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20 [NIV]). The second part- that of teaching new disciples - necessitates a serious study of Scriptures, particularly the words of Christ in the four gospels. A congregation cannot claim to be in the discipleship process without immersing oneself in God's Word and letting the Holy Spirit use Christ's teachings to take root in one's mind, heart and praxis. That is how spiritual transformation takes place.

An observation of the participants is that the content of most sermons by preachers nowadays lack the depth of Scripture engagement and exegesis. At times, the reflections and sermons heard from the pulpit dwell more on personal experiences or self-help opinions without the full and proper interpretation of Biblical passages. There are even messages when a verse in Scripture is never mentioned or alluded to by a guest resource person. It is no wonder that many city-based churches today are hungry for more in-depth Biblical study and teaching. This gap was bridged at TPUC through the Word component of this project. Scripture study has the power to build disciples, but that is not enough. Personal and group reflection also help to transform head knowledge into heart attitudes and life habits.

The Power of Group Reflections

Participants had observed that the group study of Matthew became more interesting, transforming and engaging because it was the power of group reflections and the conviction of the Holy Spirit that broadened their spiritual

understanding. The habit of journaling one's thoughts and sharing that with the group was formed, and the participants were excited to come to the Tuesday session to contribute their own reflection to the discussions. This is not surprising considering that first century believers met daily to study and reflect together on their new-found faith. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42, [NIV]).

Discipleship as a life-long process of identifying with Christ becomes a transformative journey when the group members study, reflect and work together. This does not mean that believers abandon personal devotion, meditation and quiet time. It only means that the power of group dynamics is important to facilitate spiritual growth. This was clearly evident in the lively discussions of Matthew's gospel.

The Power of the *Missio Dei*

When city congregations acknowledge the presence of the Triune God in their midst, redeeming all creation, the task of re-presenting God's reign becomes a joyful mission despite the changing landscape. With these changes, church leaders are challenged to be missional, to recalibrate their focus in ministry. Missional churches become innovative and avoid the tendency to be inward-focused nor stuck to their usual routines and programs. To love one's neighbour is a challenge for city congregants to make new acquaintances, while keeping long-time friends. The missionary God has sent the Son and the Holy Spirit to give the Church its marching orders to participate in the Great Commission. Christ has

declared that all authority in heaven and on earth are vested in him. On that authority the disciples went to proclaim the good news to all. This is the power of the *missio Dei*.

At TPUC, this was a new concept to the participants since the congregation has functioned for many years under a traditional/attractional Christendom model. It is hoped that with succeeding Discipleship Series, the missional-incarnational concept of “being church” would be sustained.

The Power of Partnership in Inter-Cultural Engagement

Not one church denomination or Christian organization can claim to accomplish the task alone. Partnering with various organizations made this Word and Deed project an interesting endeavour. One small congregation cannot reach out to the larger urban community without the database available in government agencies like TNO. City churches must constantly study their neighbourhood in order to be effective in ministry. The Bread Ministry of TPUC could not have commenced nor succeeded if the IEMELIF church and Cobs Bakery did not come with their invitation.

The inter-church, inter-cultural, inter-faith engagement was enriched when the project tapped missionary resources of Fight4Freedom, Jesus Network, and community organizations such as TNO and the Muslim Food Bank. All these agencies have deepened our understanding of “fellowship” and “one body.” It is a

good strategy for city churches to link with others and deepen the community spirit to work for social justice, peace and the reign of God.

The participants have appreciated more today than before the multi-cultural aspects of Thorncliffe community and its diversity. The mission to share the good news of Christ challenges each believer to engage other cultures and other faiths. “Getting to know the other” can be a humbling yet enriching human experience because it is a mutual exchange of narratives in our lives. Christians may know Christ, but the inner work of the Holy Spirit is not confined to them alone. Like the wind, the Spirit of God is blowing everywhere, to all tribes, cities and nations of the world.

The Power of Intersecting Spiritual Practices

The integration of faith practices and attentiveness to those who have less in life is the emphasis of the Apostle James and the Matthean paradigm of discipleship.

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? (James 2:14-20, [NIV])

To James, faith and good deeds come together as a sign of a transformed life. In Matthew’s gospel, true discipleship follows the footsteps of Christ during

his earthly ministry in his compassion for and attentiveness to human suffering. He healed the sick (Matthew 4:23), restored the lame to walk, the mute to speak and the blind to see (Matthew 15:30).

This research agrees with Nelson's concept of "borderland Christians" who are willing to be missionaries in their own communities. The Word and Deed project echoes Eckert's conclusion that "missional discipleship must integrate multiple activities that would release the believers out of their comfort zone and engage their community with the gospel message of Christ" (Eckert 2012, 105-106).

The Power of Prayer and Divine Intervention

Prayer is acknowledging the presence and power of the Triune God in all human endeavour and daily life. Prayer opens and closes the Tuesday Bible sessions of the word component and the Thursday bread ministry of the deed component of this project. In every other community service, prayer releases the participants from other concerns in order to be present and aware of God's actions in the neighbourhood. There is power in invoking the name of Jesus.

One of the unique features of Word and Deed project is the participants "waiting upon the Spirit" for the community service for Thorncliffe neighbourhood, without the researcher planning it ahead of the launching. It took a month of waiting through constant prayer. God intervened by providing a spot on Thursdays at Cobs Bread and using a Filipino pastor to explain how a bread

ministry can be an outreach project that will connect a city church to its community.

A memory verse during the Discipleship Series was "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). A mnemonic device used was A-S-K: A for ask, S for seek and K for knock. Memorizing Scripture verses and claiming them in prayer proved to be an engaging activity. The answers to prayers for the healing of sick neighbours, for example, gave the participants confidence in the power of divine intervention.

Further Research: Evaluating Strengths and Weaknesses

Due to the time limit, the project scope and data collection process, the findings of this research related only to the sixteen participants' initial experiences of the service learning approach to missional discipleship and cannot be generalized for all city congregants. Many other variables could have altered the outcomes, especially if the pre-selection of Word and Deed participants did not take place. A project such as this could be open to the whole congregation. Hence, further research is needed as to what factors may affect the predisposition of members to engage their urban neighbours while maintaining the spiritual practices of prayer, Bible study and personal reflection. This can be a future research activity.

A weakness of the project is in the instrument used for pre-project interview. I realize that more data could have been gathered if there were more

questions on initial missional awareness and more categories to measure spiritual growth.

Next Steps

Beyond the time frame of this project, TPUC's Official board has agreed to:

- continue the Bread Ministry in 2018 especially to new immigrants since Cobs Bakery renewed the annual contract with the church
- include the projects of the Discipleship Series in the church budget
- make the Creation Care project an annual church-wide activity, and
- invite guest speakers who will broaden our understanding of mission.

Researcher's Final Thoughts

Word and Deed project has been a milestone for me. I realized how we have missed the mark in many church programs. An inward-focused church may tend to ignore the needs of its larger community when there is no missional discipleship going on for a decade or more. When I heard a participant's comment that "the church can do more", I thought of its implications. I was challenged to sharpen my ministry leadership by God's grace. Facilitating the Word component was expected of me as the Chair of Christian Development. However, a welcome surprise was the refreshing testimonies of the missionaries and the powerful message from the DVDs which the participants appreciated.

While discussions on *missio Dei* and missional discipleship were lively, the hands-on experience of engagement was an innovative catalyst for spiritual growth for me and the participants. We were constantly reforming our vision of being Christ's disciples and making disciples. We were becoming "city lights" for others. I have grown to love God more as I witnessed the Spirit transform the participants' view of a missional church.

Our resolution to be the presence of Christ to Thorncliffe is a satisfying conclusion to the Word and Deed project. If I were to do this project again, I would invite more participants for a longer period. I would seek more agency partners to keep up with the changes in this urban neighbourhood. I would like to develop more "city lights" at Thorncliffe, in Toronto and beyond.

If small initiatives such as this project has moved a city congregation from an inward focus to a missional perspective, then the Holy Spirit is truly in our midst.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
Word & Deed: An Integrated Approach To
Discipleship
Curriculum for 20 Sessions

DISCIPLESHIP SERIES 2017 – Orientation Day, January 10

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

Using a service learning approach, the aim is to integrate Word study of the Gospel of Matthew with Deeds of service to the Thorncliffe community

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Word Component – To study Matthew’s gospel, know the meaning of *missio Dei* using our readings, Q&A, reflections in journals and group sharing
2. Deed Component – To view our lives as a context for mission by sharing the love of Jesus to our neighbourhood through good deeds, individually and as a group; to learn with partner agencies how to serve the community

SCHEDULE:

January 10 to March 14, 2017 (every Tuesday night)

- A. Study Matthew chapters 1- 14 with 10 to 16 participants
- B. Have a community project for the group at Thorncliffe
- C. Interview participants re – their spiritual growth, and how the Discipleship series can impact the church to be missional
- D. Evaluate if project is helping participants engage their neighbours
- E. Find out how to improve/add to community outreach strategy through partnership with other groups/organizations

Week of March 21 – March break

March 28 to June 27, 2017

Same as above, continue Study of Matthew 15- 28. Continue with the community project. Through personal interviews, evaluate if participants are learning about missional discipleship while engaging with their neighbours

Suggested reference to be used for Word Study (adapted):
http://executableoutlines.com/matt_sg.htm

NOTE: The following Discipleship Curriculum is a guide for the facilitator ONLY. It guides the discussion on Matthew and contains an “assignment” called Deed/Action Point for engagement with the Thorncliffe community.

SESSION 1 (CHAPTERS ONE AND TWO)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter One

Matthew begins his good news with the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham to Joseph, tracing the royal lineage of Jesus from David, one of the things required to convince a Jewish audience that Jesus qualified to be the Messiah (1-17; cf. Mt 22:41-42). Jesus' birth is described, with the angel announcing it to Joseph, and the protection of Mary's virginity until Jesus' birth (18-25).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The genealogy, if time permits, compare with the one in Luke's gospel
- * The prophecies of Isaiah and the angel regarding the virgin birth
- * The significance of the names given to the child born of Mary

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Whose genealogy is given by Matthew? (v.1)
- Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham
- 2) Name four women included in this genealogy? (3,5 and 6)
- Tamar - Rahab - Ruth - Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah
- 3) What was the initial relationship between Joseph and Mary? (18)
- Betrothed (engaged) Why is this detail important? – She was a virgin
- 4) When and how did Mary become pregnant? (18)
- Before she and Joseph came together
- From the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:26-35)
- 5) What two names would be given the child; what do they mean? (21-23)
- Jesus (Saviour); - Immanuel (God with us)
- 6) What OT passage was fulfilled by the virgin birth of Christ? (22-23)
- Prophet Isaiah in Isa 7:14 What is the significance of this virgin birth?
- 7) How long did Joseph wait until he knew Mary as his wife? (25)
- Until she had given birth to her son Jesus

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Names of people are important. Some have meanings. Others have stories.
What's the narrative behind your own name? Write it down in your journal.
Get to know five of your neighbours' names.
Start a conversation with someone new in the neighbourhood.
Aim to read the Gospel of Matthew in one sweep on a free day (or Sunday)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Two

Unlike Luke, Matthew does not record events related to the day of Jesus' birth. But he describes the visit of the wise men who followed the star to find the infant child and to worship Him (1-12). Warned by an angel in a dream, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt, escaping the massacre of infants by Herod (13-18). After Herod's death, Joseph and his family return to settle in Nazareth (19-23).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Stepping out in faith: the visit of the wise men (magi) from the East
- * Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by the events in this chapter

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Why did the wise men from the East come to Jerusalem? (1-2)
 - From afar, they had seen the star of the King of the Jews and had come to worship Him. Note that Matthew did not say only three wise men.
- 2) How did the priests and scribes know the location of Christ's birth? (4-6)
 - From Micah 5:2
- 3) How and where did the wise men find the young Child? (9-11)
 - Heading to Bethlehem, they followed the star; in a house where Mary was
- 4) Why did Joseph and his family flee? According to what prophecy? (13-15)
 - Warned by an angel to go to Egypt, in order to escape Herod's effort to destroy Jesus, - "Out of Egypt I called My Son" (Hosea 11:1)
- 5) What prophecy did the slaughter of the innocents fulfill? (16-18)
 - That spoken by Jeremiah the prophet (Jer 31:15)
- 6) What prompted Joseph and his family to return? Why to Galilee? (19-22)
 - An angel told Joseph of Herod's death, and told him to return to Israel
 - Hearing that Herod's son ruled over Judea, they turned aside to Galilee
- 7) Where did the family settle? What prophecy did that fulfill? (23)
 - In a city called Nazareth - "He shall be called a Nazarene"
 - (Hebrew *netser=branch*, cross reference Isa.11, Jer. 23, Zech 3, 6)

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Like the three wise men who stepped out of their country to find the Child, how do we step out in faith? Share to the group any ideas on "Stepping out" of church and "stepping in" to our community?

Session Two

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Three

Matthew skips ahead about 30 years to describe events that prepared Jesus for His public ministry. John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin served as a forerunner with his ministry of preaching in Judea's wilderness and baptizing people in the Jordan River (1-12). From Galilee Jesus came to be baptized by John "to fulfill all righteousness". As Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens opened, the Spirit descended on Him like a dove, and a voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (13).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The message and ministry of John the Baptist
- * The purpose and meaning of Jesus' baptism

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What was the theme of John's preaching? (1-2)
 - "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"
- 2) What was John's mission as foretold by Isaiah? (3)
 - To prepare the way of the Lord (Isa 40:3)
- 3) What unique clothing and diet did John have? (4)
 - Clothed in camel's hair and leather belt, food was locust and wild honey
- 4) What was John doing in the Jordan River? (5-6)
 - Baptizing people as they were confessing their sins
- 5) What did John say to the Pharisees or Sadducees coming to be baptized? (8)
 - "Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance"
- 6) What did John say the One who followed him (Jesus) would do? (11-12)
 - Baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire
- 7) Who came from Galilee to be baptized by John? Why? (13-15)
 - Jesus; in order to fulfill all righteousness. What does this mean to us?
- 8) As Jesus came up from the water, what three things happened? (16-17)
 - The heavens were opened, The Spirit descended like a dove upon Him
 - A voice said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Begin writing in a journal personal reflections on "Who Jesus is to me". From Q6, reflect on the difference between John's baptism with Jesus' baptism? Share to the group what we are learning. Am I making new friends?

Session Three (*Chapters Four and Five*)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Four

Following His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He fasted for 40 days and overcame temptation by the devil (1-11). Returning to Galilee and moving from Nazareth to Capernaum, (see map) Jesus began His Galilean ministry preaching the same message of the kingdom of heaven as that of John the Baptist. After selecting four disciples, Jesus went about Galilee teaching in the synagogues and healing all kinds of sickness/disease. Soon multitudes from surrounding regions began to follow Him (12-25).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * How Jesus overcame His temptation by the devil
- * The beginning of His ministry in Galilee, His message and methods
- * The call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John to discipleship

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) With what three temptations did Satan challenge Jesus? (3, 6, 9)
 - "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."
 - "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down (from temple pinnacle)."
 - "All these kingdoms I will give you if you'll bow down and worship me."
- 2) How did Jesus respond to each of the three temptations? (4, 7 and 10)
 - With the Word of God ("It is written...")
- 3) Where did he begin his public ministry? Fulfilling what prophecy? (12-16)
 - The region of Galilee; as prophesied by Isaiah (Isa 9:1-2)
- 4) What was the theme of Jesus' preaching? (17)
 - "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- 5) Who were the four fishermen called to follow Jesus? (18-22)
 - Peter and Andrew (brothers), James and John (brothers)
- 6) How did Jesus conduct His ministry in Galilee? (23-24) - Teaching in the synagogues and - Healing all kinds of disease, including demon possession
- 7) Where did people come from to follow Jesus? (25)
 - Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan (see map)

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Wat is a disciple? Describe the kind of men Jesus called to be his disciples. Start memorizing favourite verses and reciting them especially when tempted, discouraged, etc.

Reflect on the importance of "hiding God's word in my heart".

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Five

From chapter 5 -7, Matthew records the Sermon on the Mount. The theme: "The kingdom of heaven". He began with the Beatitudes, describing the character and blessedness of those who would be citizens of the kingdom (1-12) and illustrating their relation to the world as salt and light (13-16). Clarifying His relationship with the Law, Jesus stressed how our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees (17-20), followed by a series of contrasts between the oral interpretations of the Law and conduct expected of His disciples (21-48).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The meaning of the phrase: "the kingdom of heaven" (KOH)
- * The blessedness of those in the KOH, and their relationship to the world
- * How our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What do the beatitudes describe? (3-12)
 - The character and blessedness of the citizens of the kingdom of God
- 2) How are citizens of the kingdom to relate to the world? (13-16)
 - As the salt of the earth and the light of the world
- 3) What was Jesus' relation to the Law of Moses? (17-18)
 - He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it
- 4) What does Jesus expect of the citizens of the kingdom? (20)
 - Righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees
- 5) List the five subjects whose interpretations are contrasted (21-48)
 - Murder, adultery, oaths, retaliation, love
- 6) What phrases illustrate the contrast?
 - "You have heard that it was said..." (NOT "It is written...")
and "But I say to you..."
- 7) Then what contrast is being made with these five subjects?
 - The oral interpretation and application of the Law versus teaching of Jesus

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Reflect on true discipleship as being “salt” and “light” to our community/ world.

Personal application: how can a Christian like me be salt and light?

Compare and contrast Ten Commandments to the Beatitudes (see grid)

Session Four (*Chapters Six and Seven*)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Six

The "Sermon on the Mount" continues as Jesus teaches the righteousness of the kingdom expected in those who would be citizens of the kingdom. He discusses righteousness with respect to man's relation to God, regarding charitable deeds (1-4), prayer (5-15), fasting (16-18), materialism (19-24), and anxiety (25-33).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Performing acts of righteousness in ways that please God
- * The danger of materialism and overcoming anxiety about such things
- * Making the kingdom of God and His righteousness our priority

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) As we perform acts of righteousness, what should we avoid? (1-2, 5 and 16)
 - Doing it for the purpose of being seen by men, - Acting like the hypocrites
- 2) How can we ensure that God will reward us for our righteous acts? (4,6,18)
 - By doing them in secret where only the Father sees
- 3) How else does Jesus teach us to give, pray, and fast? (3,7 and 17)
 - Do not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing as we give
 - Do not use vain repetition as we pray nor disfigure our faces as we fast
- 4) What is the likely purpose of "The Lord's Prayer"? (9-13)
 - To serve as a model of prayer ("In this manner...")
- 5) Of things in "The Lord's Prayer," on what does Jesus elaborate? (14-15)
 - The need for us to forgive others their trespasses against us
- 6) Where are we to lay up treasure? Why? How? (20 and 24)
 - cf. Mt 19:21; 1Ti 6:17-19) - In heaven; to serve God rather than mammon;
 - By giving to the poor
- 7) What is the key to overcoming anxiety? (25-32)
 - Trusting in the providential care of God
- 8) How can we ensure that God will provide what we need? (33)
 - By seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Begin regular prayers to God for neighbours especially those in need

Have a prayer list in a journal.

Reflect on: How seeking first the kingdom of God will affect our lifestyle

How do I live a simple lifestyle so I can share my material blessings to the poor?

Share this to the group next meeting, if you are willing.

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Seven

Jesus continues his "Sermon on the Mount" discussing the righteousness of the kingdom with respect to man's relation to man, with a warning on judging others (1-6), the importance of persistence (7-11), and keeping "the golden rule" (12). He concludes with exhortations: choose the narrow, difficult path (13-14), watch out for false prophets (15-20), do God's will (21-23), be doers of the Word (24)

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The nature of judging condemned by Jesus
- * How Jesus' "golden rule" differs from that found in other religions
- * The importance of doing the Father's will to being saved

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What sort of judging is Jesus warning his disciples against? (1-6)
 - Not all judging, but hypocritical, censorious condemnation (see John 7:24)
- 2) How does Jesus illustrate the need for persistence? (7-11)
 - By literally saying "keep on" asking, seeking, knocking
- 3) How does Jesus' "golden rule" differ from that found in other religions?
 - Most state it negatively (Don't do to others ...)
- 4) Contrast the two ways described by Jesus (13-14)
 - The way to life: narrow gate and difficult way, found by few
 - The way to destruction: wide gate and broad way, traveled by many
- 5) How do false prophets operate? How can we identify them? (15-20)
 - As wolves in sheep's clothing; - by their fruits
- 6) Who will not enter the kingdom of heaven? Who will? (21-23)
 - Many who believed in the Lord, did many great things for Him, but practiced lawlessness (i.e., did things without His authority)
 - Those who do the will of His Father shall enter the kingdom of heaven
- 7) What is the key difference between the wise and foolish listeners? (24-27)
 - The wise do what Jesus said, the foolish do not
- 8) Why were the people astonished at Jesus' teaching? (28-29)
 - Because He taught as one having authority

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Reflect on my current relationships. Do I please God?
Am I loving/welcoming and not judging others?
Have I offended a neighbour by insisting on my own standards?
Whom have I judged unfairly? (Ask God for forgiveness)
Who are judging me? (Forgive them in my heart)

Session Five

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Eight

As Jesus' ministry in Galilee continues, Matthew describes His miracles and related events. Coming down from the mount, He cleansed a leper (1-4). Entering Capernaum, He healed a centurion's servant (5-13). Arriving at Peter's house, He healed his mother-in-law and many demon-possessed and all who were sick (14-17). Before crossing the Sea of Galilee to escape large crowds, Jesus challenged two would-be disciples (18-22). After calming the winds and waves of a great tempest (23-27), He arrived on the other side of the sea where He healed two demon-possessed men (28-34).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The nature of Jesus' miracles performed in Galilee and the Gergesenes
- * The cost of discipleship

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) List the five miracles recorded in this chapter
 - Jesus cleanses a leper
 - Jesus heals a centurion's servant
 - Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law (and many others)
 - Jesus calms the wind and the waves
 - Jesus heals two demon-possessed men
- 2) Before healing the centurion's servant, what impressed Jesus? (10)
 - The great faith of the centurion who was a Gentile
- 3) Before healing the servant, what did Jesus foretell? (11-12)
 - Gentiles would enter the kingdom, while many Israelites would not
- 4) In Peter's house, who did Jesus heal? What prophecy was fulfilled? (14-17)
 - His mother-in-law, -that all the sick that were brought to Him were healed
 - "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses" – Isaiah 53:4
- 5) What two lessons did Jesus teach about discipleship? (19-22)
 - It can mean a life of poverty; it requires precedence over familial duties
- 6) What can we learn about fear and faith before Jesus calmed the sea? (25)
 - Fear comes from having little faith
- 7) Who did the demons acknowledge Jesus to be as He confronted them? (29)
 - The Son of God

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Reflect on the costs of discipleship for the Twelve.

What does discipleship mean to the 21st century Church and to me?

Write them on a journal.

Session Six (Chapters Nine and Ten)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Nine

Back in Capernaum, Jesus' ministry in Galilee continued with forgiving and healing a paralytic (1-8). Matthew the tax collector was called to be a disciple, who invited Jesus to his home where Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees and disciples of John (9-17). Asked by a ruler to go and raise his dead daughter, Jesus did so, along the way, healed a woman with a "flow" (18-26). Jesus healed 2 blind men and a man who was both mute and demon-possessed (27-34). He went about, teaching and healing, moved with compassion for the multitudes (35-38).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Jesus' power to forgive sins
- * His willingness to eat with sinners
- * His compassion for the lost

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) List the five miracles recorded in this chapter (1-8,18-34)
 - Jesus forgives and heals a paralytic
 - Jesus heals a woman with a flow of blood
 - Jesus restores a ruler's daughter to life
 - Jesus heals two blind men
 - Jesus heals a man mute and demon-possessed
- 2) How did Jesus demonstrate His power to forgive sins? (6)
 - By healing a paralytic
- 3) Who was called to be a disciple and then gave a feast at his house? (9-10)
 - Matthew, also known as Levi, author of this gospel (cf. Lk 5:27-29)
- 4) What two groups confronted Jesus regarding what two issues? (11-17)
 - The Pharisees, concerning eating with sinners
 - The disciples of John, concerning fasting
- 5) What explanation did Pharisees give for Jesus' ability to exorcise demons?
 - "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." (34)
- 6) What moved Jesus to call for prayer for more laborers? (36-38)
 - Compassion for the multitudes who were like sheep without a shepherd

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Am I God's labourer? Do I pray for the sick, lonely, shut-ins, unemployed? Get to know someone in church, or in the neighbourhood who is in this category. Make an appointment. Have a friend join you to visit (the sick, lonely or unemployed) for tea/ a prayer time. You may bring food or fruits.

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Ten

Following His call for prayer for more laborers (Mt 9:37-38), Jesus selected Twelve disciples and gave them power to cast out demons and heal all kinds of disease (1-4). He then sent them to preach/heal throughout the cities of Israel with specific instructions in what has come to be called "The Limited Commission" (5-42).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The twelve men selected to be Jesus' apostles to cities of Israel only
- * Evangelistic principles utilized by Jesus

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) List and memorize the names of the twelve apostles (2-4)
 - **Peter & Andrew** (brothers), **James & John** (sons of Zebedee), **Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew** (or Levi), **James** the son of Alphaeus, **Labbaeus** surnamed **Thaddaeus**, **Simon** the Canaanite, and **Judas Iscariot**
- 2) What was to be the range of their preaching? Their message? (5-7)
 - Only to the house of Israel; "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"
- 3) What miracles were they to perform as they preached? At what charge? (8)
 - Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, - Raise the dead, -Cast out demons
 - No charge for their services ("Freely you have received, freely give")
- 4) How were they to be supported? (9-11)
 - By people willing to receive them into their homes
- 5) What were they to do if they were not received by a house or city? (14-15)
 - Depart, shaking the dust from their feet
- 6) What did Jesus prepare them to expect? (16-26) - Persecution
- 7) What were they to fear more than persecution? (28 and 33)
 - Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell;
 - being denied or disowned by Jesus before the Father in Heaven
- 8) What did Jesus acknowledge His teachings might do? (34-36)
 - Separate members of the same family
- 9) What blessings would befall those who assisted the apostles? (41-42)
 - The same reward as the apostles for their service;
 - Anyone who gives a cup of water to a disciple will be rewarded

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Partner with Jesus Network to meet/serve a Muslim neighbour in Thorncliffe. Introduce Jesus* or invite someone to a church worship, if appropriate. Note that Muslims outnumber Christians here at Thorncliffe. (Some organizations -Power to Change, CEF use booklets/comic books to introduce Christ)

Session Seven (Chapters Eleven and Twelve)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Eleven

While the apostles were fulfilling the limited commission (10:5-7), Jesus was approached by emissaries of John the Baptist who received confirmation that He was "The Coming One" (1-6). Jesus revealed that John was the Messenger foretold by Malachi. Many were inconsistent in their opposition to Jesus and John (7-19). Jesus then rebuked cities which did not repent at His teaching (20-24), and also extended a tender invitation to those who would accept His teaching (25-30).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist
- * Why the Day of judgment will be more tolerable for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom than it will be for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum
- * The Saviour's tender invitation to those with troubled souls

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Why did John send two disciples to Jesus? (2-3)
 - To confirm that Jesus was "The Coming One"
- 2) What evidence did Jesus offer to John's disciples? (4-5)
 - His miracles, and the fact that the poor have the gospel preached to them
- 3) What two O.T. prophecies did Jesus say that John fulfilled? (10 and 14)
 - Malachi 3:1 and 4:5
- 4) Who did Jesus say would be greater than John the Baptist? (11)
 - He who is least in the kingdom of heaven
- 5) How did some people describe John and Jesus? (18-19)
 - John: having a demon
 - Jesus: glutton, winebibber (drunkard), friend of sinners/ tax collectors
- 6) Why did Jesus rebuke the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum?
 - Because they saw His mighty works and yet did not repent (20)
- 7) To whom did Jesus extend His invitation? What did He expect in return?
(28-30) - To all who labour and are heavy laden (by the guilt of sin, worry)
 - To take His yoke upon them and learn from Him (become His disciple)

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

For Reflection - Do I trust Him with my life, like a true disciple?

As a sinner who is forgiven, am I a friend to other sinners? Have I touched base with the poor like Jesus did?

Church's project this Sunday: "bring a mug for the Fred Victor Centre".

NOTE: Our Bread Ministry with Cobs bakery has begun. Sign up!

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twelve

Opposition to Jesus and His ministry increased, spear-headed by Pharisees who objected to Jesus' conduct on the Sabbath (1-14). Jesus humbly sought privacy, which fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy concerning God's Chosen Servant (15-21), but Pharisees followed Him making blasphemous accusations against the Spirit and demanded a sign (22-45). When Jesus' physical family wanted to see Him, Jesus identified His disciples as His true family (46-50).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Jesus and the Sabbath day
- * The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit
- * The true family of God

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What were Jesus' disciples doing that angered the Pharisees? (1-2)
- Plucking heads of grain to eat on the Sabbath day
- 2) What was Jesus doing that angered the Pharisees? (9-14)
- Healing on the Sabbath day
- 3) What prophecy did Jesus fulfill warning people not to make Him known?
(17- 21) - That He would not quarrel or cry out (Isa 42:1-4)
- 4) How did the Pharisees explain Jesus' ability to cast out demons? (24)
- He did it by the power of Beelzebub, ruler of the demons
- 5) What was the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? (31-32)
- Attributing Jesus' ability to cast out demons to having an unclean spirit
(cf. Mk 3:30)
- 6) For what will one give an account in the Day of judgment? (36-37)
- Every idle word spoken
- 7) What sign did Jesus say He would give to the Pharisees? (38-40)
- The Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth
- 8) Who did Jesus identify as His true family? (49-50)
- His disciples, i.e., whoever does the will of His Father in heaven

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Continue journaling new insights gained from Word and Deed project.

Share to the group your experience with the Bread Ministry.

Are there transformative Aha! Moments in my reflections about discipleship.

Have there been changes in my life in Christ, or when sharing faith to others?

Session Eight

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Thirteen

Jesus began teaching in parables regarding the kingdom; seven are recorded in this chapter). His goal was to separate the truth seekers from just curiosity ones, as He explained the parables privately to His disciples (Mt 13:10-17 and 34-35). At Nazareth, He taught in the synagogue and found an unreceptive audience (53-58).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The purpose of parables
- * What the parables reveal about the kingdom of heaven

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) List the seven parables of Jesus found in this chapter
 - The parable of the sower
 - The parable of the wheat and tares
 - The parable of the mustard seed
 - The parable of the leaven
 - The parable of the hidden treasure
 - The parable of the pearl of great price
 - The parable of the dragnet
- 2) What was Jesus two-fold purpose in teaching in parables? (10-17, 34-35 and 51)
 - To keep truths of the kingdom hidden from those not seeking the truth
 - To illustrate truths to those with ears and hearts willing to listen
- 3) What does the parable of the sower illustrate? (3-9 and 18-23)
 - Different types of listeners and their response to the word of the kingdom
- 4) What does the parable of the wheat and tares illustrate? (24-30, 36-43)
 - The efforts of the devil to undermine the work of the Son of Man
- 5) What do the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven illustrate? (31-34)
 - The growth and spread of the kingdom heaven
- 6) What about the parables of the hidden treasure/ pearl of great price? (44-46)
 - The great worth of the kingdom, found accidentally or after diligent search
- 7) What does the parable of the dragnet illustrate? (47-52)
 - The final makeup of the kingdom will be determined at the end of the age
- 8) Why was Jesus rejected by many at Nazareth? (53-58)
 - They were apparently blinded by their familiarity with Him and His family

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

See grid on *My Reflections on the Parables**
Fill in your thoughts on the third column.

Discipleship Series 2017: Word and Deed
My Reflections on the Parables

Matthew 13: The hidden Kingdom of Heaven revealed in Parables by Jesus
Setting: Galilee, Jesus on a boat teaching about KOH as prophesied (Psalm 78:2)

Parable defined: a simple story by Jesus in the Gospels to illustrate a spiritual reality with the intent of revealing truth only to those who care to listen

WORD Title of Parables	Notes/Remarks: Elements in the story & Jesus' interpretation	DEED/ Action Point: Written Reflections on how parable speaks to me about being a disciple
1 The Farmer, Seeds & 4 Soils verses 1-8; 18-23	<p>Farmer = Gospel bearer Seeds = KOH message 1 Footpath (hard soil) = unreceptive to message Birds eating seeds= Evil one/temptations 2 Rocky, shallow soil Plants grow quickly = first joy Sun dries plants quickly= trouble/persecution kills message 3 Thorny soil choke plants = worries/ wealth 4 Good soil= understands Gospel message plants produce “crops” <i>* relate this to making disciples</i></p>	

WORD Title of Parables	Notes/Remarks: Elements in the story & Jesus' interpretation	DEED/ Action Point: Written Reflections on how parable speaks to me about being a disciple
2 Separating Wheat from Weeds vv 24-30; 37-43	Man sows seeds of wheat = Jesus field = world	Reflect on my view of Judgment (cf vv 47-51)
	2 kinds of people: A. good seed = people of KOH B. Enemy sow weeds =Evil one	
	Harvest time = end of age Harvesters = angels	
	Furnace for weeds = Judgment Day	
3 Kingdom is like mustard seed vv 31-32	Mustard seed = Kingdom	
	In time, it becomes largest tree with birds perched in branches	
4 The yeast in the dough vv 33-34	Woman with dough uses yeast (hidden) in flour	
5a Treasure hidden in the field v 44	Treasure/ Pearl = Kingdom of Heaven	Compare and contrast the buying & selling in these two parables
6 The pearl of great value v 45		
7 Fishnet with good & bad catch vv 47-51	Net = Kingdom of Heaven good catch of fish = righteous by faith & good deeds	Do I believe in a blazing furnace? What's my view of heaven and hell
	bad catch of fish = wicked by unbelief & evil deeds	
	separation time = end of age Blazing furnace – Judgment	

WORD	Notes/Remarks:	DEED/ Action Point: Written
Title of Parables	Elements in the story & Jesus' interpretation	Reflections on how parable speaks to me about being a disciple
7 Homeowner brings out old and new gems of truth, verse 52	Homeowner = teacher of the Law (Jews?) becomes a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven	Do Jews have an edge over non-Jews?
Gems of truth: old and new		If yes,
		Reflect on the advantages of a Jew who would believe in Jesus.
Prophet Jesus returns to hometown of Nazareth	Jesus: “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his home”	
verses 53-58		
Town-mates knew him:	“And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith”	
He is the son of Joseph, a carpenter		
He has a mother named Mary		
He has at least 2 sisters staying home (“with us”)		
He has 4 brothers named James, Joseph (a.k.a.		
Joses cf Mark 6:3), Simon, and Judas (or Juda)		
(Jesus possibly had a nuclear family of 9 or more, if more than 2 sisters)		

Session Nine

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Fourteen

Word of Jesus' ministry came to Herod the tetrarch. Matthew tells how Herod killed John the Baptist (1-12). Hearing of John's death, Jesus sought privacy but was followed by the multitudes. He fed over 5000 with five loaves and two fish (13-21). Sending His disciples away by boat, Jesus dispersed the crowd and went to the mountain to pray. He later joined them by walking on the sea (22-33). In Gennesaret, Jesus healed all who came to Him by simply letting them touch the hem of His garment (34-36).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The unlawful marriage of Herod that led to John's death
- * Two miracles that demonstrate Jesus' power over nature
- * The inverse relationship between fear and faith

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Who did Herod think Jesus was when he heard about Him? (1-2)
 - John the Baptist, risen from the dead
- 2) What led to Herod's arrest of John the Baptist? (3-4)
 - John's rebuke of Herod's unlawful marriage to Herodias (*cf. Mk 6:17-18*)
- 3) How was Herod tricked to have John beheaded? (6-10)
 - By Salome's dance, Herod's foolish oath, and Herodias' prompting
- 4) When Jesus heard of John's death, what did He try to do? (13)
 - Go to a deserted place to pray; the multitudes followed Him
- 5) What prompted Jesus to heal the sick and feed the hungry? (14-15)
 - His compassion for them
- 6) How many were fed, and with what? (16-21)
 - 5000 men, besides women and children; five loaves and two fish
- 7) As Jesus walked on the sea, what led to Peter sinking? (25-31)
 - Fear, which Jesus attributed to little faith
- 8) How were the sick in the land of Gennesaret healed? (34-36)
 - As many as touched the hem of Jesus' garment

ACTIVITY:

Today, we listen to Michael Frost on *Missio Dei* (excerpt on DVD)

Note the meaning of terms he used:

- Every person as *imago Dei*
- The church as *Corpus Christi*
- *Missio Dei* as the sending God

Session Ten (*Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen*)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Fifteen

Religious leaders from Jerusalem took issue with Jesus' disciples' failure to observe certain traditions, which led Jesus to warn against the danger of traditions and that which causes true moral defilement (1-20). After a quick trip to the region of Tyre and Sidon where He healed a Canaanite woman's daughter (21-28), Jesus made His way to a mountain near the Sea of Galilee where He healed many and fed 4000 with seven loaves and a few fish. He then sailed to the region of Magdala (see Map), located on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee (29-39).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The danger of traditions and vain worship
- * That which causes true moral defilement

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What tradition of the elders had the disciples of Jesus transgressed? (1-2)
 - Washing of hands before eating bread
- 2) According to Jesus, when do traditions of men become wrong? (3-9)
 - When one keeps a tradition of man instead of a commandment of God
 - When one teaches as doctrine (that which is binding) a man-made tradition
- 3) When does worship become vain? (9)
 - When such worship is based on the teachings of men rather than of God
- 4) What constitutes true moral defilement? (11 and 16-20)
 - That which comes out of the mouth (evil thoughts/deeds) from man's heart
- 5) What will happen to plants (religions, doctrines) not started by God? (13)
 - They will be uprooted
- 6) How did Jesus describe the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem? (14)
 - As blind leaders of the blind
- 7) What moved Jesus to grant the Canaanite woman's request? (28)
 - Her great faith
- 8) With what did Jesus feed more than 4000 people? (34-38)
 - Seven loaves and a few little fish

DEED/ACTION POINT:

Based on *Missional Church* (DVD), reflect again to redefine your view of man (*imago Dei*), the sending God (*missio Dei*) and the Church as *Corpus Christi*. Share with the group your thoughts. Was there an attitude that has changed?

Special Readings for Holy Week, April 9-16, 2017

“Discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew”

These selected readings have been prepared for our time of meditation during the Lenten Season, and supplement our study on Matthew.
Have a blessed Holy Week!

Holy Monday - Matthew 4:18-22 The Call: “Come, follow me”

Holy Tuesday - Matthew 10:1-15 Jesus to disciples: “Go, preach this message”

Holy Wednesday - Matthew 11:25-30 “Come to me and rest”

Maundy Thursday -Matthew 19:23-30 Commitment: The First & the Last

Good Friday -Matthew 20:1-16 Jesus seeks Kingdom Workers

Holy Saturday - Matthew 23:32-37 Jesus’ disciples carry the Cross

Easter Sunday - Matthew 28:1-10 The Resurrection: Celebrate New Life

MEMORY VERSES SELECTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Matthew 25: 34 -40 New International Version (NIV)

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Sixteen

Pharisees and Sadducees asked Jesus for a sign. Exposing their hypocrisy, Jesus offered the sign of Jonah (cf. Mt 12:38-40). He warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (1-12). At Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples who people were saying that He was. Peter confessed Him to be the Christ. Jesus commended Peter and spoke of his role in His church, but then told the disciples to tell no one He was the Christ (13-20). Jesus spoke of His death and resurrection, the cost of discipleship, and coming of His kingdom.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The confession of Peter and Jesus' response
- * The cost of discipleship

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) When asked for a sign, what sign did Jesus say would be given? (1-4)
 - The sign of the prophet Jonah (i.e., His death and resurrection)
- 2) When Jesus warned of leaven, what did He mean? (5-12)
 - The doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees
- 3) Who did Peter confess Jesus to be? (16)
 - "The Christ, the Son of the living God"
- 4) What did Jesus say He would build? Upon what would it be built? (18)
 - "I will build My church" upon "this rock"
(Possibly Peter as an apostle, cf. Ep 2:20, or truth of Peter's confession)
- 5) What did Jesus promise Peter? Was it limited to him? (19; cf. Mt 18:18)
 - Keys of the kingdom to bind and loose; granted also to other apostles
- 6) What did Jesus begin to predict at that time? (21)
 - His suffering in Jerusalem, death, and resurrection on the third day
- 7) What did Jesus demand of His disciples? How valuable is one's soul? (24)
 - To deny self, take up one's cross and follow Him; more than the world
- 8) What promise did Jesus make regarding His kingdom? (28)
 - Some would not die before seeing the Son of Man coming in His kingdom

DEED/ACTION POINT:

Today, we watch a clip from John Ortberg speak on Creation Care (DVD).

Have you any healing experience from Nature? When and how?

What can we do for our community to become involved in caring for the environment?

Session Eleven (Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Seventeen

The events in this chapter begin with Jesus transfigured on the mountain (1-13), referenced to later by Peter in his epistle (2Pe 1:16-18). Afterward Jesus healed a demon-possessed boy when His disciples were unable due to a lack of faith and prayer (14-21). Back in Galilee, Jesus once again predicted His death and resurrection (22-23). Upon arriving in Capernaum, Jesus expounded on the payment of the temple tax (24).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The significance of the transfiguration
- * The reason for the failure of a miracle

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) When was Jesus transfigured on the mount? (1)
 - After six days of saying some would not die before seeing Him coming in His kingdom (cf. Mt 16:28; Mk 9:1-2; Lk 9:27-28)
- 2) Who appeared when Jesus was transfigured? What might they represent?
 - Moses and Elijah; the Law and the Prophets (3)
- 3) What did the voice from the cloud say about Jesus? What might it indicate?
 - "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"
 - That Jesus would have priority over the Law and the Prophets
- 4) When were the disciples to tell others what they had seen? (9)
 - Not until Jesus had risen from the dead
- 5) Who did Jesus say had come? Who had fulfilled that prophecy? (10-13)
 - Elijah (cf. Mal 4:5); John the Baptist. Both were great prophets of Israel
- 6) Why were the disciples unable to heal the demon-possessed boy? (19-21)
 - Because of their lack of faith and prayer
- 7) What did Jesus predict for the second time to His disciples? (22-23)
 - His betrayal, death, and resurrection from the dead
- 8) Did Jesus teach His disciples to pay taxes? How did He pay the tax? (24)
 - Yes (cf. Mt 22:15-22); by having Peter catch a fish with a coin in its mouth

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

As a group, connect with Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office (TNO).

Contact city officials and councillors about our community service.

Organize volunteers from church, neighbours and community.

Advertise "Creation Care" at Burgess Park Clean-Up in April 2017.

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Eighteen

Answering a question by His disciples, Jesus taught the need for child-like humility and the danger of offenses to others and to self (1-9), followed with the parable of the lost sheep (10-14). Further instructions included how to deal with a sinning brother (15-20) and the need for a forgiving heart shown by the parable of the unforgiving servant (21).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The need for humility, and concern for others in the kingdom
- * Dealing with a sinning brother, and the importance of forgiveness

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Who will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (1-5)
 - Those who believe God and humble themselves like a little child
- 2) How old was the little child that Jesus used as an example? (6)
 - Old enough to believe, old enough to sin
- 3) What types of offenses does Jesus warn against? (6-9)
 - Leading children from faith & letting personal weakness cause you to sin
- 4) What parable illustrates the Father's concern for the lost? (12-14)
 - The parable of the lost sheep
- 5) In dealing with a sinning brother, what steps should be taken? (15-18)
 - Go and tell the brother his fault between you and him alone
 - If that doesn't work, take one or two more with you to serve as witnesses
 - If that doesn't work, tell it to the church
 - If that doesn't work, then no longer associate with him
- 6) What increases the likelihood that God will answer prayer? (19-20)
 - When two or three pray together
- 7) How many times should we be willing to forgive a brother? (21-22)
 - Up to seventy times seven (490); cf. seven times in one day, Lk 7:3-4
- 8) What grave warning is in the parable of the unforgiving servant? (33)
 - "So My heavenly Father also will do to you..."

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Encourage other church members and lead friends in the community for the Clean-Up of Burgess Park at Thorncliffe, and also distribute bread to neighbours.

Session Twelve (*Chapters Nineteen and Twenty*)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Nineteen

In response to another test by the Pharisees, Jesus spoke on the issues of marriage, divorce and celibacy (1-12). Little children were brought to Him, whom He blessed (13-15). When a rich young ruler questioned Him concerning eternal life (16-22), Jesus used the occasion to teach His disciples about possessions and God's kingdom (23-30).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Jesus' teachings related to marriage, divorce, and celibacy
- * Possessions and rewards in reference to the kingdom of God

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Who is it that joins a man and woman in marriage? (6)
 - God, not the state (government)
- 2) What exception does Jesus allow for divorce? Otherwise, what occurs? (9)
 - Sexual immorality; adultery, cf. Mt 5:32
- 3) What price might be necessary for some to enter the kingdom of heaven?
 - To make themselves eunuchs (to remain in an unmarried state)
- 4) What did Jesus say about little children? (14)
 - "Let the little children come to Me for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
- 5) What did Jesus counsel the rich young ruler? (17 and 21)
 - About eternal life; -To keep the commandments, and to be perfect - sell all and give to the poor, and follow Him (which the rich ruler rejected)
- 6) What did Jesus say about being rich and the kingdom of heaven? (23-24)
 - It is hard for the rich to enter heaven;
 - It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle
- 7) What did Jesus promise to His apostles who left all to follow Him? (27-28)
 - To sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel when Jesus returns
- 8) What did Jesus promise to all willing to leave much to follow Him (29-30)
 - A hundredfold blessings in this life; and in the life to come, cf. Mk 10:29-30

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Reflect on the implications of this chapter on discipleship

Make a personal inventory of my views on money/possessions

Make an inventory of my view on sexual purity for single and married people.

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twenty

Continuing His reply to Peter's question (cf. 19:27 -"what shall we have?"), Jesus told the parable of the labourers (1-16), then predicted His death and resurrection a third time as they headed toward Jerusalem (17-19). When the mother of James and John requested a special place for her sons in the kingdom, Jesus said it was not His to give, but the Father. He used the occasion to teach all His apostles the principle of greatness through service (20-28). Leaving Jericho, Jesus gave sight to two blind men who would not let the crowds deter them (29-34).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Should one delay in his/her obedience to the gospel?
- * The danger of a mercenary spirit
- * The importance of humble service

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Whose question had prompted the telling of the parable of the laborers?
- Peter
- 2) What should not be deduced from this parable? Why? (1-10)
- That it is alright to put off accepting the invitation to serve and obey the Gospel because those who started later responded as soon as they were given a chance
- 3) What is the main point of the parable of the laborers? (11-16)
- One should not begrudge others for receiving the same reward for less service
- 4) List the three passages in which Jesus foretold His death and resurrection
- Mt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:19-20
- 5) Who asked Jesus for a privileged position in His kingdom? (20-21)
- The mother of Zebedee's sons (James and John) in their behalf
- 6) What quality is considered great in the kingdom? (25-28)
- Serving others, even as Jesus came to this earth to serve
- 7) What commendable spirit did the two blind men manifest? (30-31)
- Persistence in their request for mercy (present application to our prayers)

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Compare the world's meaning of "greatness" to Christ's measure of it. Can one be called a disciple without serving God, caring for one's neighbour and creation?

Session Thirteen (Chapters Twenty-one and Twenty-two)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twenty-One

Jesus began His Last Week before His crucifixion with a triumphant entry into Jerusalem (1-11), followed with dramatic acts like driving the money-changers from the temple (12-17) and cursing the barren fig tree (18-22). His authority was soon challenged (23-27). In response Jesus told the parables of the two sons (28-32) and the wicked vinedressers (33-46), understood by religious leaders to be directed toward them.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Jesus' triumphal entry, cleansing of the temple, cursing the fig tree
- * The conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem?
 - The prophecy by Zechariah (Zech 9:9)
- 2) Why was Jesus angry at the merchandising going on in the temple? (13)
 - God's house of prayer had become a den of thieves, oppressing the poor
- 3) Why were the religious leaders angry with Jesus? (15)
 - Envy: they saw Jesus doing miracles, and heard what people were saying
- 4) What might the cursing of the barren fig tree signify? (19)
 - The Lord's displeasure and coming judgment upon Israel's faithless leaders
- 5) Where does authority in religion come from? (25)
 - Either from heaven (the Word of God) or from men (teachings of men)
- 6) Who did the two sons in the parable represent? (28-32)
 - The first son: tax collectors and harlots who repented at the preaching of John
 - The second son: religious leaders who did not believe John
- 7) What prophecy foretold that religious leaders would reject Jesus? (42)
 - The one found in Psalm 118:22-23

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Evaluate our community service - Bread Ministry to Thorncliffe neighbours. Are we making friends with families belonging to other faith, listening to stories of Syrian refugees in our midst, blessing the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) with the bread? Have we made faith conversations and built friendships with “non-church” people? Are we hospitable as a church?

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Jesus told a third parable directed toward religious leaders: the parable of the wedding feast (1-14). The leaders responded as various factions tried to trip Jesus with questions. Pharisees and Herodians asked Jesus about paying taxes to Caesar (15-22), Sadducees presented an argument against the resurrection of the dead (23-33), and a lawyer asked, "What was the greatest commandment of the Law?" (34-40) Jesus answered easily, and then silenced them with a question of His own regarding the Christ as David's son (41-46).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Many are called, but few are chosen
- * Paying taxes, the resurrection, and the greatest commandment
- * How Christ is both David's son and David's Lord

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What two groups are depicted in the parable of the wedding feast?
 - Those who refuse the invitation; those who accept, but improperly adorned
- 2) How did Pharisees and Herodians try to entangle Jesus in His talk? (15-17)
 - By asking whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar
- 3) What did Jesus reply that prompted them to marvel? (21-22) - "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; to God the things that are God's."
- 4) How did Sadducees try to trip Jesus? (23-28)
 - With a hypothetical situation aimed to show the resurrection is impossible
- 5) What two-fold answer did Jesus give the Sadducees? (29-32)
 - Marital relations don't exist after death; Exo 3:6 proves the dead still exist
- 6) What were the two greatest commandments in the Law? (37-38)
 - Love God with all your heart, soul, mind; love your neighbour as yourself
- 7) How can Christ be both David's son and David's Lord? (45)
 - David's son by virtue of Christ's physical ancestry (his humanity),
 - David's Lord by virtue of His deity, to be demonstrated by His resurrection

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Significance of the upcoming Easter celebration

Reflect on this mystery of the Resurrection: Christ as fully human, and fully divine. Share your thoughts on this mystery.

Session Fourteen (Chapters Twenty-three and Twenty-four)

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twenty-three

With the religious leaders silenced by their inability to entangle Jesus with their questions, Jesus proceeded to decry the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees in a series of scorching rebukes (1-36). Despite His strong condemnation, His love for them was manifested by His lament for the people of Jerusalem (37-39).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees
- * Jesus' grief over the apostasy and fall of Jerusalem

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What does Jesus tell people to do in regard to the scribes and Pharisees?
 - Do what they say, even though they do not practice what they preach
- 2) List some things for which Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees (3-7)
 - They say, and do not
 - They bind burdens on others they themselves would not bear
 - Their works they do to be seen of men
 - They make their phylacteries broad, enlarge the borders of their garments
 - They love the best places at feasts, best seats in the synagogues
 - They love greetings in the marketplaces, to be called "Rabbi"
- 3) What did Jesus tell His disciples not to do? Why? (8-11)
 - Not to use religious titles like "Rabbi", "Father", "Teacher"
 - Rather than be esteemed by such titles, they were to be humble servants
- 4) List the reasons for the eight woes expressed by Jesus (13-16, 23,25,27,29)
 - Preventing others from entering the kingdom of heaven
 - Devouring widows' houses and making long, pretentious prayers
 - Making proselytes twice the sons of hell as themselves
 - Making inconsistent distinctions between the swearing of oaths
 - Paying tithes of minute things while neglecting justice, mercy, faith
 - Cleaning the outside while neglecting the inside
 - Outwardly appearing righteous but inwardly full of hypocrisy/ lawlessness
 - Building the tombs of the prophets while persecuting prophets
- 5) What did Jesus say was the condition of Jerusalem? (38)
 - "See! Your house is left to you desolate"

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twenty-four

This chapter records the beginning of the Olivet discourse, prompted by questions following Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the temple (1-3). It involves the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D., though many also see intertwining references to the Second Coming of Christ (4-51).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The fulfillment of events foretold by Jesus in this chapter
- * The importance of being prepared and productive

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?
 - The destruction of the temple foretold – vv 1-3
 - The sign when things would soon occur – vv 4-28
 - The tribulation and events immediately after – vv 29-35
 - The need to be prepared and productive – vv 36-51
- 2) What questions were prompted by Jesus' prediction?
 - "When will these things be? What will be the sign...?"
- 3) What did Jesus say would happen first? (4-13)
 - There will be false christs, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution, lawlessness
- 4) What would happen before the "end" would come? (14)
 - The gospel preached in all the world
(Cross reference Mk 16:15; Romans 10:16-18; Col 1:23)
- 5) What would be the sign for those in Judea to flee? (15-16; cf. Lk 21:20-21)
 - The abomination of desolation (Jerusalem surrounded by armies)
- 6) What would happen immediately after the tribulation of those days? (29-31)
 - Cataclysmic events in the sun, moon, stars -Son of Man coming on clouds
- 7) Where else is language like this used to describe judgment upon a nation?
 - Isaiah 13:6-13; 19:1-2; 34:4-6; Nahum 1:1-5
- 8) Why did Jesus stress the importance of preparation and productivity?
(36-51)
 - No one knows the day /hour because the Son of Man comes unexpectedly
 - His servants will be judged by their faithful service

DEED/ACTION POINT FOR TWO CHAPTERS:

Watch TV current news and record today's events that were predicted in the Scriptures. Pray for a country that the Holy Spirit impresses upon you.

Session Fifteen

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twenty-five

Jesus continued the discourse on the Mount of Olives with two parables illustrating the need to be prepared/ productive: 1) the wise and foolish virgins (1-13), 2) and the talents (14-30). He concluded by predicting His judgment of the nations by how they treated Israel and the least of His brethren (31-46).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The importance of being prepared and productive
- * The basis upon which nations are to be judged: how we treat others

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What parable illustrates the importance of being prepared? (1-13)
 - The parable of the wise and foolish virgins
- 2) Why is it imperative that one always be prepared? (13)
 - "for you know neither the day nor hour in which the Son of Man is coming."
- 3) Which "coming" is Jesus talking about? (13)
 - Either His coming in judgment on Jerusalem and /or His Second Coming
- 4) What parable illustrates the importance of being productive? (14-30)
 - The parable of the talents
- 5) Based on this parable, what does Jesus expect of His disciples? (15, 21,26)
 - To use what "talents" we have to the best of our ability and opportunity
- 6) In the judgment depicted, who is being judged? On what basis? (32, 40,45)
 - All the nations; on their treatment of Jesus' brethren (His disciples)
- 7) Where is there a similar judgment portrayed in the Old Testament?
 - Joel 3, in which nations are judged based on their treatment of Israel
- 8) Even if such judgments are limited to the nations, what do they foreshadow?
 - The Lord is coming to judge all people at the end,
cf. Acts 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10
- 9) How are punishment and reward described in this chapter? (34,41 and 46)
 - The righteous: inherit the kingdom, go away into eternal life
 - The wicked: into the everlasting fire, go away into everlasting punishment

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

- * Share if there is any transformative change or spiritual growth in your life and in the group through Word and Deed project. Write reflections on a journal.

Session Sixteen

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twenty-Six

This chapter describes the flurry of events leading to Jesus' arrest and trial, with the plot to kill Jesus (1-5,14-16), Jesus' anointment by Mary (6-13), the last Passover supper and institution of the Lord's Supper (17-35), Jesus' prayers in the garden (36-46), the betrayal by Judas and accompanying arrest (47-56), the appearance before Caiaphas and the council (57-68), and Peter's denial as foretold by Jesus (69-75).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The events leading to the arrest of Jesus
- * The institution of the Lord's Supper
- * Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?
 - The plot to kill Jesus - Mt 26:1-5 and 14-16
 - Jesus anointed at Bethany - Mt 26:6-13
 - The last supper - Mt 26:17-35
 - The garden of Gethsemane - Mt 26:36-46
 - Betrayal and arrest - Mt 26:47-56
 - Before Caiaphas and council - Mt 26:57-68
 - Peter denies Jesus - Mt 26:69-75
- 2) Who plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him? (3-4)
 - The chief priests, scribes, elders, along with Caiaphas the high priest
- 3) What did Jesus say would be done for Mary who anointed Him? (13)
 - Her deed would be proclaimed throughout the world as a memorial to her
- 4) For how much did Judas agree with the chief priests to betray Jesus? (14)
 - Thirty pieces of silver
- 5) What did Jesus institute while eating the Passover? (26-28)
 - The Lord's Supper
- 6) What did Jesus predict would happen that night? (31-35)
 - All His disciples would stumble, Peter would deny Him three times
- 7) What did Jesus pray for thrice in the garden of Gethsemane (39, 42 and 44)
 - "let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not as I will, but as You will"
- 8) What claim was Jesus willing to accept at His Trial? (63-64)
 - That He was the Christ, the Son of God
- 9) After Peter denied knowing Jesus three times, what did he do? (75)
 - He went out and wept bitterly

DEED/ ACTION POINT FOR TWO CHAPTERS:

Choose one of these activities and share to the group what you've learned-

- 1 - Research on the significance of the institution of the Lord's Supper
- 2 - Read a spiritual classic book on Discipleship (ask for suggestions)
- 3 – Look into your Prayer Journal and check the list on how God has answered prayers for neighbours at Thorncliffe, so far. Praise God for every answer.
- 4 – Share from your personal journal, if you wish

Session Seventeen

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twenty-Seven

Prevented by law from carrying out execution, the religious leaders sent Jesus to Pilate who condemned Him to be crucified (1-2,10-31). Meanwhile, Judas returned the betrayal money and hanged himself (3-9). Crucified along with two thieves, Jesus expired after six hours (32-56). His body was buried in Joseph's tomb, secured by Roman guards (57-66).

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The events leading to the crucifixion
- * The abuse Jesus suffered prior to His actual death

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What did Judas do when he realized Jesus was condemned? (3-5)
 - Returned the betrayal money and then hanged himself
- 2) What did Jesus confess to Pilate? (11)
 - He was the King of the Jews
- 3) Who was released instead of Jesus? (15-26)
 - Barabbas, a notorious prisoner
- 4) What abuses did the Roman soldiers inflict on Jesus? (26 and 28-31)
 - Scourged, stripped, crowned with thorns, mocked, spat upon, struck
- 5) Who helped bear Jesus' cross? Where was Jesus crucified? (32-33)
 - Simon of Cyrene; Golgotha (Place of a Skull)
- 6) Who blasphemed and mocked Jesus as He hung on the cross? (39)
 - Those who passed by, including the chief priests, elders, and scribes
- 7) What did the guards confess after seeing the events following Jesus' death?
(54) - "Truly this was the Son of God!"
- 8) Where was Jesus buried? Who saw where He was buried? (57-61)
 - In Joseph's tomb; Mary Magdalene and the "other" Mary (cf. Mt 27:56)
- 9) Why was a Roman guard placed at the tomb of Jesus? (62-66)
 - To prevent the disciples from stealing the body and from saying He rose from the dead

DEED/ ACTION POINT

Today is Sharing or Testimony Time about our participation in Word and Deed.

Session Eighteen

WORD - "THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW" Chapter Twenty-Eight

On the first day of the week following His crucifixion, Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week and appeared first to the two Mary, giving them instructions for the disciples to meet Him in Galilee (1-10). Meanwhile the chief priests and elders bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples stole the body (11-15). When the disciples met Jesus in Galilee, He charged them to go and make disciples of all the nations (16-20). This charge we now call the Great Commission.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The circumstances of Jesus' resurrection
- * The details of the Great Commission

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?
 - The resurrection of Jesus - Mt 28:1-10
 - The soldiers are bribed - Mt 28:11-15
 - The Great Commission - Mt 28:16-20
- 2) Who came to the tomb at dawn on the first day of the week? (1)
 - Mary Magdalene and the "other" Mary (cf. Mt 27:56,61)
- 3) What had happened by the time they got there? (2)
 - An earthquake, and the stone from the door removed by an angel of the Lord
- 4) What were the two women instructed by the angel to do? (7)
 - Tell Jesus' disciples that He is risen from the dead and for them to go to Galilee
- 5) Who appeared to the two women on their way to the disciples? (9-10)
 - Jesus Himself, who gave them the same instructions as did the angel
- 6) What makes the soldiers' lie about the body of Jesus fatally flawed? (13)
 - If the soldiers were asleep, how did they know it was the disciples?
- 7) When the disciples saw Jesus in Galilee, what was their reaction? (16-17)
 - They worshiped Him (cf. Mt 28:9), though some doubted
- 8) What did Jesus claim had been given to Him? (18)
 - All authority in heaven and on earth
- 9) What did Jesus charge His disciples to do? What did that involve? (19-20)
 - To go and make disciples of all nations; baptizing and teaching
- 10) What did Jesus promise His disciples? (20)
 - "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Sessions Nineteen and Twenty

CONCLUDING SESSION

SHARING TIME

- * Reflections,
- * Exit Interviews
- * Celebration

DEED/ ACTION POINT:

Based on the greatest command to “to love God and to love our neighbours”, relate/ connect how Word and Deed, our community service learning project in Thorncliffe, will help us participate with the *missio Dei* and obey the Great Commission, that of making disciples of all nations in our own generation.

FACILITATOR’S REMINDER:

Set up individual appointments for post-project interview (personal or by phone). Give an email address if participants prefer this.

APPENDIX B:
Letter of Invitation to Participate
in “Word and Deed” Project

January 2017

Dear _____,

***You are cordially invited to participate in “Word and Deed”:
An integrated and missional approach to discipleship***

Description: As part of our Discipleship Series in 2017, *Word and Deed* will be a service learning project to integrate faith and action. Participants will meet weekly to reflect on *missio Dei*, God's missionary character and initiative to redeem all of creation. Using a study on the life and ministry of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew as part of the Word component, participants will read, reflect, write a personal journal and freely share insights with each other. As for the Deed component, participants will engage in serving the Thorncliffe neighbourhood with partner agencies. A survey before the project will be conducted and an interview follows after the project. The goal is to find out if this integrated and missional approach to discipleship will have an impact on one's spiritual growth.

Requirements

- a) Attend Tuesday study on Matthew's gospel: January 17-June 2017
5: 30 -7 P.M. at Seniors Lounge, #18 Thorncliffe Park Dr., Toronto
- b) Keep a Journal (these are personal, so you may choose what to share)
- c) Participate in a community service activity of your choice/ or with the group

Consent

You will also need to sign a consent form on January 17th meeting. The data collected anonymously can be used in my Action Research project towards a Doctor of Ministry Degree in Ministry Leadership with Tyndale University College & Seminary. Kindly respond to this invitation by emailing glendale_lazaro@yahoo.com. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Glendale

APPENDIX C:
Letter of Information on Research Project

Word and Deed: An integrated and missional approach to discipleship

This research is being conducted by Ms. Glendale Lazaro under the supervision of Dr. Mark Chapman, Dr. Les Galicinski and Dr. Paul Bramer, in the Doctor of Ministry department at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario. This study has been granted ethical clearance by Tyndale's Research Ethics Board.

The purpose of this project is to introduce an integrated and missional approach to discipleship. It is to fulfill the requirements for her completion of the degree, Doctor of Ministry in Ministry Leadership at Tyndale University College & Seminary.

The study will require a questionnaire before the project begins and a post-project interview between participant and the researcher. There are no known physical, psychological, economic, or social risks associated with this study.

Participation is voluntary and without monetary compensation. It would be greatly appreciated if you would answer all material as frankly as possible. You should not feel obliged to answer any material that you find objectionable or that makes you feel uncomfortable. We will keep your responses confidential. Only the researcher and advisor will have access to this information. The data may also be published or presented but any such presentations will be of general findings and will never breach individual confidentiality. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings.

Any questions about study participation may be directed to Rev. Edith-Ann Shantz, or to the Chair of the Official Board, Lewis Banks at dewars70@yahoo.com or to Glendale via email: glendale_lazaro@yahoo.com and glendaleyap@yahoo.com or by phone 647-970-7205. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Research Ethics Board at Tyndale University College & Seminary.

APPENDIX D:
Consent Form

Word and Deed: An integrated approach to discipleship for a missional change in a city congregation

Name (please print clearly): _____

1. I have read the Letter of Information and my questions been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I will be participating in the study. I understand that this means that I will be asked to participate in a three-month discipleship cycle and a 20-minute interview at the end of the project.
3. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time.
I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future. The data may also be published or presented but any such presentations will be of general findings and will never breach individual confidentiality. If I am interested, I am entitled to a copy of the findings.
4. I am aware that if I have any questions about study participation they may be directed to either the minister of Thorncliffe Park United Church, Rev. Edith-Ann Shantz, the Chair of the Official Board, Lewis Banks or to the researcher, Glendale Lazaro, with tel. no. 647-970-7205 and any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Research Ethics Board at Tyndale University College & Seminary.

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E:
Questionnaire before Service Learning

Engagement with Thorncliffe Community

1. Which of the earlier Discipleship Series have you attended recently in our church? Please check all that applies to you.

- Alpha 1: Explore the meaning of life (2014)
 Alpha 2: Growing in Christ (2015)
 Prayer Clinic: The practice and power of praying (2015)
 Lectio Divina: Five movements of holy reading (2016)
 Science and Creation: Study on Genesis 1-11 (2016)

Having attended one of these means you are familiar with the format of our Word Study and reflection.

2. What does being a disciple of Christ mean to you?

3. What spiritual practices/activities must a Christian have to be involved in to grow in their faith?

4. Have you had a chance to serve someone/ a group you can call “less fortunate” than most people?

YES NO If Yes, kindly describe that experience briefly.

5. What is/are your expectation/s in participating in this project entitled “Word and Deed: An Integrated Approach to Discipleship”?

APPENDIX F:
Ethical Standards of Practice for Ministry
Personnel within the United Church of Canada

The ethical standards are presented alphabetically. The document does not represent an attempt at establishing priority or sequence.

1 Competence

Ministry personnel come to their work adequately prepared to fulfill the positions to which they are called or appointed. In these positions, they are called to

- a) represent, truthfully and accurately, their abilities, skills, education, qualifications, and experience
- b) acknowledge the limitations of their skills, abilities, and competencies and make referrals when necessary and/or appropriate
- c) establish, maintain, and communicate appropriate personal and professional boundaries

2 Conflicts of Interest and Perceptions of Bias

Conflicts of interest and perceptions of bias may put ministry personnel's integrity and professional conduct in question. Therefore, ministry personnel are called to

- a) identify and appropriately disclose conflicts of interest or bias, real or perceived
- b) follow, where applicable, guidelines established by the church with respect to conflict of interest
- c) deal appropriately with conflicts of interest, consulting where possible with colleagues and/or the body to which the ministry personnel are accountable

3 Personal Relationships and Professional Conduct

"God's intention for all human relationships is that they be faithful, responsible, just, loving, health-giving, healing, and sustaining of community and self" ("Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality," 1988). Therefore, ministry personnel are called to

- a) abide by and faithfully live out the explicit policies and procedures on sexual abuse (sexual harassment, pastoral sexual misconduct, sexual assault) and child abuse as outlined by The United Church of Canada
- b) be appropriately open and transparent in all relationships
- c) conduct relationships in ways that honour covenants
- d) conduct relationships, especially those that may be intimate and/or sexual, in ways that seek to maintain the peace and welfare of the community of faith
- e) take steps to ensure that alternate pastoral care is available for any person with whom they have an intimate and/or sexual relationship and for whom they are the sole or primary providers of pastoral care

f) disclose to and seek advice from a colleague and/or the appropriate body to which they are accountable, and take steps to disengage from the pastoral care or professional relationship when that relationship is moving beyond a pastoral or professional level

4 Professional Relationships

Ministry personnel are expected to honour the covenantal relationships of other ministry personnel. Therefore, they are called to

- a) respect the call and placement of other ministry personnel, including colleagues or those with whom they are in team ministry
- b) respect the expertise of members of other professions with whom they work in the church, other institutions, or the community
- c) uphold and honour the church's policies on the exercise of the functions of ministry, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, and pastoral care, as outlined in *The Manual*

5 Relationship with the Law

Action on behalf of the church in pursuit of social justice may bring ministry personnel into conflict with the law. Ministry personnel are called to

- a) abide by the law and encourage others to do so
- b) consult with the body to which they are accountable when contemplating any action that they believe to be an ethically justified act of civil disobedience in aid of a greater good
- c) consider—before acting—the consequences to self, church, and community of any action that contravenes or appears to contravene the law

6 Relationships with Persons Served

Ministry personnel are aware of and attentive to the possible impact of their words and actions in caring for the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who seek their help. In all relationships, ministry personnel are called to

- a) uphold the integrity of the ministry relationship in which they serve
- b) honour the dignity, culture, and faith of all persons
- c) respect personal boundaries such as those of space and touch
- d) use the power and influence of their office appropriately
- e) be sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of all, while clarifying and maintaining the professional nature of the relationship

7 Responsibilities of the Role

Ministry personnel are expected to execute faithfully the various responsibilities of their roles. Thus, ministry personnel are called to

- a) adhere to the organization, governance, and procedures of The United Church of Canada as outlined in *The Manual*

- b) fulfill all the responsibilities of their position description and honour the United Church's standards of practice for ministry personnel
- c) protect the integrity of funds and any property entrusted to their care
- d) use discretion and good judgment and abide by applicable guidelines when accepting favours, honoraria, gifts, and other forms of remuneration

8 Self-awareness

Ministry personnel are called to exercise good judgment and maintain a level of self-awareness that enables them to

- a) be accountable to the church, to the ministry in which they serve, and to themselves
- b) be authentic, dependable, trustworthy, compassionate, and understanding, and live with integrity
- c) keep confidences
- d) be open to constructive criticism, guidance, and challenge
- e) accept that, at times, they will fail or make mistakes
- f) be aware of the visibility of their position and consider how their conduct may be experienced and perceived by others

*The United Church of Canada / L'Église Unie du Canada 2017
Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel*

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