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Towards a Reformed Evangelical Program
of Spiritual Formation at Ryle Seminary, Ottawa

A Research Portfolio
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of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Ministry
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by

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Toronto, Canada

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Research Portfolio Approval

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ABSTRACT

In this research portfolio the author seeks to articulate a form of reformed-evangelical spiritual formation and apply it to ministry formation training in both military and civilian ministry training contexts. The author sees spiritual formation as stripping off the old self and putting on the new self by looking to Jesus. Research is presented which shows that this formation often leads to greater resilience in ministry and life, as well as an increased awareness of, and dependence on, God's sovereign grace, leading to a deeper sense of discerning God's voice every day. The author used three parts: a personal spiritual autobiography, a model of spiritual formation in the reformed-evangelical tradition, and a field research project using appreciative inquiry to develop an integrated spiritual formation program at a reformed-evangelical seminary in Ottawa, Canada. The author was successful in using an appreciative approach to engage the students of the Seminary to design a program that was accepted by an expert panel of school administration, denominational leadership, and student leadership. This research portfolio provides both a practical model of spiritual formation in the reformed-evangelical tradition and a means of tailoring this model, through appreciative inquiry, to specific contexts.

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GLOSSARY

Affection: An inner disposition of heart toward, culminating in an experience of regard or love for an object or person.

Beatific Vision: An historical/theological spiritual concept whereby the believer is changed by the Holy Spirit through a vision of God's glory as found in Jesus. In this concept, the various spiritual disciplines become spiritual lenses through which the believer sees Jesus and is changed by his vision.

Glory: The holiness of God which is made manifest to His people. While *holiness* is the otherness of God, *glory* is how that holiness is experienced by the believer.

Means of Grace: The various spiritual disciplines traditionally associated with reformed spirituality. These practices are often listed under the headings of word, prayer, and life in the church and include actions such as Bible intake, personal prayer, worship, spiritual direction, and fellowship.

Spiritual Reformation: A broad evangelical spirituality which arises from traditional reformed theology and spiritual practice. Spiritual reformation is an affectionate spirituality through which the believer's heart, mind, and strength are actively formed by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for God's glory and the believer's good. Being spiritually reformed denotes the believer's experience of this active formation.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework for this research portfolio is spiritual reformation through stripping off the old self and putting on the new self by looking to Jesus. As detailed below, this reformation has been shown to often lead to greater resilience in ministry and life. Spiritual reformation also leads to an increased dependence on God's sovereign grace and a deeper sense of discerning God's voice in everyday life. As defined below, the major themes that permeate my work, therefore, are old self/new self, the beatific vision of looking to Jesus to be changed into his likeness, personal resilience, and God's sovereign grace.

Through my research, I sought to develop a model of spiritual formation born of my reformed-evangelical roots coupled with my experience with various forms of affectionate spiritual practice. The purpose of this model was an attempt to provide a counterbalance to the heavily theological-rational weighting of my tradition with a practical spirituality which engages the believer in a dynamic relationship with the Holy Spirit for God's glory and the believer's good. To do so involved introducing a spiritual framework which was theologically and biblically sound in order to gain acceptance by those within the reformed-evangelical tradition.

Old Self/New Self

A central biblical theme throughout my research portfolio is that of the new self. Writing to the Colossians, Paul instructs them to “put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly” (Col. 3:5a, NRSV) and later explains:

You have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! (Col. 3:9b-11)

The old self is the part of an individual’s identity that is rooted in anything other than God. Mulholland (2006, 44) commented, “These characteristics—fearful, protective, possessive, manipulative, destructive, self-promoting, indulgent, distinction-making—shape our perspectives, attitudes and behaviour patterns.”

As I moved through various stages of my autobiography, I saw very clearly what Mulholland meant as I adopted various false masks at points along my journey. In my spiritual model, I sought to elucidate a biblical process by which the Holy Spirit could bring about this change to the new self.

Jesus said, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it” (Matt. 16:24-25). In explaining this text, A. W. Tozer (2000, 112) pointed out that there seems to be an enemy in each one of us: “Jesus called it ‘life’ and ‘self’ or as we would say, the *self-life*. Its chief characteristic is its possessiveness: the words *gain* and *profit* suggest this.” Specifically, the sins which hide the face of God from individuals are self-righteousness, self-pity and self-love (Tozer 2000, 117).

The issue with the old self is the problem of finding identity in something other than God.

In contrast, the Bible calls us to be formed, or reformed, into the humans God created us to be. Mulholland (1993, 33) wrote, “When the New Testament writers speak of ‘the image of Christ,’ they mean the fulfillment of the deepest dynamics of our being.” It is a matter of our old identity being made into a new identity through Christ’s death and resurrection and learning to live from our new identity by constantly looking to the risen Christ (Rom. 6:5-11). Mulholland added:

Putting on the new nature is allowing the real presence of Christ to take control and dominate us, not as a hostile takeover but as a loving union of our being with God in Christ. This reality is what Paul is pointing us to when he says ‘For me, to live is Christ’ (Phil 1:21) and ‘it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me’ (Gal 2:20), as well as what he previously indicated to the Colossians. (Mulholland 2006, 135-136)

This is the godly new self which my model of ministry seeks to help believers nurture through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Beatific Vision

Another central theological theme in the portfolio is the beatific vision. According to the Preacher, God “placed eternity in the heart” of humanity (Eccles. 3:11) and filled us with longing. This longing for eternity is the cause of the universal restlessness with which all humans struggle. It is this universal restlessness, in my experience, which can cause us to hide behind a false self-identity rooted in this old dying world. Piper (1012, 13) claims that the Christian life is about learning to behold and feast on the Almighty One, by dying to our sin

by faith in Christ and finding our superior satisfaction in God. For the Puritan pastor Richard Baxter, there was one constant question: how has the Christian taken the vision off God, and how does one get the vision back on to Him? This is the Puritan foundation of the beatific vision, focussing on God's glory, meditating on and beholding God as a means of grace and reformation. This can be seen in the letter to the Hebrews where spiritual growth is intrinsically linked to fixing one's eyes upon Jesus:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:1-2)

Morris (1983, 120) commented, "We are to look away from all else and 'fix our eyes on Jesus' (v.2); He is our inspiration and it is to Him that we run." Just as Jesus acted out of the joy set before Him in God, we act out of the joy set before us when we behold God in Christ who sits in glory at His right hand (Guthrie 1993, 250-251). This beholding allows the Spirit to strip us of our old selves and put on the new from God in Christ. My model of spiritual formation is rooted in the belief that God, as found and experienced through faith in Jesus, is so beautiful that one cannot help but live a Holy Spirit-empowered life, wholly devoted to Him in spiritual and life devotion.

This beholding is what Paul meant by the knowledge of God when he prayed:

I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give

you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. (Eph. 1:16-20)

John Stott (1979, 54) wrote that this knowledge is much more a Hebrew than a Greek concept in that it highlights the experiential, personal, and relational aspects over simple truth. It is a dynamic dance of revelation, relationship, community, illumination, affectation, and enlightenment as the believer comes to grasp the truth and behold God in Christ (Eph. 3:19). The biblical root of the freedom of the Christian spiritual life and the beatific vision is found in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.” Seeing the glory of the Lord is an intentional action which leads to spiritual reformation.

The beatific vision resonates with my own desire to experience beauty and hope in the midst of a life spent witnessing much of the opposite. The biblical vision that God is so beautiful and so glorious that we are changed simply by looking to Him reaches past my old self to the very core of my spirit. It causes me to seek out those means of grace in order to experience His grace and look on His beauty. It also fills me with the desire to share the means with others, specifically, sharing with those training for various forms of ministry. The model

I present seeks to leverage the beatific vision towards spiritual formation in the reformed-evangelical tradition.

Personal Resilience

As both an important part of my story and my ministry, personal resilience is a continuing theme in the portfolio. My story was one of discovering the practical need for the spiritual life in meeting the challenges of ministry and life. Emotional and spiritual turmoil brought about by my experiences on deployment with the military and in professional ministry overwhelmed my ability to hide behind my old self and shone a light on my personal need for greater resilience. This gave me the mission to balance the heavily cerebral aspects of my reformed tradition with an equally robust affectionate spirituality. I have learned the hard way that sustainability in ministry is inextricably linked to the extent to which the pastor engages with the Holy Spirit.

Recent developments of spiritual ministry within the public sphere have highlighted the increasing importance of developing well-rooted models of spiritual formation ministry in the Postmodern context. An example of this is the unique ministry of chaplaincy in the Canadian Armed Forces. Over the last two decades, this traditionally Christian organization has endeavored to make the transition to a pluralistic, multifaith ministry in such a way as to allow those who minister as chaplains to do so in a way that is faithful to their calling as ministers in their own traditions (Peterson 2015, i).

According to the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service Manual, the mission of the chaplain is “to support and enhance the effectiveness of the [Canadian Armed Forces] as a whole—its leadership, the individual men and women who serve and their families—through the provision of comprehensive religious and spiritual support, advice and care” (Department of National Defence [DND] 2016, 7). What makes this ministry distinct is that although one works within the multifaith context, he or she is expected to minister from his or her own tradition. The manual continues, “chaplains remain first and foremost ministers of their own civilian faith communities, without whose recognition and endorsement they would not be permitted to exercise ministry in the [Canadian Armed Forces]” (DND 2016, 12). For example, an Anglican evangelical pastor is expected to be, identify, and minister as an Anglican evangelical pastor. However, this same individual is expected to minister in a way that serves everyone. The manual stipulates further that “chaplains offer spiritual care and support to every member of the military community regardless of faith, religion, belief, or lack thereof” (DND 2016, 12). The chaplain is called to minister in such a way as to serve everyone, but is also expected to remain faithful to his or her faith and calling. This provides a practical tension in the day-to-day ministry within a thoroughly secular institution. To navigate this tension, one traditional description of the role states that chaplains are called to “minister to our own, facilitate the worship of others and serve all” (Anglican Military Ordinariate 2016).

As chaplains in many fields attempt to live out similar tensions, one of the new developing roles for public ministry is in the emerging field of personal and

organizational resilience. Karen Reivich helped initiate the University of Pennsylvania's Resilience Center, which was created from the institution's groundbreaking work in positive psychology. Based on her research, a broad spectrum of organizations—from government to corporations—have concluded that “everyone needs resilience. More than fifty years of scientific research have powerfully demonstrated that resilience is the key to success at work and satisfaction in life” (Reivich and Shatte 2003). Although I would challenge whether resilience is *the* key, I would agree that it is an important element of life, success and satisfaction. Resilience is the capacity of an individual to adapt, resist, and thrive in the face of the stress imposed by the various trials and tribulations of life (DND 2015, para. 5). Research by the North American military community has identified spirituality as one of the key pillars which aids in building personal resilience:

Spirituality appears to be largely beneficial for well-being. Koenig and colleagues (2012) reviewed 102 studies in 2000, 81 of which found positive associations between spirituality and well-being. Since that review, they found an additional 224 studies, 175 of which found positive associations between spirituality and well-being. Our findings regarding key constructs of spiritual fitness—spiritual worldview, personal religious or spiritual practices and rituals, support from spiritual and religious communities and spiritual coping—largely echo these overall findings. (Yeung and Martin 2013, 39)

Building on this and similar research, spirituality is one of the six fitness domains that the Canadian Army has identified for its recent performance strategy (DND 2015, para. 4.d).

In the case of the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service, the existing research in personal hardiness, the emerging field of resilience, and the army performance

strategy represent an opportunity for developing new ministries. However, as the database of available resources under each domain of resilience was recently being compiled at the Canadian Army's Doctrine and Training Centre, it was noted that the list of generic, nonreligion-specific spiritual resources was quite sparse. In addition, it was highlighted that it would be difficult to generate any list of religion-specific resources which would be readily accepted across the spectrum of belief or nonbelief representatives of the men and women in the Army. These difficulties were due to the problem inherent in attempting to find spiritual practices which would be acceptable to individuals from the agnostic to robustly religious yet would also fit within the efficaciously described framework. It is important to note that the research on the efficacy of spirituality for personal well-being shows that the benefits of spirituality are not generic. They are linked specifically with spiritual practice, spiritual community, and authentic coping based on rooted beliefs. This poses an opportunity for spiritual practices rooted in a historical framework of belief and poses problems for the 'build-your-own spirituality' resident in most secular environments.

In the milieu of the specific chaplain call of ministering to their own, facilitating the worship of others, and serving all, the chaplain is best situated to speak into the spiritual fitness need when he or she is functioning from his or her spiritual tradition. It stands to reason that if each chaplain reached into his or her own tradition and made teaching readily available from the centuries of spirituality represented, a deep well of resources could be made available, leveraging the networking resources developed by the Canadian Army's

Integrated Performance Strategy. Rather than attempting to settle on a one-size-fits-all answer to the question of spiritual resourcing, the answer to the contemporary problem is both broader and deeper: a greater number of spiritual practitioners offering deeper resources. The purpose of my model of spiritual formation is to provide one example of how the Canadian Army could take advantage of a tradition –the evangelical tradition—to provide followers with a deep and practical means of developing their spiritual life.

The notion of spiritual resilience moves beyond application for military personnel only. I learned through my research that the need for a robust spirituality was recognized by both the students at Ryle Seminary and an expert panel as necessary for sustainable and effective ministries in general. There was an overarching hunger from the students to make their theoretical and theological learning practical and active, as was exemplified by the program framework and design they generated. They desired to work from their new selves in order to build effective and lasting ministries for the Kingdom.

God's Sovereign Grace

Finally, God's sovereign grace is a central theme throughout the portfolio. This is an especially central part of my autobiography, as I experienced my story as God leading me through situations where He grows and blesses me, often in spite of myself.

God's sovereignty is found throughout scripture. We are exhorted to ask God for our daily bread every time we pray (Matt. 6:11). The Psalms (139:16)

confirm that our days were already formed for us. Likewise, as Grudem (1994, 320) points out, the book of Acts (17:28) highlights that all our actions are under God's care and providence. This passage, borrowed from Greek poetry, is instrumental to the understanding of human existence depending on God, especially in the sense of being delivered from divine judgement and being formed in the sense of "having our being" (Wall 2002, 247). My own experience, as found in my autobiography, confirms God's sovereign grace not only in salvation, but in continual formation into the likeness of Christ.

I learned through the process of writing this portfolio that at the centre of a healthy, dynamic reformed-evangelical spirituality is humility. I have come to believe that traditional reformed points of theology such as predestination and God's particular work in the heart of the believer should lead to a greater sense of thankfulness and dependence on God, stripping off the old self and putting on the new. Too often reformed belief manifests itself in a sense of pride, which I believe is a manifestation of the old self and antithetical to biblical faith. My model seeks to balance reformed theology with a strident, dynamic spirituality which, by God's grace, leads the believer into greater Christlikeness, including an ever-increasing sense of humility in response to God's continual work through the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER II: AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My autobiography is a pilgrim story. It involves the making and unmaking of several false images I hid myself behind at various points in my life: a know-it-all teenage boy, an Anglican small-town pastor with a few delusions of grandeur, and a bullet-proof hardcore soldier-pastor. In the end, as I still struggle with my old-self, God has continued to make me into the child He calls me to be.

The most salient image I have been given for my journey is that my life has been on a spiritual train track. Not in the sense that it has been easy, nor that I have been destined for any kind of greatness, but in that it has been guided by the Lord's providence. My spiritual journey has been guided by His hand and His grace. There have been valleys as well as numerous rough patches where I thought the train would come off the rails. These times, though important, have been but stops along the way and I feel as though Romans 8:28 has come true in a very personal sense: "we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." It is personal in that the path has run through high times of graduations, marriage, and the births of my children, as well as the valleys of physical trauma, and the spiritual wounding of war, loss, and unimaginable carnage. As much as I have leaned off the track, or attempted to change lanes without discernment, the Lord has kept the initiative.

No matter where I went in my pride, God's grace met me. In all this I have learned that I am no smarter, nor more deserving, than anyone else, whether they are a believer or not. I have simply been blessed, quite often in spite of myself.

Beginnings

I was born in Peterborough, Ontario, the third child of four, to parents who were active Christians and members of St. Barnabas Anglican Church. By the time I arrived, my parents were engaged in the worship life of our local Anglican parish and members of the Worker Sisters and Worker Brothers of the Holy Spirit, an Anglican lay order which emphasized lay people living by a Benedictine-modelled rule of life.

Dad worked as a sales representative for a large medical firm. My earliest memories are of my father being absent quite often, mainly for work. When he was at home, I do not recall him being very involved in my life. In fact, I remember him having a vague sense of ambivalence towards me, and yet I savoured the few moments he was present and attentive. I have come to believe that my experience of paternal ambivalence created a struggle for me when I would later focus on God as my Father, as I was saddled with images of a disinterested or unimpressed divinity whom I felt compelled to impress constantly. This ambivalence also fed into my need to hide behind the bravado of my old self as I grew older.

My mother was very intentional in raising a Christian family. The children's program at our parish was very robust, with five to six classes each

Sunday during the service. On account of Mom's efforts, I was raised believing in a transcendent God for as long as I can remember. My experience of personal faith in Jesus came at a friend's home. At the age of five or six, I had an offhand talk with my friend's mother about church and God. She asked me if I was saved, and after I showed interest in what that meant, she told me the gospel. I remember vividly receiving clarity about Jesus and accepting Him as my Saviour. My understanding of faith as a gift from God started at that moment.

The years continued with worship at church, Sunday school, and the occasional youth event. One memory that stands out for me is standing with anticipation in line to get the bishop's hands laid on me for confirmation. I was certain that it was going to be a very moving experience, and I was rather disappointed when the 'holy hands' rested on my head and nothing happened. The lack of actual spiritual experience in the somewhat bland nature of much of Anglican church worship would continue to be a struggle for me throughout my journey.

In the early 1990s, my family moved to the Haliburton Highlands after my parents decided to purchase a small business there. This would set the stage for my journey to adulthood. After the move my parents continued to be involved with the Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit who had begun a youth program allowing young people to join, which I did. I took on the order's Benedictine rule of life which included several basic spiritual disciplines such as reading the daily office, engaging with the Bible, keeping the Sabbath, attending regular worship, and praying for the community. I attended several spiritual

retreats offered by the Workers which included teaching in spirituality, silence, contemplation, small-group study, and liturgical worship. This experience gave me a vision of the deeper life in God, but also introduced me to worshipping God as the Lord of Heaven and Earth, rather than simply the placid and comfortable Father of mainline teaching.

Throughout my teenage years, financial hardship reigned supreme in the home. My father began to struggle with alcohol during this period and slipped into unhealthy domestic patterns which were very hurtful for the family. At the same time, my mother began to have her own issues with mental and physical health. While everyone focussed on their own issues and vices, I was able to run rampant without much supervision. I took up smoking and drinking and experimented with drugs. At the same time, the Holy Spirit worked to ballast my prodigal tendencies. Our church became influenced by what was known as the 'Toronto Blessing', and I became very involved in charismatic renewal. I learned of the God, in Jesus, whom I could experience and come to, even as a broken individual. During this period, I felt that I finally began to experience the kind of spiritual renewal that I had not through the religious tradition of liturgy and good works.

My first experience with the Toronto Airport Vineyard came when a group from our church attended a youth conference. It was both the first time that I can remember being engaged by a preacher on a meaningful level and my first experience with engaging in worship emotionally. I left the service completely changed in how I approached worship and experienced my relationship with the

Lord. I still refuse to settle for dry or false outward worship which lacks heart. This has, at times, put me at odds with many in my tradition, particularly those who are more fundamentalist about certain displays or forms of faith and are legalistic about liturgy. At the same time, I struggled with some of the excesses of emotion and ecstasy within the charismatic renewal movement and the lack of focus on long-term formation. Through this period, the Lord instilled in me a love of evangelical theology, rooted, although I did not know it at the time, in the theology of spiritual revival. I also learned of the need for heart in one's relationship with the Lord.

Early Adulthood

Early adulthood involved an introduction to mysticism, an introduction to the broader spiritualities of world religions, and a step into ministry beyond myself. For postsecondary education, I decided to follow a developing call to ministry and attended Thorneloe College, the Anglican College at Laurentian University, for Religious Studies. Sudbury, a city considered the gateway to Northern Ontario, was in the midst of its expansion as a major hub. Traditionally a mining town, the once barren landscape of slag was giving way to both the resurgence of Mother Nature and some urban sprawl. This made Laurentian an interesting cross-section of Christian heritage, Indigenous culture, socialist ideology, and a growing scientific community.

There were two anchors that the Lord provided which kept me trending in a direction towards Him during this time. The first was the surprising Christian

community that I found in residence and, the second was the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Group on the campus. I was involved in the social life of the university; however, I was beginning to find moderation. For instance, while I went to the bars with my non-Christian friends, I was most often the designated driver. I began to see the people around me in my residence and classes as a mission field to be present with but not a part of.

At the same time, I was influenced by the non-Christian spiritualities that surrounded me and that I was learning about in my studies, in particular Eastern and Indigenous traditions. The pressure to start incorporating non-Christian traditions came from several quarters. For example, one of the chaplains at Thorneloe was very interested in New-Age and alternate spiritualities. As a result, communion services in the college chapel opened with a sweetgrass purification ceremony.

At the same time, I was studying a great deal in Eastern spirituality at the Jesuit College and was involved in the inter-faith religious association at the school. I soon became quite enamoured with Eastern traditions. While studying the history of religious mysticism, I was introduced to the work of Thomas Merton. I began to study the teachings of the elders of several Indigenous nations and attended many of their local religious festivals and cultural events. I attended many additional seminars of Eastern spirituality and began utilizing what I learned about Eastern meditation as part of my morning devotions.

It was not until my third year, in conjunction with becoming involved with a strong community of Christian men, that I discerned these Eastern and

Indigenous spiritualities as incongruent with biblical Christian practice.

However, I did gain a clear sense of the differences in the spiritual practice of each of the major religions, particularly between Christianity and the Eastern traditions. I find many authors within the spiritual formation movement, specifically those who have come from the emergent church movement such as Tony Jones (2014), seem to mix these together without serious thought to the vast differences which lie at the root of each tradition, and where the various spiritual practices lead. I decided that I did not want to retreat into myself as the locus of my spirituality nor empty myself and become nothing as I experienced in Eastern thought. I did not believe that all was nothingness, nor was human consciousness a god. Rather, I wanted to move further into experiencing the glory of the Lord whom I discerned in every facet of reality.

The strong community of Christian men I joined was from Laurentian Christian Fellowship. For my first two years in Sudbury, I attended the group and made some friends, but I was not centrally involved. In my third year, I moved out of residence and rented a townhouse with a couple of the guys from the group. This was a clear and straight shot of theological and biblical growth on my spiritual path. We quickly bonded in the sense of becoming a Christian brotherhood, the most humbling aspect of which was that I emerged as one of the leaders of the group. I was immediately struck by the burden of leadership:

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. (James 3:1-2)

I was becoming acutely aware of my own shortcomings, especially as I observed the lives of the men with whom I lived. As well, although I knew it as a biblical fact, I was becoming practically aware that God saw through my outer façade to the nature of my true being. As a result, I could not help but be honest with the guys in our group and allow them to speak into my life. We spent the year slowly making our way through the book of Galatians, and we focused on truly making our identities in Christ over the pride that comes with focusing on our outward appearances and keeping of the law. At this point, going out with the guys meant getting together for a ministry project, to help one another out, or simply to hang out for fun or to study the Word.

Between my second and third years of university, a new chaplain joined Thorneloe in ministry. Marty was a new priest with a young family and had a parish downtown. Suddenly, our chapel services took a turn, becoming far more gospel focussed. Marty introduced me to the ins and outs of truly worshipping within the Anglican liturgy. It was through him that I became involved in the Diocese of Algoma—largely orthodox Anglican diocese which stretched from Gravenhurst to Thunder Bay, Ontario—and was introduced to Bishop Ron Ferris. Bishop Ferris was the first bishop that I had ever heard clearly preach the gospel. For this reason, I began to get more involved in both the parish and the diocese, eventually being accepted as a postulant training for ministry in Algoma.

Formation to Ministry

Having passed through the progressive movements of the Toronto

Diocese, the alternate spiritualities of my undergraduate, and accepted postulancy in a more orthodox evangelical Diocese, I was now clear on where I stood and what I believed—I was a reformed-leaning and charismatic evangelical. For this reason, I felt led to attend Wycliffe College at the Toronto School of Theology, which is an Anglican Seminary in the Reformed tradition.

My first night at Wycliffe, I met Amy. I remember standing on the second floor in the residence getting introduced to my fellow students, and she walked in. Over the next few months, I got to know Amy very well, and we became friends. I had come to a place where I was trying to prioritize quality relationships with women, honouring them as sisters in Christ rather than objectifying them in a worldly sense. This was very much my priority with most of the women I met while in Toronto, which Amy says was something that attracted her to me. It says something to me about the grace in this relationship that she was attracted more to what God was doing in me at the time. We finally attended the residence ‘At-Home’ as a date that year. I learned that evening that my feelings for Amy were, miraculously, reciprocated by her.

I find it very difficult to put my feelings for Amy into words. As the daughter of two inner-city missionaries, Amy has both a special relationship with the Lord and a heart big enough to love the world. From the beginning, our relationship had levels of attraction, affection, and connection that I had never experienced before. When she came to visit me while I was ministering in a small church in the North for the summer, I asked her to marry me. Amy would become one of the mirrors the Lord has held up for me to view and see my own

pride, sin, and brokenness for what it was. This happened as a result of her own ingrained sense of humility and her gentle spirit, which is a stark contrast to how I am when I am working from my old self.

In my first year at Wycliffe, I was intrigued by the story of one of the third-year students who served her internship in a local Anglo-Catholic parish, Church of Saint Mary Magdalene, known as the most Anglo-Catholic parish in the Anglican Church of Canada. My own background was so rooted in the evangelical tradition, which viewed anything Catholic as anti-scriptural, that I realized I knew nothing about this section of the Anglican Church. For this reason, I asked to be placed at Saint Mary Magdalene's for my second-year placement. This parish was higher, or more Catholic, than any liturgy that I had ever experienced. Interestingly, while at the parish, I discerned among many of the members a level of piety and relationship with the Lord which I admired. I ended up at the parish for both the second and third years of my seminary studies. I went through their subdeacon training program, became involved in Christian education, and sang in the men's ritual choir. The immersion in this modality involved heavy focus on ritual and seasonal fasts, the sacraments, traditional forms of liturgy, icons, and the saints. While I gained a greater appreciation for the Anglo-Catholic tradition and the piety of many of the parishioners, I did not find that the worship and faith-life was biblically faithful enough. I also found that the pomp and ceremony tended to cover up a lack of faithfulness to the gospel. For me, it was not unlike the emotion and ecstasy of charismatic worship, covering up a lack of theological grounding and authority. My time at St. Mary

Magdalene's also caused me to re-examine my own belief and rootedness as a Christian. I was brought face-to-face with the false pride with which I had judged those of a higher Catholic persuasion. The Lord used this two-year experience as a crucible for firming my own practice and praxis of 'church' and caused me to consider what I believed and why.

It was during this period that I had what I would call my conversion to social justice. In my first year we were invited, as Divinity students, to a retreat together at a centre outside of the city. The speaker at the retreat was a very social-justice oriented evangelical, who also happened to be my future father-in-law. As he spoke on the gospel's stories of Jesus among the poor and had us meditate on God's Word in worship, the Holy Spirit began to open a new way of thinking for me. Most of the social justice teaching I had heard up to that point had been rooted in Marxist ideology. However, on this retreat the speaker taught of ministry to the poor from a strong exegetical basis and understanding.

Later that year, I became involved in the college's 'sandwich runs', where a group of students would get together and make sandwiches in the Seminary kitchen and hand them out, along with socks, to people on the street. I was also introduced to the ministry of Sanctuary, an inner-city Christian community for people on the margins. Concurrently, I had taken up reading Jean Vanier (1998) and Henri Nouwen (1986) who both spoke to me quite profoundly. Soon, I was questioning the rugged individualism and the lack of understanding of the importance of community in healing and wholeness in which I had been raised.

The importance of community in formation became an important theme

for me. Vanier (1998, 35) wrote, “Belonging is important for our growth to independence; even further, it is important for our growth to inner freedom and maturity. It is only through belonging that we can break out of the shell of individualism and self-centredness that both protects and isolates us.” In the summer between my first and second years of seminary, Vanier came to Muskoka to speak at a youth conference. I was on the planning team for the conference and one of the hosts for the event. I was not only sitting under his teaching, but also interacting and praying with him for the weekend. I most recall the vivid picture he painted of the deep love of God for those on the margins.

Through these means I met the Jesus who actively reached out to the poor and, in many cases, even seemed to show deference to those on the margins. I felt as though my eyes were opened, and I was shocked that I had never previously recognized or interacted with this reality of God present throughout scripture. This had profound implications for how I would gear my ministry and preaching, as well as where I searched for the face of Christ.

It was during this period that I had a reconciliation with my father. My parents had lost their store to bankruptcy, and Dad's construction business was floundering. The situation at home had become unbearable for my mother, and she decided to separate from my father. I received a phone call from Dad, because no one else in the family would speak to him. I made the trip home from Toronto and sat with him for a day and a half. As he reflected on his broken relationships with the family, I was able to speak into his life about how difficult he was to live with growing up, being honest in my assessment of his anger,

drinking, and aggressive tendencies. We ended up crying and praying together; eventually, he and Mom had a reconciliation.

My father never completely changed his ways, as several deeply entrenched behaviours had a very firm grip on him, but I do think he sought harder for the Lord. Our relationship was much closer from that point to the moment of his passing years later, when I prayed psalms over his deathbed. I feel that this reconciliation put a stamp on the growth that God was bringing about in my life spiritually, as it mirrored my understanding of God as my Father of lights.

One of the positives of my secular religious studies degree was that, during my master's degree at the Toronto School of Theology, I was not easily swayed by the more extremist-progressive teachings in my required courses. An example of one of these courses was affectionately known as 'baby Bible,' the first-year New Testament course, which was taught jointly by the various colleges of the School. In fact, the course was mainly influenced by the United Church of Canada's Seminary and focussed heavily on the work of Bart Ehrman. Having focussed on secular approaches to religion and experimented with Eastern spirituality in my own spiritual practice, I had no compulsion to buy into what I felt was heresy taught in this and other courses of similar ilk.

As I moved on to my second and third years, I was able to choose more elective courses. Having tired of fighting the same basic battles against the same novel secular approaches to Christian faith, I chose to focus on classes known for a gospel-centred focus. I grew a great deal in knowledge during this period and was influenced by the theologies of Luther, Calvin, and Karl Barth. I began to

undergird my evangelical worldview with a stronger reformed theological framework. Even while I was gaining this systematic theological foundation, I felt the Lord was calling me to keep a broader view of the church. As a result, I was still worshipping at the heavily Anglo-Catholic church, and I took several courses with the Roman Catholics—including the Jesuits—and the Presbyterians. Of note, I took a course on grace from Regis College, a Jesuit college. During class one morning, I remember I had a number of ‘aha’ moments, only to return home to be glued to the television watching the events of September 11. This contrast of classroom theology meeting the grittiness of life is something that stays with me. Through my courses, the community, and God’s hand in these years, I believe I left Wycliffe College with a rather robust and resilient faith, a sense of God’s sovereign grace, and a desire to continue to take off my old self and put on the new. One issue, however, that comes with youth, newly acquired ministry skills, and a strong theological framework is pride.

Early Ministry

The move north to Muskoka, in Ontario, felt like a coming of age for me, both professionally and spiritually. I was struck immediately by the burden of ministry and the trust afforded to us as pastors in serving God’s community. The Diocese of Algoma offered me an assistant curacy, a two-year assistant pastorate in preparation for my own church, in a parish in a small town in Muskoka. As I came to the curacy for my first post-seminary and full-time ministry position, I did so in the hope and confidence that I would take on the world. I was full of all

the passion and optimism of youth and the energy of someone also about to start his life as a married man with Amy. My first few months within, what turned out to be, a chronically dysfunctional church, were a rather rude awakening. The position had been misrepresented to me as a comprehensive ministry experience. Although both the bishop and the church had assured me that youth ministry would only be one part of my ministry, it quickly became apparent that it was my primary, and almost exclusive, role. I was, from the beginning, not at all interested in youth ministry, and found the job ultimately disappointing and humbling. On top of this, there was quickly a dispute over my housing allowance as the church sought to save money, and I had several early run-ins with the head priest, who was having her own troubles with the congregation. Much of the tension was of my own doing and is another example of the pride which remains one of my chief spiritual struggles. Taken together, the experience of this first full-time position in a church was quite an awakening to the messy reality of church leadership and politics.

This was also my introduction to the temptation to pastoral busyness that can quickly overtake a parish minister. Although this church was in a small town in rural Ontario, it was a retirement community. Many of the members and leadership of the church were retired, white-collar persons from the Toronto area. The expectations of the church were, therefore, coloured by a worldly idea of professionalism. As a result, I felt as though how I spent my time was consistently measured by some sense of a return on the church's investment, and I felt the lure of building my identity on seeming busy and important. I did not do a

very good job of finding a balance with my work, nor dealing with that pressure. This ended up affecting my faith and my relationship with Amy. It was not until I moved to my next ministry and, by God's grace, fell under the influence of some godly senior ministers, that I even recognized this error.

After a year and a half, it became apparent that the bishop was disappointed in how the curacy was working out. It was after a year and a half that we agreed it was time for us to move on to a different ministry. Interestingly, the pastor about thirty minutes north of us was moving churches, and both he and the bishop felt that we would be a good fit. One of the most amazing ministry experiences of my life was being the pastor to the Anglican Parish of the Good Shepherd in Emsdale, Ontario, in the Deanery of Muskoka. This was a wonderful loving little country parish where Amy and I started our family, fell in love with God's people, and spread our wings in ministry. God's providential hand used my previous experience to continue to form me and build resilience for this bigger step in ministry. After such a dry time spiritually in our first experience, the Holy Spirit was very obviously present and active with us in Emsdale. For example, while settling into the ministry, Amy and I had a moment of discernment together and a vision of our future in ministry.

As we walked around the sleepy little hamlet surrounding the church, we noticed almost every house had a child's bicycle in the driveway. It turned out that Emsdale was a blue-collar town where many of the workers from Muskoka made their home due to cheaper housing and lower taxes. The town itself is just five minutes north of the Muskoka County border, in the cheaper Almaguin

Highlands region. The population, therefore, was made up of a large number of young families. We talked about how wonderful it would be if, in the future, we knew the names of the children and had them running up to say, 'Hi,' when the pastor and his wife walked by. We had a vision of being able to speak into their lives, and the lives of their families, for the Lord. The next week we put together plans for an outreach-focussed youth group for children twelve and under called Youth@Emsdale, a hybrid ministry between a youth group and a boys—and—girls club. We started the program and were amazed when, within a matter of months, the Lord brought more than seventy children out to the program and our regular Sunday morning youth services were at full capacity. This outreach formed the centrepiece of our ministry at Emsdale, and the Lord used it to build momentum, create excitement for ministry to existing members, and helped to add new members to the church. Yet again, in spite of ourselves and my various and sundry rookie mistakes, the Lord was faithful.

It was during our time at Emsdale that our first child, our son Edwin, was born. This was, to say the least, both a spiritual and an eye-opening experience. Amy took to being pregnant and nesting like it was the most natural thing in the world to her, and becoming a dad was a realization of one of my purposes. When Edwin was born, it was both an amazing and frightening experience. When I looked in his eyes for the first time, I was startled. Here was this living little being, partly formed of my own body, but also my own soul. I was simultaneously in love and awe from the beginning. This gave me a sense of two things. First, I received a sense of the weight of fatherhood and began

immediately to see my own father in a new, more sympathetic light. Second, and most importantly, I believe I was given a vision of the love with which the heavenly Father holds His children.

It was also during this period that I began to experiment in ministry, including the use of new available media for ministry and community building. We also updated the audio/video in our worship space and began to use video and media in our services. We made mistakes, and ruffled some feathers at times, but God gave the parish amazing patience and grace with us as we made these changes fast and furious. With the help and advice of some solid parish leaders I learned how to approach new horizons of ministry with solid education and consultation. Simply put, we loved this little parish, and they loved us right back.

In the final year of my time as pastor in Emsdale, the diocese made a decision that made it clear that our time in the parish was coming to an end. When we originally arrived in the church, the attendance and financial situation was such that the diocese's primary long-term plan was to merge the Emsdale church with the four-point parish to the north, which was in even worse shape financially. By the time we reached our third year in Emsdale, the financial situation was resolved, and we had money to upgrade our worship space to accommodate our growth and evolving worship style.

The diocese, however, decided, against our advice, to go ahead with the plan to merge the worship communities as the parish to the north had grown completely unsustainable. The bishop explained to me that they wished to 'lend our strength' to them. This meant a huge change in ministry focus which, as the

plan stood, included far less ministry time in Emsdale, including Sundays. I felt that this was going to be a death knell to our growing ministry. On a personal ministry level, the new ministry bounds of the parish would have had me making an hour trip from one end of the parish to the other between church buildings. There are those who specialize in this kind of multi-point large-area ministry. However, this was not a ministry I felt called to in any way.

Around the same time, I was accepted into the Reserve Chaplaincy of the Canadian Armed Forces. Applying to the Reserves had been a way to test a call to serve God in the Army. Once I was trained and serving a reserve infantry unit in North Bay, Ontario, I requested to the chaplain branch to be considered for deployment to Afghanistan. I was told that I could only be sent if I joined the Regular Force as a full-time chaplain. The recruiter made it clear how much need there was for ministry to the troops, especially with the war going on, and how short they were for chaplains.

During my short time in the reserves, I had already found that this ministry fit my gifts and my passions very well. I enjoyed deploying to the field and found that even the more difficult parts of the ministry, such as the notification of family members of casualties, were an honour to take up. In addition, I had joined the local fire hall in Emsdale, and was the chaplain for a number of the other fire halls in the area. I simply found that the interaction with those I served with, though they may never come to the church, was a ministry and mission that drew me in. This was a time of serious prayer for Amy and me, as we enjoyed parish ministry. As well, through my mentors, prayer, and the crucible of church ministry, I was

coming to realize the extent to which my pride was a driving force in my life. The possibility that I was being drawn to feed my old self through money, worldly acclaim, and position was a serious concern to work through. After several months, and a rather robust application process, I announced to the parish that Amy and I were moving to Trenton to start our lives ministering in the military.

The Canadian Armed Forces

Our move to Trenton coincided with Amy's pregnancy with Clarke, our second son. For the second time, I went off to basic training while my wife stayed home pregnant. Basic training the second time around was much like the first, but twelve weeks rather than four. I found that I was far better prepared this time, not only for the intellectual and physical demands, but also the spiritual challenge of the training. I became very comfortable not needing to be the first or the fastest during the course, and my patience level, as a result, was much higher. I was also much more focussed on maintaining my spiritual practices of prayer and study as a means to survive the challenges we faced day to day. These challenges included being gassed, long marches in weighted kit, overnights under personal tarps in extreme weather, and work at high heights.

Following my initial training, I began my Regular Force ministry under the leadership of one of the godliest leaders for whom I have ever worked. My supervisor during those two years was active in instilling in his chaplains a sense of working from their vocation rather than from a worldly perspective. As a

veteran of many years working in ministry in this secular setting, he knew well the allure of the world in our job. I remember one case when I was disappointed because the other new chaplain was given a wonderfully big office, while I was still stuck in the common room working without a computer. I wrote an email to him, which was more pointed than it ought to have been, sharing my frustration. My supervisor, who could have taken the tack of simply putting me in my place, instead chose this as a moment of spiritual mentoring for me. This silly little rant, that I had pridefully worked my way into, became a moment in which I was called by this godly pastor and friend to the higher way of following Jesus as a chaplain. His grace in that moment spoke to me of a different way of ministry in the secular milieu within which I was now planted.

Shortly after basic training, Clarke was born. Clarke, as everyone still calls him, is the perfect counterpart to his older brother. He was always a quiet and thoughtful little guy with eyes big enough to take in the world. If I had a sense of the burden of parenthood after Edwin was born, Clarke's birth amplified it and sent me to the cross once more asking to be a better man for my boys.

My first two years of ministry in the military included working on the flight line with a few different squadrons and a tasking as chaplain to a Special Operations unit. The most difficult part of being in Trenton were the ramp ceremonies: the ceremonies provided when a plane repatriated the remains of a soldier who had died in combat in Afghanistan. The available soldiers and air-crew of CFB Trenton would line up in ranks on one side of the tarmac, and the family would line up on the other beside an assortment of politicians and generals.

One of the chaplains from the Trenton team would be tasked with ‘standing the ramp’ beside the aircraft very near the family. I stood several of these and was present in the ranks for most of the others during those two years.

We did not know it at the time but found out later that the ramp ceremonies had been a serious stressor on all those who were involved. I have spoken to many who link some of their own emotional difficulties to the number of ‘ramps’ we attended in Trenton. For my part, I found the primary chaplain task was extremely difficult, especially as I could hear the reactions of the family members as the transfer case, or coffin, came into view; hardest was the reactions of children.

I also had somewhat of a trial by fire working with the Special Forces. These soldiers had complex issues far different from their Air Force counterparts. Working with them prepared me for what was coming next, seven years of Afghanistan and post-Afghanistan ministry with the Army in Petawawa. The one thing that became obvious while in Trenton was that the amount of prayer and discussion that Amy and I had put into discerning our future had led to a wise choice. I was working in a ministry that matched my gifts, and Amy was finding an outreach ministry among the spouses of the military members. As well, we found ourselves under the solid biblical teaching of a local church which included a solid small group ministry which plugged us into a community of young Christian families. For that season of our lives, the Lord had placed us where He wanted us. We were coming to realize that ministry is a series of seasons during which simple faithfulness to Him matters most.

We learned very quickly that Petawawa—or Pet, as it is sometimes called—is a place of extremes. It is said that you will either love it there and never want to leave, or you will hate it and won't be able to wait to get posted out. This is due to the mix of isolation, especially in the winter months, the constant tempo of highly operational units, and the natural issues created by a large group of type-A, front-line soldiers. When we were posted in 2009, a battle-group had just returned from Afghanistan, and another was training to deploy there. The war years tested everyone from the commander to the gun-slinger private to their limits.

As far as my own ministry goes, 'Pet' was both exhilarating and extremely difficult. The Lord used this time to form me to search for His heart far more than I had previously. My first posting on the base was as chaplain to the Royal Canadian Dragoons. The Dragoons, as they are commonly known, are the oldest cavalry (armoured) regiment in the Canadian Army. I was posted into the unit to provide rear-party ministry at home in Garrison while the soldiers were deployed. At that time, the Dragoons had a squadron, roughly 100-120 soldiers, deployed to Kandahar and another squadron-sized group getting ready to deploy. From the first day I joined the unit, I was engaged weekly in repatriating casualties, dealing with those recently returned and their families, and other critical incidents. Every day seemed to be a different emergency that called for my attention. Although exhilarating, it is a ministry which is quickly fatiguing if one was not careful to keep proper boundaries and hold fast to their daily practice spiritual disciplines.

January 12th, 2010 began for me the same way as every other day. I had

grabbed a coffee and was sitting down in the adjutant's office to see what was on the go for the day. The adjutant, the senior captain in the regiment and main staff officer for the Commanding Officer, had just got off the phone with brigade headquarters and informed me that the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) of the Canadian Armed Forces was deploying to Haiti in response to the earthquake that had struck overnight. The Prime Minister had ordered that the DART deploy as soon as possible. This was a surprise because I had only heard about the earthquake in passing and because I was recently appointed as chaplain to the DART, which was placed on high readiness in case any national or international response was needed. After a quick phone call, the adjutant ordered me to go through the deployment preparation process and attend the briefings that morning. By 1700 hours that evening, I had packed my kit, said goodbye to Amy and the boys, and was on the three-hour bus ride to the staging airport to await deployment to the disaster zone.

After some administration and waiting on the tarmac in Trenton, we took off at 1500 hours January 13, for Port-au-Prince, Haiti. When we finally landed in the centre of the capital, it was nighttime, and the airstrip was eerily quiet. In the distance we could see several fires still burning in the hills and in the core of the city. Due to a lack of logistical support, we unloaded the Globemaster, the Forces' jet with the largest payload, by hand before bedding down on the airstrip to sleep as we waited for our vehicles to arrive several hours later to move us to the embassy. Those used to front-line military deployments had slept, while many of the medical staff and logistics personnel ambled about nervously

awaiting contact with our forward elements in the city.

As chaplain, it was my job to make my way around to all personnel, offering support and encouraging words. I also made sure to score toilet paper and paper-towel from the pilots before they took off back to Canada. As a result of this, I became very popular among those who did not come prepared. Most of the experienced soldiers know enough to bring their own for these kinds of situations. The ongoing differences between the front-line soldiers and the supporters were somewhat humorous to begin with on the deployment. After two months, the tension between the two groups became a serious morale issue.

The buses finally arrived to take us to our preliminary camp at the embassy. The trip through Port au Prince to the embassy took us through the heart of the city, and the middle of the earthquake's worst destruction. As we drove from block to block, we witnessed the images we had been watching on the news in Canada come to life in front of our eyes. It is hard to explain what a city in the developing world looks like after it has collapsed. Entire buildings were thrown on top of one another and spilled out into the streets, people wandered through the wreckage. I do not wish to record here the experience of death everywhere. Something that sticks with me is that every public school was flattened. We learned later that this was due to the fact that Haiti is such a corrupt place that the shabbily built government buildings (most government building money was simply pocketed), in particular schools, were the most susceptible to imploding. The saddest part was that the earthquake took place during what was parent—meet—the—teacher day across the school board; entire families were in

the schools when they collapsed. This trip was one of the darkest moments of my life, and then, in what we later learned was one of the most dangerous parts of the city, our bus broke down and the motorcade went on without us.

This became one of the moments when I realized what it was going to be like on this deployment. In a dire situation like this, soldiers learn instinctively to turn to the chain of command and carry out their orders without question. This is how everyone gets home safe. In this case, however, the senior tactical officer on the bus was a pharmacist. To be sure, one can be a medical officer and a solid command officer at the same time, but this was not the case at that moment. It became quickly apparent that he did not know what to do, nor did he realize, until I rather bluntly pointed it out to him, that he was the senior person in charge. This scared me more than anything else; I, the chaplain, was having to coach a commander in setting up a basic cordon around the derelict vehicle. Making matters worse, some of the soldiers on the bus had not yet been issued ammunition for their weapons. We disembarked the bus, and the soldiers took their places as we waited for quite some time, staring at the destruction. Luckily, as the crowd of curious locals was just getting bold enough to start moving closer, a replacement bus arrived, and we moved on to the embassy.

This first night was a taste of what I would experience for sixty days as chaplain to the DART, including unbelievable hardship, destruction, death, and interpersonal struggles between our staff, born of the stress. On top of this was the lingering doubt caused by a natural disaster having occurred at this time in a place where the Christian faith is so prevalent. The very buses that drive down

the streets have praises to Jesus and Psalms painted across their sides. However, this was also a time when I experienced dynamic answers to prayer through several situations where my life was clearly in danger. For sixty days, I worked elbows-deep with the medical staff, alongside our soldiers as we fed people at a local world food programme distribution, and with the United Nations protection cluster in orphanages, while always trying to sort out problems between personnel. It was the most intense period of ministry in my life. In fact, the intensity that started on the first night very seldom let up. I felt like, every day, I was party to a new tragedy of some sort, whether it was saying the last rites over a young girl while her twin sister looked on or sitting with a little boy while his father lay nearby with very little chance for survival. In the evenings, I was the outlet for the other members of the DART who had to get the tragedies they witnessed off their chests. I found myself having trouble with my patience and anger near the end of the tour, particularly with some members of the chain of command when it came to care for the soldiers. This was a time of serious spiritual battle for me. Even now, many of these events and stories come back to haunt me as I lie awake at night. It is interesting to note that a great many of us who were on that deployment all have the similar experience of waking up at 0300 in the morning most nights since, unable to get back to sleep. Many soldiers have mentioned that they struggle more with the Haiti tour than their combat tours to Bosnia or Afghanistan. Through this traumatic time in my life, I was often brought back God's promise in the scriptures:

He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect

in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong. (1 Cor. 12:9-10)

Although I had believed this with my head, I was soon to experience it in a profound way in my heart and life.

My deployment to Haiti was followed, two and a half months later, by a deployment to the Theatre Support Element for Task Force Afghanistan, OPERATION ATHENA. While my deployment with the DART was with the Army, this deployment was with the Air Force. We were deployed to a staging base which is still, technically, a secret desert location. My main function for this six-month tour was as part of the two-person chaplain team to the Air Force personnel servicing the camp. My secondary duty was to run the out-of-cycle decompression site for soldiers coming out of Afghanistan. A week before their scheduled return date from theatre, we would move our soldiers to an undisclosed location away from the fighting, to decompress, blow off some steam, and receive briefings on mental health and reintegration with their families. It was my job to provide the briefings and be present with the soldiers if they wanted to talk during their three days away. I had several intense conversations each week with details of the soldiers' tours of duty as they sought to make sense of their experiences and prepare to return to normal life. In our vocation, we consider ourselves keepers of the story, a role that can be very difficult when one's own cup is full. This was also a time when I returned to the practice of being involved with ramp ceremonies. There were 'ramps' on the tour as well, just as there had been in

Trenton, when the remains of coalition soldiers were sent back to their home country.

I started to notice during this time that my patience level was running very low. The experiences I had that year, and the new experiences of those from the warzone, were starting to wear. I was blessed during this time both with my fellow Canadian chaplain with whom I had deployed and an older Australian chaplain who was deployed to the same base. As the Apostle wrote:

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:24-25)

We kept one another grounded and urged each other on, even as we were constantly dealing with the high-octane realities of ministry while deployed. Most importantly, I remained steadfastly anchored in God's Word. More and more, spending time in the Word and in prayer was keeping me going day-to-day.

Immediately upon my return from ROTO 10, I began to struggle with my own mental and spiritual health. As well, things had deteriorated between several chaplains on the Petawawa team, and in my state, I was not at all helpful to the situation. I was overly combative and hyper-aroused most of the time.

Spiritually, this became a very dry time for me. While I had kept to some semblance of spiritual practice while deployed, coming home was like hitting a brick wall. I was unhappy at work, angry at home, and rarely slept. At the pleading of my wife, I walked through the door of our base mental health clinic and asked for help. I went into therapy for several years. In God's grace, there

were a number of changes on the chaplain team that summer which were obviously the Lord answering our prayers. The team eventually became the strongest ministry group with whom I have ever worked. Three of the chaplains who arrived in that year became peer mentors God used to bring me back to spiritual health. Two of them, and their wives, ended up being godparents to my daughter and youngest son. This is when I feel my understanding of strong Christian community was deepened.

Oddly, it was my first non-Christian counsellor who asked me about my spiritual practice. It was during that session that I realized that the Holy Spirit, my main source of healing, energy, and love, was being checked by my own anger, pride, and brokenness. That was a decision-moment for me: between spiritual aridity and health, between careerism and ministry, between my pride and God's plans. It was also at this time that I was reintroduced to my reformed theological roots through reengagement with my studies. I was soon immersed once again in the solid foundation of evangelical spiritual practice, rediscovering the works of Richard Foster and Dallas Willard. The Lord, in His timing, brought these aspects of life together and drew me back to Him in a deeper way. Over the next few years, I felt as though my spiritual life was built back up from that foundation.

As I reread Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline* in particular, I resonated with his message. I took his words as a clarion call about letting go of my old self:

Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction

is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people. (Foster 1998, 1)

As a result of how Foster spoke to me, I practised the disciplines as I went through his work methodically. Fasting returned at this time as an important part of my spiritual practice. The experience of doing the various disciplines as a simple form of worship and a means of grace, rather than a penance or some sort of austere religious imperative, spoke to my heart during this time of rebirth and renewal. I would say that this was, in fact, both my rebirth into reformed belief and my conversion to spiritual formation.

Returning from deployment became the context for the most profound spiritual growth of my life. While it was extremely difficult and painful for both me and my family, the Lord used it for my good and His glory. As Bramer (2016) commented, this was the big stop sign stimulus which, although trauma led to a personal crisis, became a vehicle within which God showed me His mercy.

As I was wrapping up my time working with the Dragoons, my daughter Jubilee was born. She was instantly daddy's little princess and the apple of my eye, not to mention a little version of her mother. The joy and awe I experienced being the father to a little girl brought me full circle in my own relationships with women. Raising a little princess in Christ in this culture has given me a respect for what women go through.

During this period, I was also involved with an evening ministry in the chapel which was an extension of the Meeting House, a megachurch located in Toronto. We had developed, along with some local Christians who were similarly

minded, an evening service at the chapel which was an approved teaching site for the Meeting House, using their video-recorded services. There were some profound differences in some areas, as they are passionately pacifist, but we were able to steer through this with the common goal of engaging a good many people. Personally, the church's focus of faith without religion had a profound effect on me in my own walk with Jesus. In many ways, this focus on a personal and communal integration with God, by the Holy Spirit, allowed me to put the faith of my tradition into further perspective. We discovered that this new focus was not only a hunger of ours but was shared by many others whom I would consider spiritual orphans. Several people either came to faith or recommitted themselves to faith through this ministry. As we stumbled along looking for the Lord ourselves, He pulled us together with fellow pilgrims simply looking for a vision of His glory. The ministry lasted just over a year, and as fast as it developed, it was gone again. Every single member of the community was either posted to a different base, released from the military and moved, or in one case, passed away. It was clear that that ministry had fulfilled its mandate from the Holy Spirit and provided another wonderful season in ministry.

One of the new leaders on our team who arrived that summer had been a captain with me on ROTO 10. Now a major, she knew and recognized what was going with me. Following my parental leave for Jubilee, this leader had me moved from my front-line unit position to the coordinator/pastor of the Protestant base chapel working directly for her. The change of pace was good for me, and a return to a pastoral role running a church served to add to the momentum my life

was taking towards the Lord. This change gave me the time to reconnect with community and help form the chapel into a spiritual community where people encountered and engaged with Jesus on a meaningful level. It also moved me out of the hectic day-to-day grind of being a front-line unit chaplain, allowing the time to focus on theology, spirituality, and the rhythms of the means of grace.

With the end of the Meeting House ministry, we focussed attention on the continuing changes to our larger chapel ministry. This was both an exhilarating and difficult time. I was brought in as the chapel pastor, not only because it was the best thing for me at that time, but also because major changes were needed. In contrast to civilian ministry, as the chapel pastor I was the military officer in charge of the military institution with a mission to serve the soldiers and their families. This allowed the chaplain team to make significant changes to update the ministry, even through several were not popular. By God's grace, the ministry grew both in numbers, and in the percentage of military families who attended. The chaplain that followed me after the two years of change took the reins and helped the ministry grow even further.

This position also afforded me more time for prayer and study as I took seriously the charge to minister also to my fellow Protestant chaplains on the team. I felt a desire for the chapel to be a place that had the sense of being well-prayed ground. This also coincided with my return to studying deeper theology and pastoral studies.

In my second year as the Pastor of the Chapel, the chaplain who had been my supervisor in Trenton was posted in as my new supervisor. I also discovered

during this time that there had been a major discrepancy between how I had been annually reviewed, and how many of my peers on other bases had been. This led to several animated discussions between several supervising chaplains and myself. However, my immediate supervisor was, yet again, able to speak into my life about what was truly important. The Lord also led me to think about my priorities as I made my way through the words of Jesus in the gospels during this period, words such as:

And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. (Luke 12:29-31)

At the same time, we were offered several new opportunities to return to civilian ministry, and I started to explore different options for a Doctor of Ministry. After a great deal of prayer and searching the Lord, we ended up staying in the Armed Forces while I completed the degree. During this discernment process I learned the value of a solid spiritual director. To sit with an older and mature Christian while he prayed with me through the process was of amazing value.

As my time was coming to a close in the chapel, Amy gave birth to our fourth, and final, child, our son Eli. This sweet little monkey became the cherry on top of the family. He quickly became everyone's baby, and it warmed my heart to see the mothering instinct kick in for Jubilee almost immediately. In my life, Eli was a sign that my quiver was complete and my cup was running over; this time in a blessed way.

When I finished my allotted time as the Chapel Pastor, I was asked to

return to front-line unit ministry for a year with the Third Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment. The Third Battalion is a light infantry unit of airborne and air-mobile soldiers including snipers and reconnaissance troops. I leapt at the chance to return to this ministry to which I felt such an affinity. I hit the ground running with the Third Battalion and was introduced to the developing science of resiliency theory by my new supervisor. I immediately put requests in to start my doctoral studies training focusing on the link between spirituality and resilience. This was a natural area of study for me as I found that my own spiritual formation was so instrumental in personal resilience and overcoming the difficulties when I returned home from tour.

Following my time with the Third Battalion, I was moved into a supervisory role, and eventually, promoted to the rank of Major. With my promotion, I was posted to Ottawa to be the senior staff officer of the Canadian army chaplaincy, working directly under the army command chaplain. Eventually I ended up being selected as the executive assistant and staff officer to the Chaplain General, Major-General Guy Chapdelaine. In this role, I was responsible for reviewing and editing all policy and direction from the Chaplain General's office. My passion for spiritual resilience and soldier care began to shift to a focus on the wellbeing of chaplains and pastors. I began to think about ministry formation and the opportunity educational institutions have to influence the spiritual and emotional well-being of the next generation of pastors. I have come to realize this is possible if these institutions would put greater emphasis on personal spiritual formation in their training programs.

Going Forward

As I look to the future, I do not know exactly what Amy and I will be doing as I feel we continue in a state of discerning with respect to our call and our futures. The ultimate goal of this quest, thus far, and I believe into the future, is to gain greater experience of God's glory in my formation by His grace. Part of this, I believe, involves a consolidation of my experiences in ministry to aid the spiritual formation of others, particularly those studying for ministry. What form this will take, whether in the military, the church, or education, I do not know. What I do know is that it will continue to be guided by His grace and will involve twists, turns, difficulties, and joys that I will not be able to anticipate. Amy and I are presently entering a time of life when many of those we love are growing older and departing into the great mystery. My own father was diagnosed with dementia and passed away just a year ago. How great is our God that I had reconciliation with him long before it was too late? We are continuing to learn to trust in His sovereignty, taking care to recognize the signposts of His wisdom as He guides us along the way. As Amy and I travel the rail of life together, we do so trusting in the sure and certain hope of God who loves us, Jesus who saves us, and the Holy Spirit who leads us into all holiness. Life is short and, as one of my best friends puts it, this isn't a rehearsal.

My experience with the trials of operational and ministry life, as well as the post-traumatic growth that is possible when one works for it, has led me to seek for a particular model of spiritual formation for those in my tradition. As stated above, I believe that the 'one size fits all' approach to spirituality does not

carry with it the efficacy necessary to aid in becoming resilient in life or ministry, whether military or civilian. This conviction has informed the model of spiritual formation which follows. As I have returned and grown into the reformed-evangelical tradition, I have discovered a treasure-trove of spiritual resources which I believe can aid in an active affectionate spirituality for believers in this spiritual path. As such, what follows is an example of how a particular spiritual tradition can be leveraged to develop comprehensive models of spiritual formation and advance resources for the people we seek to form towards resilience in life and ministry.

CHAPTER III: THE SPIRITUAL REFORMATION MODEL OF MINISTRY

Bishop J. C. Ryle taught that the Christian's present comfort and spiritual well-being depends on the state of our spiritual holiness. He wrote, "We are sadly apt to forget that there is a close connection between sin and sorrow, holiness and happiness, sanctification and consolation. God has so wisely ordered it, that our well-being and our well-doing are linked together" (Ryle 2002, 148). As Pastor John Piper (2012, 108) indicated, God has created us with a capacity for joy which we can hardly imagine. The Christian life of beholding and knowing God is how one goes about experiencing these joys. The Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry that I am proposing is rooted in the belief that God, as found and experienced through faith in Jesus, is so beautiful that one cannot help but live a Holy Spirit-empowered life, wholly devoted to Him in spiritual and life devotion.

This model grows out of my own desire to bring together my experience of God's sovereign grace in my life with my desire for an affectionate biblical spirituality. My knowledge of the emotional trials of ministry have made this desire even more imperative and given me a heart to share this biblical spirituality with others in my tradition. My heart is specifically drawn to share this with those training for ministry.

In describing the Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry, I will define what is meant by ‘evangelical spirituality,’ explore the importance of the Puritans to the present spiritual formation quest, and uncover the model of spiritual formation ministry used by Puritan devotional author and pastor Richard Baxter. I will then use the Baxterian model of Spiritual Reformation Ministry as a basis for a contemporary Evangelical Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry. Finally, I will engage several additional modern biblically-based sources to tailor the historical Baxterian model to the present Christian reality.

Evangelical Spirituality

Evangelical spirituality is used here in the sense of being a large school of spirituality within the Christian tradition. Howard (2013, 79) commented that:

If we consider a school as a certain approach to or community of faith which brings together features of the spiritual life into an organic whole and communicates them to future generations of recognized followers, it is reasonable to consider ‘evangelicalism’ as a broad school. (Howard 2013, 79)

Spirituality and spiritual formation are among the main strengths of the evangelical tradition, partly due to discipleship having such a high formational role in theological education (Cheeseman 2012, 1). To discern what spirituality and spiritual formation mean within the context of discipleship in the evangelical tradition, a definition for *evangelical* is first required.

Evangelical

As Lovelace (1979, 21) commented, when *evangelical* is used in the contemporary context, it is used to refer to a particular subculture of twentieth-

century descendants of American revivalism and those who stand in the tradition of “Protestant live orthodoxy.” When considering evangelicalism as a school, or a type, an oft-cited definition is church historian David Bebbington’s four-fold criterion of crucicentrism, Biblicism, conversionism, and activism (Stackhouse Jr. 2007, 1). For example, both evangelical scholars Alistair McGrath (1995, x) and J. I. Packer (2002, 31-33) used forms of Bebbington’s defined criteria in their work. As the school of evangelicalism has developed this definition has expanded to encompass six criteria, adding the criterion of *orthodoxy* and *transdenominationalism*. Stackhouse defines each of the six criteria further. *Orthodoxy* means that evangelicals subscribe to the main tenants of the churches to which they are members. *Crucentricity* denotes that evangelicals are cross-centred in their spirituality and preaching. *Biblicism* signifies that evangelicals view and affirm the Bible as God’s Word, functioning as the supreme written guide for life. *Conversionist* indicates that evangelicals believe everyone must be saved by Jesus through faith and must co-operate with God in a growing life of spiritual maturity. Being *missional* means that evangelicals are active in partnering with God in his redeeming mission to the world, with a particular focus on gospel proclamation. Finally, being *transdenominational* signifies that evangelicals happily partner with like-minded Christians, regardless of denomination, to advance God’s Kingdom work (Stackhouse Jr. 2007, 3).

The Evangelical Spiritual Problem

Following recent movements in evangelical media, both in print and on the Internet, there appear to be two roads of spirituality which are an issue in today's evangelical church. Although they both represent traditionally opposing sides of the gospel, they both boil down to the same problem. The first road is the resurgence of antinomianism: the ancient heresy that makes an idol of Christian freedom and denies any work in response to God's grace. This is the belief that Bonhoeffer (1937, 58) famously labeled "cheap grace" and stated is merciless in the damage it does to the evangelical church.

The other road at issue is the rise of soft-moralistic legalism: the belief that says God wants the believer to simply 'be good' and in exchange, God acts as a kind of eternal therapist returning happiness. This belief was popularized in the 2000s under the term *Moral Therapeutic Deism*. It has become so much of a problem that some scholars warn that the main issue with Christianity is not so much that it is being secularized, but that it is being slowly infiltrated and replaced by Moral Therapeutic Deism (Keller 2016). As Mulholland (1993, 11) commented, "The Christian community, which should have been a clear voice of liberation and wholeness in the wilderness of human bondage and brokenness, has too often been merely an echo of the culture, further confusing those on a wondering and haphazard quest for wholeness." Packer added that this echoing of culture is because this belief does not allow the believer to cope effectively with the reality of life nor the human condition:

The Santa Claus theology carries within itself the seeds of its own collapse, for it cannot cope with the fact of evil. It is no accident that when belief in the 'good God' of liberalism became widespread, about the turn of the twentieth century, the so-called problem of evil (which was not regarded as a problem before) suddenly leaped into prominence as the number one concern of Christian apologetics. (Packer 1973, 160)

The same conclusion has many looking for something more from their faith.

Looking at these two alternatives which seem to be the roads most travelled in the contemporary Christian context, many are coming to the same diagnosis: *narcissism*. Although they take different routes, both paths start with a narcissistic Western view of the world, and they end with a therapeutic view of God whose existence is to make and keep humanity happy. Keller (2016) stated that "the root of both legalism and antinomianism is the same. My guess is that most readers will find this the best new insight for them, one that could even trigger a proverbial paradigm shift. It's a fatal pastoral mistake to think of legalism and antinomianism as complete opposites." This has led many pastors, authors, and spiritual leaders to state that individuals simply need to get over themselves before they will find any depth to their spirituality. For example, in the best-selling Christian book of all time, other than the Bible, Rick Warren (2002, 17) began, "It's not about you." New York Times bestselling author Francis Chan (2008, 44) wrote, "Frankly, you need to get over yourself." How Christians accomplish that is one of the first questions of contemporary spiritual formation. In seeking to address these issues I present evangelicalism, the school of spirituality Ping-Tong Liu (2000, 2) described as "the slumbering giant of the world of spirituality."

Evangelical Spirituality

An answer to the evangelical spiritual problem identified above is reclaiming a robust evangelical spirituality. The deeper life that individuals are not finding in the dual streams of contemporary spiritual belief is found in the full-gospel living of Christ-centred, evangelical faith. McGrath (1995, 5) stated that evangelical spirituality “focuses on the deepening of the life of faith in relation to Jesus Christ, recognizing in him the fullness of life that God wishes his people to possess.” In doing so, it is a spirituality which fits within the six-fold criteria of being evangelical.

First and foremost, an evangelical spirituality focuses on the person and work of Jesus Christ (McGrath 1995, 6). He is the truth to which all orthodoxy and the Bible itself point. Evangelical spirituality’s main interest is in Christ and Christlikeness. As Whitney (1991, 14) said, “Every Christian should ask, ‘How then shall we pursue holiness? How can we be like Jesus Christ, the Son of God?’” At the root of evangelical spiritual discipline is love for Christ, a desire to follow him, and become like him. The basis of this spirituality is simply the love of Jesus, and a desire to be like Him (Willard 1991, xii).

An evangelical spirituality is a biblical spirituality. In describing this aspect of evangelicalism, Bebbington noted, “The overriding aim of early evangelicals was to bring home the message of the Bible and to encourage its devotional use” (in Howard 2012, 59). As Carson (2011, 378) commented, “for Christians with any sense of the regulative function of Scripture, nothing, surely, can be deemed a spiritual discipline if it is not so much mentioned in the NT.”

This can, however, include more ambiguous practices such as the Puritan practice of keeping a journal, as within the context of Puritan Spirituality it is a label for self-examination, contrition, thoughtful meditation on the Bible, and prayer. In evangelical spirituality, therefore, the spiritual disciplines, or the means of grace, are not simply a list of assorted religious responsibilities but biblically given activities explicitly stated as increasing spiritual growth and maturity into the likeness of Christ Jesus (Carson 2011, 378-379). There is an abiding sense of the regulative nature of scripture against the practice of simply accepting anything that falls under the category of spirituality (Carson 1994, 390). Simply put, “evangelicalism has no place for those ‘spiritual’ writers who point us away from Scripture or Jesus Christ. Their reliability and trustworthiness are to be judged by the extent to which such writers are Christ centred and scripturally focussed” (McGrath 1995, 7).

An evangelical spirituality is also an affectionate spirituality which converts both the mind and the heart. When speaking of being converted, “coming to faith is one thing, *growing* in faith is another” (McGrath 1995, 7). There needs to be a healthy suspicion of those streams of thought in evangelicalism which do not engage the affections nor foster an active sense of the presence of God (Carson 1994, 392). The Kingdom of God is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17b). Looking back over recent history, a faith which focused on mere mental assent was negligent in bringing believers to Christlikeness in life (Willard 1991, 23). An evangelical spirituality is about a conversion of both heart and mind. As McGrath (1995, 20)

commented, “the Enlightenment is over, and we need to purge rationalism from within evangelicalism. And that means recovering the relational, emotional, and imaginative aspects of biblical spirituality that the Enlightenment declared to be improper.” As followers of Jesus, we worship Almighty God in both spirit and truth (John 4:24). God is seeking those who worship Him in spirit as well as truth (Grudem 1994, 1010).

An evangelical spirituality is also a spirituality which is active and alive. Being missionally focused means that evangelicalism is activist by nature. When it comes to life and mission, evangelicals, by nature, tend to actively seek to practically live out the Christian life (McGrath 1995, 11). This is of great importance because, as Whitney (1991, 14) commented, “the only road to Christian maturity and Godliness (a biblical term synonymous with Christlikeness and holiness) passes through the practice of the Spiritual Disciplines.”

Finally, in evangelical spirituality, it is of central importance to remember that biblical spirituality belongs to all regenerate Christians, even those who could be deemed as infants in Christ (1 Cor. 2:14):

The [New Testament] does not label immature Christian as *unspiritual*, as if the category ‘Spiritual’ should be reserved only for the most mature, the elite of the elect: that is an error common to much of the Roman Catholic tradition of spirituality, in which the spiritual life and the spiritual traditions are often tied up with believers who want to transcend the ordinary. Such ‘spiritual life’ is often bound up with asceticism and sometimes mysticism, with orders of nuns and monks, and with a variety of techniques that go beyond ordinary Joe or Mary Christian. (Carson 2011, 377)

An evangelical spirituality, therefore, is one that is open to all. One would notice here as well that, for evangelicals:

the Triple Way of classical mysticism, which moves from the stage of cleansing one's life through illumination toward union with God, seems to reverse the biblical order, which starts from union with Christ claimed by faith, leading to the illumination of the Holy Spirit and consequently cleansing through the process of sanctification. (Lovelace 1979, 19)

Sanctification is a process that is open to all through the power of the Holy Spirit, not simply to select religious mountain-top dwellers. Evangelical spirituality makes the emphatic assertion, therefore, that “growth in *faith* is the root of all spiritual growth and is prior of all disciplines of works” (Lovelace 1979, 19).

Evangelicalism brings a unique theological contribution to the spiritual renewal of the church, but this spiritual gift needs conceptual development (Lovelace 1979, 26-27). Ping-tong Lin challenged evangelicals that in order to bring this development, they must reach as far as the origins of the Protestant Reformation to revive its vast lessons for today's spirituality (Ping-tong Lin 2000, 2). This means that a number of evangelical movements are available for exploration such as the spiritual traditions of the Pietists, the Puritans, the Methodists, and more. For this model, I will be exploring the Puritan spiritual tradition with its focus on God's sovereign grace.

Puritan Spirituality

Evangelical authors Packer, Grenz, Lovelace, and Hambrick-Stowe all “have drawn attention to the potential of the Puritan tradition to contribute to a more substantial evangelical spirituality” (Ping-tong Lin 2000, 2). Puritan spirituality is a rich heritage which fits very well within the ethos of modern evangelicalism. Packer (1990, 215) commented that “anyone who knows

anything at all about Puritan Christianity knows that at its best it had a vigour, a manliness (sic).” His belief is that due to hard-fought lessons forged in their time, the Puritans were spiritual giants compared to us—giants whose help we can gain now, giving a fullness to our experience of the fellowship which is the communion of the saints (Packer 1990, 16). Packer (1990, 57, 64) called the Puritans *affectionate-practical pastor-evangelists*, using the image of a physician of the soul wielding the means of grace as instruments of healing.

Puritan spirituality, and Baxterian Spiritual Reformation in particular, is a model of spiritual formation which fits within the six-fold criteria of contemporary evangelicalism. Furthermore, while rooted firmly in God’s Word, Baxter calls contemporary Christians to seek an affectionately engaged relationship with God in Christ via the means instituted by the Holy Spirit.

Through this model, the Puritans developed a kind of *Reformed Monasticism*:

Puritan piety can fairly be characterized as a reformed monasticism. Those who sought the desert and the cloister... did so because they wanted to be thorough-going before God... The Puritans, whose minds were in some ways medieval just as they were in other ways modern, also accepted rigorously disciplined routines on a permanent basis, and for the same reason; but, like the Reformers, they believed that God calls his saints to serve him in the family, the church, and the world, rather than in any form of closed celibate society, and hence they thought and thought about the believer’s life of ‘duties’ (a Puritan key word) in terms of these three spheres of relationship. (Packer 1990, 331)

This is an curious reflection for a tradition that rejected traditional monastic life.

Speaking to Colin Hansen about the recent rise of interest in the Puritans in evangelical circles, church history professor Garth Rosell believed that many young evangelicals gravitate toward the Puritans because the young believers are

searching for deeper historic roots and models for high-commitment Christianity (Hansen 2008, 50). The Puritans spoke to a context that was overly conforming and lacked passionate, affectionate faith. From this tradition, as Packer commented in his introduction to *The Reformed Pastor*, Baxter stands out as “the most outstanding pastor, evangelist and writer on practical and devotional themes that Puritanism produced” (in Baxter 2012, 9).

Spiritual Reformation

Using the term *Reformation* in Spiritual Reformation seeks to redeem it from contemporary theological and ecclesiastical overtones which tends to denote simply a form of harsh five-point Calvinism. As Lovelace (1979, 22) wrote, “Reformation refers to the purifying of doctrine and structures in the church, but implies also a component of spiritual revitalization.” This is the spiritual practice which is best found in the affectionate-practical preachers of the Elizabethan era commonly called the Puritans.

When Baxter wrote *The Reformed Pastor*, for him a ‘reformed’ pastor was not one who crusaded for Calvinism but one whose ministry as preacher, teacher, counsellor, and model showed revival or renewal. The spirit of this reformation was the enrichment of understanding of God’s truth, arousal of affections toward God, increase in devotion, and more love, joy, and resolve of Christian purpose in one’s calling and life (Packer 1990, 26-27). Packer made the key point:

Historians and Evangelicals regularly conceive of ‘reform’ and ‘reformation’ in the church as a matter of externals only, doctrine publicly professed and order publicly established, without reference to inward renewal of heart and life; so they miss the spiritual dimensions of the goal

of 'reform' which the Reformation and Puritans always had at heart.
(Packer 1990, 38)

For this reason, the term spiritual reformation is used when denoting evangelical spiritual formation ministry in the Puritan model.

Baxterian Spirituality

Ordained in the Church of England in 1638, Richard Baxter ministered in Bridgenorth, as a chaplain in the army and as the vicar at Kidderminster.

Although the Puritans were famously Calvinist, Baxter held a theological course between the doctrines of the reformed, Arminian, and Roman traditions (Baxter 2012, 9-10). In fact, Baxter and John Owen (1616-1683) had intense theological debates as a result (Beeke and Jones 2012, 2). Baxter's main concern, and contribution to the Puritan cause, was a pastoral one. For this reason, perhaps the finest Puritan model for spiritual formation ministry is found in the Spiritual Reformation ministry of Richard Baxter (Turner 2016, 3).

The theological "middle way" was also apparent in Baxter's pastoral and devotional work. While he rejected the Roman Catholic apophatic approach to spirituality, Baxter highlighted the need to engage the affections in the Christian walk. The reality of mystical experience, the affections, imagination, and intuition were important to the Baxterian model of Spiritual Reformation. However, at the same time, he held that reason was the core faculty of the Spirit's illumination (Ping-Tong Liu 2000, 194).

To accomplish this balance, the centre-point of Baxterian and much of Puritan spirituality was the spiritual doctrine of the beatific vision as the root of

the Christian spiritual life: the belief that a believer is formed spiritually by constantly looking to God's glory as found in Jesus Christ. John Piper explained of Baxter that:

The hope of heaven brought him joy, and joy brought him strength, and so, like John Calvin before him and George Whitfield after him (two verifiable examples) and, it would seem, like the apostle Paul himself... he was astonishingly enabled to labour on accomplishing more than would ever have seemed possible in a single lifetime. (Piper 2012, 12)

The Puritans believed that delight in God's glory led to reformation which led to greater delight. Baxter (2010, 10) wrote, "The living God, who is the portion and rest of his saints, make these our carnal minds so spiritual, and our earthly hearts so heavenly that loving him, and delighting in him, may be the work of our lives."

As an example of this, Baxter pointed to the Queen of Sheba who stated how happy the servants of Solomon must have been to continuously stand in his presence; he surmised that those who look upon the glory of God in Christ must therefore be even more joyful. To Baxter a life of godliness was simply living dependent on, and attracted to, God (Baxter 1673, III.I.1, 3201). This was the source of Puritan spirituality: through the vision of God, which becomes truer through experience of Him, this living unto God becomes more of a reality (Baxter 1673, III.I.6-7, 3216).

This same spiritual doctrine of the beatific vision is prevalent in many Puritan works such as the work of Christopher Love (1628-1651) in *Heaven's Glory*, Francis Turretin (1623-1687), and John Owen. For Owen, the beatific vision of Christ was the "immediate means by which God reveals His mind to His creatures; the object of divine glory; and the sight of Him will be transforming for

those who love Him with an undying love” (Beeke and Jones 2012, 824). Author Kyle Strobel believed that the beatific vision was the main focus of later Puritan Jonathan Edwards’ entire spiritual theology:

Unfortunately, many mistakenly believe that Edwards was somewhat obsessed with hellfire and brimstone. Because of this, Edwards is often ignored as a spiritual thinker. Rather, if Edwards did have an obsession, it was the beauty and glory of God. Ultimately, Edward’s grasp of spiritual formation centres on the idea that God is beautiful and glorious, and he calls us to share in that beauty and glory. (Strobel 2013, 15-16)

Baxter, therefore, followed the Puritan spiritual tradition in having the glorious vision of Christ as the centre of his Spiritual Reformation.

Baxter (2010, 53) was particularly focussed on the life of the minister of formation. He believed that the state of the soul of the minister is more important than the form, or the spiritual means, that the minister might set out to teach. In fact, *The Reformed Pastor* is a meditation on Acts 20:28: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” (Baxter 2010, 51). He wrote, “I confess, that a man shall never have my consent to have the charge of other men’s souls, and to oversee them in order to their salvation, that takes not heed to himself, but is careless of his own” (Baxter 2012, 82).

Baxter’s (2010, 71) model of Spiritual Reformation rested on the four foundations of Word, Prayer, Personal Examination, and Enjoying Christ. Each of the Baxterian foundations consisted of particular means of grace, which served as a restatement and expansion of the classical Protestant teaching on the means of grace (Whitney 1991, 7). The foundation of the Word consisted of Biblical

meditation and hearing; the foundation of Prayer consisted of secret prayer, contemplation, and family worship; the foundation of Personal Examination consisted of examination, watchfulness, and humility; the foundation of Enjoying Christ consisted of worship, Sabbath, community, and service (Turner 2016, 5-7).

The Baxterian Foundation of the Word

Baxter's Spiritual Reformation ministry, just as all Puritan spiritual formation ministry, was centred on scripture (Haykin 2012, 5). As a result, study and meditation, rather than contemplation, constituted the core practices of the Christian life. As the foundational spiritual discipline, every other discipline flowed out of a prayerful and affectionate engagement with God's Word (Pong-Tong Liu 2000, 195). Although he was interested in an experiential spirituality, Baxter was very cognizant of the need to be anchored in God's revealed Word. Again, Baxter was interested in the 'middle route' to knowing God in both a relational and conceptual way (Ping-Tong Liu 2000, 197). The foundation of the Word was found in Baxter's belief that hearing the word preached was a prime means of grace (Packer 1990, 281). The ministry of the Puritans was based around the word being preached. He believed in the authority of ministers as appointed by God in the Word (Turner 2016, 7-8).

The Baxterian Foundation of Prayer

Baxter describes secret prayer as a key means of grace. This was that practice of finding a personal routine time and place to be with God in silence,

praying for life, forgiveness, repentance, and visions of grace and glory (Baxter 2010, 152; 2012, 252). In prayer, believers learn to hear the Holy Spirit speak through the scriptures and the wisdom of the church's teaching. (Baxter 1673, III.VII.VI, location 4280). Prayer, therefore, turns naturally to the spiritual practice of contemplation.

The spiritual means of prayer and contemplation were closely linked in Baxterian Spiritual Reformation. One aspect that made him distinct, particularly from Roman Catholic spiritual traditions, was that Baxter made use of conceptual objects for contemplation in his spirituality. Primarily, he made use of contrasts between visions of heavenly and earthly things. These contrasts started with heaven's glory and moved on to include everything from morality to creation itself (Baxter 2010, 173).

Another essential means of grace for the Puritans was family worship (Whitney 2016, 32). Baxter believed the family to be a miniature church and a centre for spiritual reformation as its members gathered for morning and evening worship (Gangel and Wilhoit 1997, 53-54). He believed the future of the Christian faith depended upon prayerful families: "If you desire the reformation and welfare of your people, do all you can to promote family religion" (Baxter 2012, 100). The balanced Christian life was both personal and communal, and that community included the family (Turner 2016, 8-9).

The Baxterian Foundation of Personal Examination

Baxter continuously employed personal examination as a means of grace in his devotional teaching. He believed that iniquity left unpardoned would halt spiritual growth, never letting the believer “rest or prosper” (Baxter 2012, 39). Baxter’s directions included prayerful examination focussing on the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit (Baxter 2012, 74), listening patiently to the Holy Spirit for any direction once one’s faults had been found out (Baxter 1673, location 4717), and employing the assistance of an able spiritual guide or friend “to settle your souls in the well grounded persuasion of your special interest in God and heaven” (Baxter 1673, III.XIII.XVI, location 7651). Personal catechetical and spiritual direction ministry was central to Baxter’s model of Reformation ministry.

From his prayer of examination, Baxter derived one of the hallmarks of Baxterian Spiritual Reformation: the spiritual means of watchfulness, or walking “jealously of one’s self” (Baxter 2012, 146). Following the Puritan tradition, Baxter viewed regular life as the main context for knowing God (Ping-Tong Liu 2000, 199). One did this by developing a constant practice of walking in watchfulness: a moment-to-moment watchful attitude, being mindful of holiness in work, relationships, status, thoughts, and the various seasons of life (Baxter 1673, III.IX.Temptations to particular.III-XII, location 5149-5265). Through this, he called Christians to become acquainted with their spiritual temperatures, or which sins they seem to be most inclined to during the day. And, he gave

instructions for switching sinful thoughts to prayer, and for anticipating and avoiding unhelpful situations (Baxter 1673, III.IX.Tempter's methods.VI, location 5380-5396).

Baxter (2012, 143) believed that "humility is not a mere ornament of a Christian, but an essential part of the new creature. It is a contradiction in terms, to be a Christian, and not humble." As a result, to him the development of humility as a virtue became a means of grace in and of itself. He commented that without examination on and attention to humility, those who focus on the Christian life will end up focussing on "the fame of godliness instead of godliness" (Baxter 2012, 145). One problem that Baxter noted was that the sin of pride was tolerated in the Church while other sins were condemned so readily (Turner 2016, 9-10).

The Baxterian Foundation of Enjoying Christ

For Baxter (1673, III.XIII.XII, location 7616-7634), a primary means of grace was delight in worship, including thanksgiving, praise, and the sacrament of the Lord's Table. Baxter (1673, III.XV.glorifying God with tongues.I.3, location 7993-8011) believed that praising God was the greatest of the means as it brought the believer nearest to God, thus coming closest to giving the vision which was the chief end of Baxterian Spiritual practice. Linked to worship was the spiritual means of spending the Sabbath in family prayer, in freedom from worldly business or distraction, in studying the Catechism, and in recalling what had been learned at church. The Lord's Day was a divine gift during which the family

practiced a special watchful setting of their minds upon the Lord (Baxter 2012, 252) and was also an opportunity for parents to exercise spiritual leadership (Baxter 2012, 102).

Baxter followed Puritan tradition in believing that although spiritual growth was in a sense personal, it occurred only within the broader contexts of family, church, and school (Gangel and Wilhoit 1997, 58). Participation in the church, therefore, was a means of grace. In contrast to the fractured and individualistic church within which he lived, Baxter (2012, 157) sought for an approach to the body of Christ that focussed on spiritual community and love. This, he believed, was how the church affected the Christian towards Spiritual Reformation.

Baxter also believed that mercy ministry was a means of grace in that it allowed the believer to commune with God by exercising one's divinely endowed talents through service. He assumed that the believer's life would be spent in "doing God service, and doing all the good you can, in works of piety, justice, and charity, with prudence, fidelity, industry, zeal, and delight" (Baxter 1673, III.X, location 5955). The Christian enjoys Christ by joining His mission of mercy (Turner 2016, 11-12).

Baxterian Spiritual Reformation Today

When considering the application of aspects of Baxterian spirituality in the contemporary context, it must be noted that the spiritualities of Puritanism and Richard Baxter have "special reference to issues of church and state, theology and

worship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” (Beeke and Jones 2012, 4).

Packer comments that:

Application may never be taken over second-hand and ready made; each man in each generation must exercise his conscience to discern for himself how truth applies, and what it demands, in the particular situation in which he finds himself. The application *may* be similar in detail from one generation to another, but we must not assume in advance that it will be so. And therefore our aim in studying the Puritans must be to learn, by watching them apply the word to themselves in their day, how we must apply it to ourselves in our ours. (Packer 1990, 234)

Therefore, Christians need to take caution in simply transplanting a model of Spiritual Formation directly from the Puritan context into the present.

Evangelical scholar Evan B. Howard shed light on how one can go forward learning from Baxter’s spiritual foundation. Howard (2008, 58-59) recommended Christians drink deeply from their respective traditions and histories as a means to being open and carefully challenged as they set their focus toward understanding spirituality in the contemporary context. Using Howard’s recommendation as a guide, there are ways Baxterian Spiritual Reformation can inform the present evangelical spiritual quest. First, Baxter provides an overarching understanding of affectionate, biblically-centred spirituality which is important for the contemporary church. Second, Baxterian Spiritual Reformation provides a historically evangelical, biblically-rooted framework upon which to build an evangelical Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry. According to Mulholland, identified spiritual foundations can form the scaffolding, within which one then exercises the various means of grace as he or she is formed by the Spirit toward Christlikeness (Mulholland 1993, 104). Third, Baxter provides a

solid biblical and theological foundation from which to discern wisdom from a broader cross-section of Christian authors.

Spiritual Reformation Ministry

The Apostles set the pattern for Spiritual Reformation (Catechesis Task Force, 2013). We see this in that “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

We also see this in the exhortation of the author of Hebrews:

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:23-25)

Following the Baxterian Spiritual tradition, the Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry is rooted in the *beatific vision*, nurtures the formation of *the new self*, has an initial focus on the *heart of the minister* of formation, and builds on four main *foundations* which in turn consist of several *means of grace* which fall under each foundation.

The Heart of the Minister of Formation

Spiritual Reformation ministry starts with the heart of the minister of formation, whether a spiritual director, spiritual friend, pastor, or other spiritual leader. Baxter (2012, 53) commented on Acts 20:28 and highlighted first the need of the pastors to “take heed to yourselves, lest you be void of that saving grace of God which you offer to others.” Eugene Peterson (1989, 20) laid out what this taking heed looks like in the life of the congregational pastor; his

instructions are applicable for all ministers of formation. First, Peterson believed the minister of formation is an individual of intentional *prayer*. One falsehood that ministers get caught up in is believing that their own spiritual lives can be developed on the run. However, personal prayer, devotion, and spending time with the Lord are not the same as offering prayers in public, with others, from the pulpit, or at a hospital bedside. To pray one must pay more attention to God than anything else; “usually, for that to happen there must be a deliberate withdrawal from the noise of the day, a disciplined detachment from the insatiable self” (Peterson 1989, 20). Simply praying a great many prayers of any sort amid our work or ministry does not mean we are developing a life of prayer.

Secondly, Peterson (1989, 20) believed the minister of formation is an individual who truly studies the Word and preaches the gospel. For pastors, this means the difference between the congregational pastor who gives respectable or inspirational sermons and the pastor who wants “the people who come to worship in my congregation each Sunday to hear the Word of God preached in such a way that they hear its distinctive note of authority as God’s Word, and to know that their own lives are being addressed on their home territory” (Peterson 1989, 21). Harry Shields commented, “The preacher who is serious about spiritual formation will want to make prayer a daily habit” (in Pettit 2008, 252). The minister must intentionally live a life of prayer and personal study. Through hours of study and prayerful working through personal struggles, Shields believes the minister becomes immersed to the point of being drenched in Scripture. This is far more than simply preparing a sermon (Peterson 1989, 20). For Spiritual Directors, this

means the difference between biblical answers or methods from their favourite authors, and actually being involved in the same level of study themselves. This is what it takes to speak the Word into the lives of those to whom God has called us minister.

Thirdly, Peterson (1989, 21) believed the minister of formation is an individual who *listens*. This involves giving up the worldly idol of needing to be busy and giving in to the ministry of holy *unhurried leisure*: “The question I put to myself is not ‘How many people have you spoken to about Christ this week?’ but ‘How many people have you listened to in Christ this week?’” (Peterson 1989, 21).

The Foundation of the Word

The first foundation for the Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry is the foundation of the Word of God. Don Whitney (1991, 24) claims that “No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God’s Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There is simply no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture.” As will be outlined below, the importance of this foundation to the spirituality of evangelicals was confirmed in the findings of my action research project. The foundation of the Word consists of three means of grace, biblical meditation, listening to teaching, and study.

Biblical Meditation

According to D. A. Carson (1994, 393), the evangelical heritage has always emphasized a spirituality of the Word. In Puritan spiritual practice, meditation on the Word of God as means of grace lays at the root of every discipline. As Packer (1990, 85) wrote, “Affection may be the helm of the ship, but the mind must steer; and the chart to steer by is God’s revealed truth.” For example, the parables of Jesus slip past our mental and emotional defenses to plant God’s truth in our hearts. As Peterson (1989, 33) comments, “God does not impose his reality from without; he grows flowers and fruit from within.” Through our imagination and affections, the Holy Spirit uses the Word to allow Christians to experience the reality of God (Peterson 1989, 44).

As the biblical and theological grounds for this means, the oft-quoted Scripture for the formational importance of Scripture is Paul’s words to Timothy: “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16). However, as John Davis (2012, 12) pointed out, the church’s overly academic focus on the Bible has left many “spiritually dry and frustrated.”

Practising biblical meditation provides an opportunity to introduce spiritual formation to evangelical churches and individuals. According to Prochaska and DiClemente, any change moves through the stages of precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance (in Volz 2009, 1). Practically speaking, using biblical meditation can serve as a vehicle for

moving individuals or congregations from the precontemplation mode to the contemplation mode. This is due to the fact that devotional use of the Bible is already a central feature of evangelicalism. By reclaiming the evangelical practice of meditating on God's Word, we can set a bedrock for the other disciplines and leverage the biblicist nature of evangelicalism toward acceptance and use of the biblical spiritual disciplines. Even those within the secular media have begun to comment that today's world has begun to require a "new kind of self-discipline, a willed and practiced ability to focus, in a purposeful and almost meditative sense—to step away from the network and seek stillness, immersion" (Davis 2012, 24). Biblical meditation can cultivate cognitive skills of mindfulness, contemplation, and focus which can help in our spiritual and daily lives (Davis 2012, 25). Practically speaking, biblical meditation means the ways of calling to mind, thinking over, dwelling upon, and applying the things that one knows about the works, ways, purposes, and promises of God:

It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, and a means of communion with God. Its purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let his truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart. (Packer 1973, 23)

In this way, biblical meditation connects the Word to the other foundations, as one becomes more aware of the old self at work, and seeks to be reformed into the new self in Jesus.

Listening to teaching

A neglected means of grace in the field of spiritual formation is the public preaching of God's Word. For instance, Adele Calhoun's (2015, 13-16) *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, an influential manual in the field of Spiritual Formation, does not mention listening to the Word of God being preached as one of the seventy-five disciplines she lists such as care for the earth, centering prayer, labyrinth prayer, slowing, *Visio Divina*, and welcoming prayer. In fact, she does not mention the Word of God being preached in her section on the discipline of worship (Calhoun 2015, 27-51). Further, she makes a point, in her section on the discipline of Hearing God's Word, of placing listening to various 'speakers' in favour of simply personally attending to scripture on one's own (Calhoun 2015, 183). The neglect of a focus on the preached Word in the field of spiritual formation may be due to a reaction by many who were raised in churches where preaching was one of the few means by which spiritual growth was expected to happen. However, in the Puritan tradition, and other churches which stand in the heritage of the Protestant Reformation, the sermon was the liturgical climax of public worship. They believed that nothing honoured God more than the faithful declaration and obedient hearing of His truth. Preaching was an act of worship and needed to be performed and heard as such. In this way, preaching became one of the prime evangelical means of grace to the church (Packer 1990, 281).

Whitney (1991, 25) commented that the biblical and theological grounds for this means come from the words of Jesus when he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:28). The point of the

passage is not merely the hearing of the Word, but the integration of being and doing as well (James 1). N. T. Wright pointed out, from Acts 6:2, that preaching, and teaching have been defining marks of spiritual formation ministry in the church from the beginning:

The temptation for leaders in the movement, from the earliest days until now has always been to heave a sigh of relief at being spared the spiritually and mentally demanding task of preaching and teaching, of explaining scripture, opening up its great narrative and its tiny details, applying it this way and that, enabling people to live within its story and make its energy its own. (Wright 2008, 99-100)

The preaching and teaching of God's ministers is a primary means of His grace and growth in the church and in the lives of His people (Wright 2008, 100).

Practically speaking, in order for the preaching of God's Word to have a reformational effect, the Puritans believed it needed to be expository, doctrinal, orderly, and logical in arrangement, plain spoken, Christ-centred, practically focussed on the experience of God, and aimed at the specific spiritual needs of the people (Packer 1990, 284-286). Whitney (1991, 25) stated that the simplest way to discipline ourselves to hear God's Word means "developing the practice of steadfastly attending a New Testament church where the Word of God is faithfully preached." This means, therefore, finding a church where the pastors are intentional about their preaching ministry as pertains to the spiritual reformation of those they serve.

Study

Study as a means of grace refers to studying the Bible through the lenses of community, nature, and history; and then reflecting on our lives in light of what

the Holy Spirit brings before us. The aim and prayer for study is not to gain knowledge for its own sake, but in order to know and meet God (Willard 1989, 177). The biblical grounding for study as a means of grace is the nature of the Bible itself. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart (1993, 17) explained that “because God chose to speak his Word through *human words in history*, every book in the Bible also has *historical particularity*... Interpretation of the Bible is demanded by the ‘tension’ that exists between its *eternal relevance* and its *historical particularity*.” Study is not only a matter of the larger tasks of exegesis and hermeneutics, but also the question of integrating what is learned toward a life of godliness.

Study can take different forms including reading books, listening to online digital recordings, or participation in Bible study groups, or formal theological education. One form of study that many find has pastoral benefit is the memorization of scripture. Willard commented,

As a pastor, teacher, and counselor I have repeatedly seen the transformation of inner and outer life that comes simply from memorization upon Scripture. Personally, I would never undertake to pastor a church or guide a program of Christian education that did not involve a continuous program of memorization of the choicest passages of Scripture for people of all ages. (Willard 1988, 150)

Regular study also provides a solid grounding for our contemplations on Scripture.

The Foundation of Prayer

The second foundation for the Spiritual Reformation model is the foundation of Prayer, which includes personal prayer, contemplation, and family worship.

Personal Prayer

Augustine (2008, 3) said of prayer that at its root, calling upon God is an act of believing in him. Prayer, therefore, is actualized faith in the living God “by which the people of God become incorporated into the presence and action of God in the world” (Mulholland 1993, 108). By bringing us into God’s presence and action, prayer serves to form more than it serves to effect change in the world. We are changed through a dynamic and intelligent mystical connection with God in our prayer life, as John Murray wrote:

It is necessary for us to recognize that there is *an intelligent mysticism* in the life of faith... of living union and communion with the exalted and ever-present Redeemer... He communes with his people and his people commune with him in conscious reciprocal love... The life of true faith cannot be that of cold metallic assent. It must have the passion and warmth of love and communion because communion with God is the crown and apex of true religion. (Keller 2014, 16)

A rich, lively, reassuring, effortful life of prayer is the means of this communion (Keller 2014, 21).

The biblical and theological grounding for prayer as a means of grace is found throughout the Bible and the history of the church. Jesus made one’s private prayer life, in Matthew 6:5-6, “the infallible test of spiritual integrity” (Keller 2014, 23). The Apostle Paul opened and closed his letters by praying for

the spiritual wellbeing of those he loved. Keller (2014, 19) points to Ephesians 1:17 as the heart passage for the striking importance of prayer in the apostle's life: "I keep asking that...you may know him better."

Practising prayer as a means of grace traditionally takes a number of forms including petition, praise, waiting on the Lord, confession, forgiveness, and thanksgiving (Grudem 1994, 376-392). It not only functions on its own but can serve as an integrating factor to other spiritual means. Oftentimes, prayer is also linked with fasting, particularly during times of intense supplication or repentance in the Bible (Grudem 1994, 390). Carson (1992, 19) adopted two sources to shape his prayer life: the Bible and mature Christians, the less authoritative being more mature Christians, including historical tradition. We see through the other foundations, prayer, or a prayerful posture and attitude blend with other means to provide a comprehensive, experiential relationship with the Holy Spirit. A great example of this is contemplation.

Contemplation

Where prayer and biblical meditation meet in evangelical Spiritual Reformation, there is the spiritual means of contemplation. Thomas à Kempis wrote:

In quiet and silence the faithful soul makes progress, the hidden meanings of the scriptures become clear, and the eyes weep with devotion every night. Even as one learns to grow still, he draws closer to the Creator and farther from the hurly-burly of the world. As one divests himself of friends and acquaintances, he is visited by God and his holy angels. (cited in Foster and Griffin 2000, 150)

Contemplation is where prayer and meditation give way to beholding God. Through that beatific vision viewed with unveiled faces we are changed from one degree of glory to another, realizing further our new selves (2 Cor. 3:18). One passage often used as the basis for contemplation is Elijah standing in the entrance of the cave and hearing the Lord in a “still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12). In our loud and hurried world, we often look for the loudest voice and follow it. However, the God of the Bible calls us to “be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). David Sherbino (2013, 1) contended that “without silence and solitude we will never be able to fully enter into intimacy with God simply because so many other voices are contending for our attention and commitment.”

Practically speaking, this is different from meditation in that it is tarrying in the presence of God as opposed to focussing on any fact or meaning. This is searching the scriptures and seeking the presence of God simply to know God and be in His presence. It could simply be asking questions of the text and allowing our imaginations to take us into the world which surrounds the narrative, experiencing what we read.

Family Worship

The Westminster Divines believed that family worship was necessary so that prayer and praise would regularly touch the life and needs of the church at large, that regular plain explanation of Scripture would aid understanding for and attendance at public worship, and so that application would be brought to a familial level (The Directory for Family Worship 1647, 1). The spiritual benefits

present in family worship from a reformational perspective, therefore, are numerous. They are so beneficial, in fact, that Charles Spurgeon once commented, “I trust there are none here present who do not also practice prayer in their families” (Whitney 2016, 15). J. I. Packer (1990, 255) explained that “family worship was also, to the Puritans, vitally important. Every home should be a church, with the head of the house as its minister.” Through family worship, children are formed through prayer and parents are formed through familial ministry. Again, we see the cross over between the various means of grace, such as prayer and family worship.

Whitney (2016, 15) stated that “the Bible clearly implies that God deserves to be worshiped daily in our homes by our families.” For instance, Abraham was commanded to lead his children and household in the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19), Moses’ famous words, known as the *Shema*, command worship and teaching for families (Deut. 6), Paul’s words about roles in marriage have pastoral and apostolic implications (Eph. 5:25-26), and Peter assumes the place of common prayer between husbands and wives (1 Peter 3:7; Whitney 2016, 16-26).

Family worship is an opportunity for catechizing, for fellowship, and for parents to exercise spiritual leadership in their homes. Whitney (2016, 47) recommended keeping the process simple, which can be very easy with the help of sing-along YouTube videos or recordings of your favourite worship songs: “So, what should we do in family worship? It’s simple: read the Bible, pray together, and sing to the Lord.” The key, in my experience, is not having the

worship be onerous on either the parents in preparation, or the children in taking part.

The Foundation of Watchfulness

The third foundation for the Spiritual Reformation model of Ministry is watchfulness, which includes watchful heavenly-mindedness, conscious self-examination, and sacrificial living.

Watchful Heavenly-Mindedness

According to Mulholland (1993, 16), “Once we understand spiritual formation is a process, all of life becomes spiritual formation.” Watchful heavenly-mindedness is the spiritual practice of walking wholeheartedly alert to God, the presence of Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit in one’s self, others, and the surrounding world (Calhoun 2005, 114).

In Isaiah, when Israel has fallen away, it is partly due to walking but no longer seeing the Lord (Isa. 42:18-20). Later in Israel’s history, Jesus, quoting Isaiah, made a similar observation:

With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: “You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them.” (Matt. 13:14-15)

Packer (2002, 42) pointed out that, biblically, ‘yielding’ and ‘abiding’ denote a sense of resolute habitual obedience rather than mystical passivity, “in which you pray as hard as you work and work as hard as you pray, because you know that

God works in you to make you will and do his pleasure as set forth in his Word.”

If we cooperate with God’s work, we move toward Christ’s wholeness; if we rebel against God’s work, we move toward destructive and dehumanizing emptiness (Mulholland 1993, 16). This is why many spiritual authors make use of the biblical language of spiritual battle. Bishop Ryle described the daily Christian walk as a good fight of faith in which the believer is called to walk as a soldier on active duty. He lamented the lack of any such fight or awareness in so many of the Christians under his charge (Packer 2002, 158-163). When Paul wrote about walking by the Spirit (Gal 5:16), he described war breaking out in the life of the believer: “The flesh will war against the Spirit, and the Spirit will war against the flesh” (Mulholland 1993, 133). When we become too bound to the earth and the life of the flesh, we are unable to be God’s soldiers (Augustine 2008, 140).

Practising watchful heavenly-mindedness as a means of God’s grace can take the form of breath prayers through the day, habitual examination, or simply growing aware of our emotional and physiological cues towards certain emotions and actions. Calhoun gave one practical example:

If you have ever emerged from prayer and immediately gone on a rant, engaged in catastrophic thinking or indulged in an interior soap opera, this is a moment for attentiveness. Take some deep breaths to slow your mind and heart. With a long inhale, breath in God’s presence. On the exhale feel your body... What does God want you to notice? What judgements come to mind? If you notice something, take it to God and practice letting go of judgement and worry. (Calhoun 2005, 116)

This is one example of being aware; others could be using a memorized verse of scripture, a short time of prayer to focus on God, or some combination which

allows one to mingle awareness, contemplation, prayer, and the promises of God into the rhythms of everyday life.

Conscious Self-Examination

Sin cannot be ignored because it is a fact of Christian living: “Indeed, Christianity is the only religion in the world which takes sin seriously and offers a satisfactory remedy for it. And the way to enjoy this remedy is not to deny it but to confess it” (Sherbino 2013, 47). As Baxter (2012, 39) wrote, “Unpardoned sin will never let us rest or prosper, though we be at ever so much care and cost to cover it: our sin will surely find us out, though we find not it out.” As McGrath (1995, 14) wrote, “The essence of sin is self-deceit.” The watchfulness of conscious self-examination makes us aware of our sin and allows us to confess it before God by the power of the Holy Spirit and receive forgiveness. Through this we learn to walk in our new selves, becoming more aware of when we are living and acting out of our old selves.

One passage often linked with conscious self-examination is Isaiah’s prophecy:

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa. 55:6-9)

Self-examination as a means of grace is practised through regularly praying over our thoughts, feelings, and actions to bring them in line with the Lord’s will.

Zachary Crofton wrote, “Repentance is not the work of an hour, or a day: but a constant frame, course, and bent of the soul” (cited in Packer 1990, 174). A minister of formation’s effectiveness increases as he or she discerns between the forms of sin presented and then loves, prays, and administers graces appropriate to each individual. This is due to the fact that “sin is not simply a failure in relation to God that can be studied lexically; it is a personal deviation from God’s will” (Peterson 1989, 121). The nature of the prayer, therefore, can be different depending on individuals. An example of one option is the set of questions asked by John Wesley’s accountability groups which include the following: What known sins have you committed? What temptations have you met with? How were you delivered? What have you said, thought, or done, which you aren’t sure is a sin or not? These could be followed up by a review of your life, what steps need to be taken towards correction and plans for accountability (Sherbino 2013, 53). It is also important to note that the practice of conscious self-examination is closely tied to humility.

Sacrificial Living

Martin Luther believed that the sinful worship of Mammon did not consist of eating or wearing clothes, nor in making a living, for the needs of life make certain things a requirement. However, anything in life becomes a sin when believers begin to be concerned about it and make it the reliance and confidence of their hearts (Foster and Griffin 2000, 120). In this way, as Augustine (2008, 15) taught, wealth becomes “in reality destitution of spirit, and the glory

something to be ashamed of.” The issue is not only with money, but also with the complexity of life. As McGrath (1995, 14) wrote, “If you are dissatisfied with the quality of your Christian life, perhaps the first thing you need to sort out is the pressures of your everyday life. Start cutting back on the non-essentials, and stop pretending that you need to do everything.” Concerning the attitude towards time and money that claims more is better, Foster (1981, 3) commented that the result is that “the lust for affluence in contemporary society has become psychotic: it has completely lost touch with reality.” Simply put, simplicity is laying up our treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19-24). Foster (1981, 10) continued that “Jesus spoke to the heart of the matter when he taught us that if the eye were single, the whole body would be full of light.”

Practising sacrificial living as a means of grace in the contemporary context often requires a call for greater simplicity. Piper (2012, 201-203) remarked there is no problem with six-figure salaries; the problem is that they often seem to need to be accompanied by six-figure lifestyles. Sacrificial living can be as simple as living uncluttered and creating more space in your life for giving to and serving God or learning to let go of envy and entitlement in order to support and encourage fellow workers in Christ (Calhoun 2015, 85).

The Foundation of Enjoying Christ

The final foundation for the Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry is enjoying Christ, which includes worship, ministry, sabbath, and retreat.

Worship

Human beings are a people wired to worship. Chandler remarked that the television news often has more stories about the lives of celebrities than actual news of what is going on in the world. The amount of energy put into following professional sports teams or developing the physical abilities of children to play games is astounding. He continued,

We put posters on our walls, stickers on our cars, ink under our skin, and drugs into our system. We do all of these things and others like them, pouring ourselves automatically and quite naturally into what is decaying. We want to worship something. Worship is an innate response. We are wired for it by God himself. (Chandler 2012, 37)

Answering this innate call means learning to remain with the Holy Spirit in worship and prayer. Murray wrote,

So too the Holy Spirit, working in the depth of our heart, is the One who is able to reveal the Son within us. Through Him alone we have the power to know what and how to pray. Through Him we have the assurance that our prayer has been accepted. Dear Christian, it is in tarrying in the secret of God's presence that you receive grace to abide in Christ and to be led by the Holy Spirit. What food for thought—and worship! (Foster and Griffin, 272)

Worship, according to Murray, drives our spiritual life.

Theologically speaking, worship brings us closest to our chief end: “glorifying God and enjoying Him forever” (Westminster 1648, Q.1). In reformed theology, this has traditionally given worship a primary position in the life of the Christian. Wayne Grudem (1994, 956) wrote, “If worship is genuinely the experience of drawing near to God, coming into his presence, and giving him the praise he deserves, then we certainly ought to count it one of the primary ‘means of grace.’” As Chandler (2012, 103) commented, “The aim of the

Scriptures is to direct our worship to the one true God of the universe, and the universe itself is designed not to occupy our worship but to stir our heart of hearts to behold its God.”

True worship happens “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24) which indicates it is not merely an outward physical action but an act in the spiritual realm through which, biblically, God very often brings great blessing, both individually and corporately by His presence (Grudem 1994, 956-957). This assumes that the believers’ affections as well as their actions are normally engaged in the act of worship before almighty God, and the focus is on God’s glory and manifest presence rather than the externals of religious ceremony. As John Owen said, believers are always tempted to make a “pageant of religion... whose hearts are not really affected with the love of Christ” (Packer 1990, 196).

Fellowship

Theologically speaking, Christians believe that God is the ultimate model and standard for human life. Grenz explained that:

At the heart of the Christian understanding of God is the declaration that God is triune—Father, Son, and Spirit. This means that in his eternal essence the one God is a social reality, the social Trinity. Because God is the social Trinity, a plurality in unity, the ideal for humankind does not focus on solitary persons, but on persons-in-community. God intends that we reflect his nature in our lives. (Grenz 1994, 98)

The Christian life is the community life expressed in Jesus’ prayer, “That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you” (John 17:21).

According to Mulholland (1993, 42), “if you want a good litmus test of your spiritual growth, simply examine the nature and quality of your relationships with

others.” He believes that when followers of Jesus move wholly toward holiness as individuals, the consequence is a peculiar kind of devotion. Their lives tend to become compartmentalized in the sense that the ‘spiritual life’ is in one compartment and ‘daily life’ is in another (Mulholland 1993, 159). The believer attempts to live out of both the old and new selves at the same time rather than enjoying a comprehensive spiritual relationship with God which brings about spiritual change.

Practising fellowship as a means of God’s grace means pursuing intentional Christian community, as well as taking part in individual and group Spiritual direction. As the body of Christ manifest on earth, the community of fellowship is an important way believers experience both engagement with and participation within the body of Christ. Christian fellowship means intentional involvement in the trials, tribulations, and victories of the common life of God’s people. Grenz (1994, 601) stated that: “Because sin brings alienation between humans, God directs his saving action toward the healing of interpersonal relationships. According to the New Testament the focal point of God’s new reconciled society is the church of Jesus Christ.” An important element of God’s glory as found in Jesus is the reconciliation that comes through the cross. Involvement in Christ’s community is an important means by which we experience this element of his glory.

Although evangelicalism has a great many strengths, one great weakness is the tradition’s tendency towards the individualization of spirituality. McGrath (1995, 22) believes that evangelicals need to rediscover their tradition of having

old Christians acting as mentors to their younger friends: “In Christian literature of the early nineteenth century, we find reference to ‘letters of spiritual counsel’, in which older Christians passed on their wisdom to those who were beginning the life of faith. This tradition of ‘spiritual direction’ remains of fundamental importance today, and its neglect is inexcusable.” This gift of wisdom in fellowship could take the form of traditional spiritual direction, accountability partners, or simple mentoring.

Ministry

The joy of God’s grace automatically overflows into love towards others both inside and outside the church (Piper 2012, 119). Ministry means service within the church, and outside the church in evangelism and mercy ministry. The biblical grounds for ministry are both the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:35-40) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20), where our mission of service is given. In service to one another and the lost, we show our gladness to the Lord (Ps. 100:2). Evangelicals usually do not have a problem with service in the church and evangelism; however, mercy ministry can sometimes be caught up in political or ideological concerns. However, Christ does direct his followers to “sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys” (Luke 12:33). Mulholland (1993, 41), commenting on the spiritual importance of mercy ministry, wrote, “Reflect for a moment on what the image of Christ is. It is the image of One who gave himself totally, completely, absolutely,

unconditionally for others. This is the direction in which the Spirit of God moves us toward wholeness. If we forget this... we don't have Christian spiritual formation." Jesus identified his ministry as one of binding up the broken-hearted and proclaiming release to captives (Luke 4:17-18). The fact is that "a true experience of the grace of Jesus Christ inevitably motivates a man or woman to seek justice in the world" (Keller 2010, ix).

Practising ministry as a means of grace is as simple as finding a ministry within the body of Christ or searching to grow in the ministry in which one already finds oneself. Don Whitney's (1991, 117) persuasion was that every believer has at least one spiritual gift, and the ministries God makes available to us are graces within which to exercise our gifts. Passages to read and prayerfully attend to as one considers the various ministries inside and outside the church are Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, 1 Corinthians 14, and Peter 4:11. It might also be important to consider a balance from time to time between ministries inside the church and outside the church; evangelistic and servant; discipleship and mercy ministries; in order to grow in the gifts God has given.

Sabbath

The Sabbath is "God's gift of repetitive and regular rest. It is given for our delight and communion with God" (Calhoun 2015, 42). The biblical and theological grounds for this means come from Hebrews 4:9-10: "So then, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from His." The Puritans created the

English Christian Sunday during which business and organized recreation stopped for worship and good works (Packer 1990, 235). Practically speaking, the Christian Sunday included firstly, preparation with detailed intention—“from this point of view, the battle for our Sundays is usually won or lost on our foregoing Saturday night, when time should be set aside for self-examination, confession and prayer for the coming day” (Packer 1990, 241)—secondly, public worship with the Body of Christ; thirdly, a particular focus on family worship with the heads of the household acting as ministers; and fourthly, rest, but with distinct effort to keep from pharisaic attitude (Packer 1990, 242).

Retreat

One omission from a great deal of Reformation Spirituality is the spiritual practice of retreat. This is surprising as our Lord often retreated into the wilderness to pray throughout His ministry (Luke 5:16). However, as the centre of Christian living moved from the monastery to the every-day Christian, the Reformers tended to emphasise serving God in the everyday (McGrath 1995, 12). As a means of grace, to retreat “is the discipline of setting apart a time, individually or corporately, to step aside from the normal flow of life and give God our full and undivided attention” (Mulholland 1993, 119).

Willard (1991, 28-29) wrote that “a close look at Jesus’ ‘great acts’ of humility, faith, and compassion recorded in the Gospel narratives finds them to be moments in a life more pervasively and deeply characterized by solitude, fasting, prayer, and service.” As Augustine of Hippo (2008, 213) wrote, “When my heart

becomes the receptacle of distraction... and the container for a mass of empty thoughts, then too my prayers are often interrupted and distracted; and in your sight, while I am directing the voice of my heart to your ears, frivolous thoughts somehow rush in and cut short an aspiration of the deepest importance.”

Summary

The Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry is rooted in the beatific vision, nurtures the formation of the new self, has an initial focus on the heart of the minister of formation, and builds on four main foundations which in turn consist of several means of grace which fall under each foundation. The Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry teaches a form of everyday Reformed monastic life patterned after the Puritan spiritual tradition of devotional pastor Richard Baxter. This is one model of spirituality which could be made available, leveraging the networking resources developed by programs such as the Canadian Army’s Integrated Performance Strategy, toward the personal resilience of members within public and corporate organizations.

Practical implementation of the Spiritual Reformation Model of Ministry in either the military or civilian context would be best suited for the congregational context. Evangelical theology assumes a holistic view of the Christian life in the sense of being both individual and communal. The introduction of Biblical meditation leading to prayer and contemplation in a retreat, small group, or online format may give the most appropriate introduction

to the Spiritual Reformation practices for an evangelical context, as the Bible comprises the foundation for evangelical spirituality.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH PROJECT

The goal of my project was to develop a targeted student spiritual formation program for a newly constituted denominational Seminary. The research question I sought to answer was: what is the best way forward for an integrated spiritual formation program for those training for ministry at Ryle Seminary which is biblical, realistic for the school, and has a high likelihood of leading to spiritual growth?

Opportunity

The research project arose out of staff commentary on the need for spiritual mentoring and shepherding of the school's students. As already mentioned, maintaining a balance between the head and the heart in faith is an ongoing issue for reformed believers. In a larger sense, spiritual formation of students has been a historical problem for the reformed Christian tradition dating back to Puritans (Baxter 2012, 56-58). My study was specific to the theologically reformed-evangelical context of the school.

Response

I addressed the central goal by assessing the spiritual needs of the students through an appreciative inquiry, development of a spiritual formation program proposal, and a final consultation with an expert panel to evaluate the proposed

program. I sought to leverage and augment existing college programs towards a more comprehensive, yet manageable, and biblically based approach to the spiritual formation of candidates for ministry. This was accomplished by identifying a manageable targeted number of areas on which the seminary could focus, thereby allowing best value for resources and time used (See Appendices A-C).

Supervision, Permission, and Access

For the duration of the project, I was accountable to both the Principal and Academic Dean of Ryle Seminary. They were kept apprised of my research through occasional meetings and reporting. Permission for access was granted in response to an initial proposal. Through the contextual assessment, leveraging of existing resources, and expert panel consisting of staff, students and denominational leadership, I ensured the research was context specific, and gained buy-in and ownership of the results by seminary members and key-stakeholders.

Context

Several areas of context influenced my research, including my identity and its relevance, where the study was conducted, the participants involved, the state of ministry I was addressing, as well as the cultural and spiritual contexts.

My Identity and Its Relevance

I am an Anglican (Network) priest and military chaplain who recently

transferred to the Anglican Network in Canada from the Anglican Church of Canada. My desire was to consult with ministry training organizations in the new denomination towards developing contextualised spiritual formation ministries for those they serve. This is relevant to my research project as the denomination is still evolving and seeking to listen to the Spirit for the way forward in ministry, growth, and formation.

As a military chaplain, I have experienced firsthand the operational trauma that can happen for those in ministry in the Forces. This is of particular concern for those who lived through the Afghanistan War years. As the Forces enter a new era of high-pressure operations, resilience and hardiness are a key need in pastoral training. In addition, since openly addressing mental health and ministry in several forums, I had a number of civilian pastors come forward sharing their own stories. Of note, according to Lifeway research, studies showed that pastors are up to twice as likely as the general population to struggle with anxiety and depression (Lifeway 2013). Spirituality, resilience and the pastorate, particularly as it pertains to providing spiritual formation for those studying for ministry are therefore inherent to my ministry-milieu both in civilian and military ministry.

Where the Study was Conducted

I conducted the project at Ryle Seminary in Ottawa. The students of the seminary resided in the city of Ottawa and the surrounding Ottawa Valley. The Seminary grew out of the ministry of the Church of the Messiah, an evangelical Anglican Church in Ottawa.

Initially involved in the project were the students of the two cohorts studying for ministry in the seminary. The opportunity to take part in the research was opened to all members of the cohorts studying for ministry. The final assessment involved the Principal, Academic Dean, local Archdeacon, and two students who were involved in the appreciative inquiry.

State of Ministry that Needed to be Addressed

Although the school had core courses in spiritual formation, it was noted by the staff that a more experiential and comprehensive approach to the formation of the students beyond traditional courses would be beneficial. Initially, this aim was to be accomplished through one-on-one mentoring of the students on an ad hoc basis. My study assessed whether this was the best practice going forward, or if a select number of different practices for spiritual formation were more appropriate.

Cultural Context

The cultural context impacted my project in a theological way. The school and staff stated that they wish to remain distinctly biblical and evangelical in orientation. There is a concern in the reformed-evangelical movement that spiritual formation is particularly Roman Catholic in orientation (Carson 2011). For this reason, there was an intentional attempt to remain within the lines of reformed doctrine and practice. At the same time, as discussed above, I have discerned an overly academic approach to the faith within the culture of my

tradition. My experience is that this has led to a cultural hard-edginess characterized by pride, a tendency towards judgementalism, and a lack of affectionate engagement spiritually. My hope with this project was to ‘speak into’ my tradition, seeking to provide spiritual resources for the next generation of pastors towards a passionate, experiential spiritual life which lends itself to manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Spiritual Context

The spiritual context was preparation for ministry in the contemporary Canadian reality. According to the members of the seminary community, Ottawa is a very liberal-secular city. In addition to the local milieu, most of the ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada is focused around church planting. The pressure of ministry in this context, with a particular focus on church planting, set a distinct need for a robust and intentional program of spiritual formation of the students to prepare them to be resilient in ministry. The students themselves confirmed this during the research as they shared a fear of burnout and ineffectiveness due to the pressures of isolation, conflict, and cultural marginalization in a secular context.

Models and Other Resources

The basic foundation for my project arose from Richard Lovelace. Lovelace (1979, 19) contrasted evangelical spirituality with the triple way of classical mysticism. While classical mysticism traditionally defined spiritual growth as a movement from spiritual cleansing, to illumination, and, ultimately,

to union with the divine, Lovelace outlined biblical evangelical spirituality as moving the other way from union, to illumination, to sanctification. The matter of finding a distinctly evangelical model, which would be accepted by those from the reformed-evangelical tradition, meant keeping distinct from models and practices that pointed to the classical way of mysticism, and arose, instead, from what the reformed tradition would understand as distinctly biblical foundations.

The importance of this study was further advanced due to the growing amount of research identifying a strong link between practical spirituality and personal resilience (Yeung 2013; Brémault-Phillips 2017). This link suggested that a program preparing pastors for the rigor of ministry ought to include an intentional approach to individual spiritual formation. In addition, research further indicated that the more established forms of spirituality as found in the religious communities of the world's major religions lent themselves to personal hardiness (Robson 2014). This showed that particular traditions offering comprehensive spiritualities, such as the reformed-evangelical tradition, seemed to be the most beneficial way forward for spiritual formation and personal resilience.

Background from my Spiritual Autobiography and Model

My own journey, as outlined in my spiritual autobiography, was a story of travelling through the breadth of the Anglican spiritual tradition including Benedictine, Ignatian, charismatic and evangelical spirituality. My own experience with operational and vicarious trauma, both firsthand and in the

chaplains I lead, led me to study the science of personal resilience as it pertains to the helping profession, as well as those in the profession of arms. My spiritual model based on the works of Richard Baxter, was an attempt to provide a practical spirituality towards resilience for those who consider themselves to be from the evangelical tradition.

I highlighted Puritan spirituality as a subset of reformed-evangelicalism focusing on the work of Ping-tong Lin (2000), Packer (1990), and Beeke and Jones (2012). The form of Puritan spirituality I put forward as the foundation of our study was that of Puritan pastor Richard Baxter, applied to the present context. This seemed appropriate as Baxter is known, historically, as the penultimate Puritan writer on spiritual devotion (Baxter 2012, 9). It is also my experience that Baxter's works have become popular for contemporary reformed believers. Thus, engaging his works brings a level of comfort and familiarity for those I seek to serve.

From Baxter's work, I was able to present a basic contemporary model for reformed-evangelical spiritual formation. This model, in the Puritan tradition, was a comprehensive spirituality where the believer is formed into Christlikeness by God through the power of the Holy Spirit for His glory, and the believer's good. In particular, I argued that this happens through looking to Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) via both God's particular blessing and the various means of grace. This 'looking to Jesus' was accomplished in the four spheres of word, prayer, watchfulness, and enjoying Christ. My research project, therefore, used this model as the framework for study and focussed on these four spheres, looking to

apply a select number of practices which could be best leveraged for the students' formation.

Other Resources and Cases

As I utilized an appreciative inquiry approach to engaging the student body, I engaged the work of Sensing (2011) and Stringer (2014) for the overarching rationale to the community approach. The research was given granularity through the processes outlined in Cooperrider and Whitney (2005), Verma (2014), and Hammond (2013), particularly as pertained to forming the questions for the inquiry, selecting the participants, and understanding the nuances of the five step approach described below. The questions were further developed, in part, through examining a community engagement case study by Cooperrider (2018). Data for the appreciative inquiry was initially analyzed, during a two-night appreciative inquiry summit, through the identification of key themes by the group. These themes were then cross-referenced with the field notes from the summit and prioritized to give greater clarity to the spiritual formation program developed through the appreciative inquiry by identifying the main elements and sub-elements of the program. The expert panel questions were developed utilizing a modified version of Fitzpatrick's (2011) questions on program design. Finally, data was analysed using Stringer's (2014, 139-163) analysis approach to distill action research data, specifically interpretation through concept mapping.

Project, Methodology, and Methods

For the research, seven students of the Seminary took part in three hours of Appreciative Inquiry at Ryle Seminary over two nights. These individuals provided feedback and input into a positive assessment of the present means of, and teaching on, spiritual formation at the Seminary. From this inquiry, I made recommendations to an expert panel. The expert panel consisted of the Principal of the Seminary, the Academic Dean, the local Archdeacon and two student leaders who participated in the summit. The Principal and Academic Dean were selected to provide input on the program from the perspective of the school as well as practical achievability. The local Archdeacon, whose role includes local clergy care, was invited to give input from the perspective of the denomination and for his understanding of ministry in the local context. The two student leaders were selected by participant consensus to provide input on whether the program was a fair reflection of what was developed in the appreciative inquiry and the practicality of the program.

Scope

The research was completed when I recommended an initial practical student spiritual formation program at Ryle Seminary, based on the students' capacities and needs, as well as the goals of the seminary and those of The Anglican Network in Canada. My intent was to make recommendations for a biblically based program based on the research findings, likely to lead to the spiritual formation of students, and to prevent putting undue demands on the

Seminary.

The research was restricted by the goals and priorities of the seminary. The mission of the seminary is: “Equipping unashamed workers, unashamed of the Gospel, and unashamed of the whole counsel of God” (Sinclair 2018). Its vision is: “Building strong local, Gospel churches at home and abroad – one leader at a time” (ryleseminary.ca 2018). The project was likewise limited by the mission of the Anglican Network in Canada who stated they seek to be a denomination, “Building Biblically faithful, Gospel sharing, Anglican churches... fully Anglican, biblically faithful, evangelizing and discipling communities” (anglicannetwork.ca 2018). The particular focus of the project was forming leaders training for ministry in the Anglican network in Canada. These limitations affected the research project as it guided the criteria from a theological perspective. As well, the need for practicality in the intended result became apparent when the proposed program designed with the students was put to the panel.

Methodology

This was an action research project examining the area of spiritual formation for students preparing for ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada. As the primary researcher, I led the appreciative inquiry and facilitated the expert panel. Appreciative inquiry is “a collaborative and generative process of organizational learning and change emphasising building on an organization’s assets rather than focusing on problems” (Sensing 2011, 168). Using a

participatory approach to research leads to greater ownership of the results (Stringer 2014, 14) and was intended to keep the results achievable within a small-school setting. Stringer commented that “action research provides a model for enacting local, action-oriented approaches to inquiry, applying small-scale theorizing to specific problems in specific situations” (Stringer 2014, 14). Participatory action research is a form of applied research which gains effectiveness through community participation in the process: “through working together, establishing an understanding of each other’s experience, we establish the basis for truly effective outcomes, with head, heart, and hand” (Stringer 20014, xxi). So, this methodology choice is well-suited to developing a program tailored to a particular community milieu.

Methods

In the first phase of the research, student participants met for two successive Monday evenings for a small-scale appreciative inquiry summit (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 38). An appreciative inquiry summit is a “meeting process that focuses on discovering and developing an organization’s positive core and designing it into strategic... processes” (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 38). The evenings were driven by the 5D Process of Appreciative Inquiry: Define, Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny (Verma 2014, Ch 3: 5D Process) (See Figure 1). The first evening a short presentation on the reformed-evangelical model of spiritual formation introduced the centre of gravity for the summit, followed by the steps of Define, Discover and Dream. The final evening

encompassed the Design and Destiny phases.

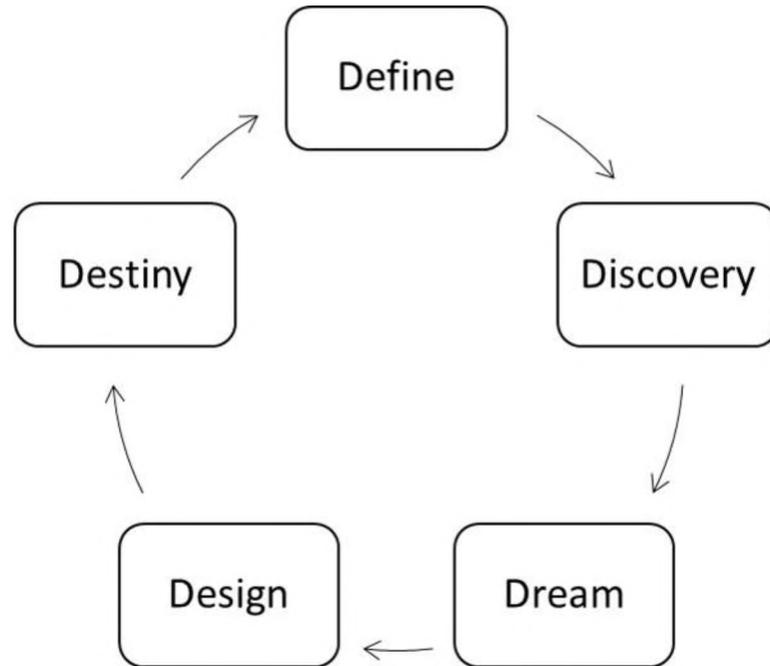


Figure 1. The 5D Process (Verma 2014, Ch 3: 5D Process)

As part of the Dream and Design phases of the summit, central themes were identified by the group, a design statement was authored, and an emerging practical set of steps were identified. The themes themselves were identified and given priority through a group exercise that examined group notes and labelled priorities with sticky dots. Each individual was given three dots to highlight any theme they found in the group notes posted around the room. In the final Destiny phase, the ‘who’ and ‘when’ of the program were explored. Data was collected through collection of artifacts generated such as these student and group notes, and the final products of the agreed upon program. The resultant data was processed through group interaction with identification of themes, the creation of a design statement and the identification of priorities and ways forward.

The second phase of the research was an in-depth analysis of the data from the summit. In-depth analysis involved comparing summit notes and artifacts with the field notes for data confirmation. This allowed me to confirm that the summit notes and artifacts were a fair representation of the group's inquiry. Through this, I filtered out concepts and terms inadvertently inserted into the process or incorrectly interpreted by myself as the facilitator. This confirmation process also allowed me to confirm the prioritization of key themes by the group. As a result, I was able to finalize the spiritual formation program with the confidence that I was using the same terms, concepts, and prioritization used by the group. The final formation program was, therefore, the product generated by the group during the final phase of the summit, confirmed by the impressions and observations of outside observers.

During the third phase of the research, the expert panel were emailed the program documents. They responded to the research assessing the proposed spiritual formation program based on the three priorities of biblical-basis, achievability, and overall probability of leading to spiritual growth. In the final phase of the research, the results from the expert panel were tabulated using an interpretive approach which included distilling the data, review, unitizing, coding, identifying themes, categorizing, developing a report framework, and, finally, concept mapping (Stringer 2014, 139-155). Using Stringer's concept mapping identified priorities for the various stakeholders, in order to compare them to the research group's results (Stringer 2014, 152-53). Due to the narrative aspect of the findings, as well as the involvement of several stakeholders in the expert

panel, I chose the concept mapping alternative from Stringer (2014, 152-155). Concept mapping involved reconceptualizing issues in ways that clearly identify the interrelationships among all the significant elements (Stinger 2014, 153). Using a diagram to represent elements of the research allowed me to “visualize the ways in which components of the situation relate to the problems” that I was investigating (Stringer 2014, 153). Based on this, I was able to judge the success of the program from the perspective of the panel. Recommendations going forward were generated by cross referencing the positive and negative concepts mapped from the expert panel with the prioritized themes from the appreciative inquiry. Through this process, I was able to take the concerns of the expert panel, such as the feasibility of introducing regular worship in Ryle’s schedule, with the priorities of the Appreciative inquiry summit, which prioritized worship as tertiary to several other elements of the program.

Ethics

My permission to take on this project came from the leadership of the Ryle Seminary under the supervision of Tyndale Seminary. I am not a teacher nor a professor at the school, although I have been a guest lecturer in ministry classes. Several of the students were on staff at the church where I am an honorary associate pastor. I knew several of the other students from my previous church before moving to Ottawa. As a military Chaplain, I stood outside of the traditional structure of church leadership, which reduced the power imbalance between myself and the students. All of the students at the school who were

training for ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada were invited to participate. I approached each prospective student with an introductory letter, explained the research, and asked if they would consent to participate. They were given at least a week to consider their participation. The sessions were held during days when the students were normally already at the school, as many traveled from outside the area. Research abided by the ethical requirements of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Approval by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board was given October 10, 2018, by the Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Formation program coordinator, and the Principal of Ryle Seminary.

Outcomes and Findings

The research provided a basis for design of a spiritual formation program which was biblical, achievable, and likely to lead to the spiritual growth of the students.

Findings

The final spiritual formation program design was generated by using data analysis inherent to the appreciative inquiry process. The group designed a program which included four core elements within which seven key themes were to be explored. The four elements were spiritual mentorship, intentional small groups, communal worship in Chapel, and an annual retreat. These specific elements made up the four core actions to be added to the Ryle community life as its spiritual formation program, in addition to the core spiritual formation classes

taught as part of the school's existing curriculum. Through these four elements the themes identified by the participants would be experienced, explored and developed in the life of the students while they study at the school.

The main themes identified by the appreciative inquiry group to be explored through the four elements were prayer/scripture, mentorship, accountability/transparency, intentional community/support, seeing markers for growth, pouring out (practically loving our neighbours), and realism about life/ministry/education. Interestingly, prayer and scripture were always mentioned together in discussion. Although my first inkling was to mention them separately, it became apparent from the field notes and how they were prioritized in the summit that they were closely linked for the group. The seven themes emerged several times at each point of the inquiry, and the group noted that they seemed to build upon one another in the order of the priority identified during the sticky-dot exercise.

In-depth analysis, as directed by Stringer (2014, 147-154), was achieved through confirming the prioritization of identified themes by examining group work. The themes were prioritized in two ways. First, I looked at how often the group engaged each theme throughout the summit. Second, I mapped the chronological order in which each theme was discussed in each of the five points of the inquiry. This involved looking at the sequential order of discussion, and when (first, second, or third) each theme was brought up in discussion. Some themes, such as prayer and scripture, became so central that they became 'givens' in group discussion. So, although less time was devoted to discussing prayer and

scripture in group discussion, it was often mentioned first or second as a ‘given’ before the group moved on to other themes. This consistent mention at the beginning of each section showed a priority for the group, even though other elements were discussed more often. In a similar way, I confirmed the group’s prioritization of the four elements of the program, giving precedence to what was most important to group interaction.

The in-depth analysis also allowed me to give a more fulsome explanation of each of the four elements of the program the group developed. This explanation included which theme would be explored by each element of the program. For example, exploring the realistic spiritual challenges of ministry and community building were specifically highlighted as a focus for the annual retreats. As realism was given less priority in group discussion, it made sense for this theme to be included as a secondary theme for a less important element of the program.

When the proposed program was put to the expert panel, I utilized a concept mapping approach to assess the responses. The first stage in analysing the panel responses was to categorize and code. The first step of this stage was to review the data to identify elements that were particularly pertinent to the research question as detailed at the beginning of this chapter. This involved removing any data that was irrelevant or peripherally relevant (Stringer 2014, 141). Data removed included statements which were assumed in the research question, such as the special relationship of the college with the Anglican Network in Canada, comments made out of unfamiliarity with what is taught in the college’s spiritual

formation classes, and peripheral comments made due to lack of explanation or clarity in the expert panel questions themselves.

The second step of stage one was to unitize the data by identifying units of meaning. To accomplish this, I separated the individual responses from the expert panel into word-for-word units of meaning (Stringer 2014, 141-142). Each unit of meaning represented a specific point that the respondent was making. For example, one panelist's response to the achievability question included the comment:

I think that to have this work we will have to think through some structural changes in the Seminary program. Our current pattern of having all our courses offered on Mondays and Wednesday makes time for lunch and small groups complicated.

This became a unit of meaning for analysis.

The third step of stage one was to categorize and code the data by sorting the units into related groups (Stringer 2014, 142). The units fell into six categorical groupings, taking care to use terms from the words of the stakeholders themselves: program convergence with stakeholders, biblical foundation, communal worship, mentorship, achievability, and pragmatism. These were further broken down into sub-categories. The category of program convergence was broken down into three sub-categories which corresponded with the stakeholders: the Anglican Network in Canada, Ryle Seminary administration, and the students. The biblical category broke down into care in emphasis on biblicism and reformed/evangelical concerns. The communal worship broke down to priority and seminary structure/schedule. The mentorship category

included the sub-categories key value and resources/gifted mentors. The achievability category was broken down into three categories: complimentary and doable, practical concerns/questions, and implementation. Finally, the pragmatic category included the sub-categories import/focus and practical vision.

The fourth step of this stage was to identify themes between the groupings (Stringer 2014, 142-143). Three themes arose between various groupings. These were the themes of foundations, disciplines, and practicality. The final step of stage one was to organize a categorical system out of the identified themes, categories, and sub-categories (Stringer 2014, 143). The breakdown under the three themes is represented in Figure 2. Category System.

- 1. Foundations**
 - I. Program convergence**
 - a. Ryle Seminary
 - b. The Anglican Network in Canada
 - c. The Licentiate in Theology Program
 - II. Biblical**
 - a. Care in this emphasis
 - b. Reformed/evangelical
- 2. Disciplines**
 - I. Communal Worship**
 - a. Priority
 - b. Seminary structure/schedule
 - II. Mentorship**
 - a. Key value
 - b. Resources and gifted mentors
- 3. Practical**
 - I. Achievable**
 - a. Complimentary and doable
 - b. Practical concerns/questions
 - c. Implementation
 - II. Pragmatic**
 - a. Import/focus
 - b. Practice/vision

Figure 2. Category System

Using these categories, the data was organized into a charted format for interpretation in stage two.

Interpretations

Stage two consisted of an in-depth analysis of the data and interpretation of the results. As mentioned, due to the narrative aspect of the findings, I chose concept mapping through visual representation to interpret the data. To build the diagram I wrote the three groups, Foundations, Disciplines and Practical, on three separate pieces of paper. Next, I added other geometric figures, squares for the categories and circles for the subcategories, to represent the elements associated with the problem. Finally, I linked the figures which were related to each other, based on the units of meaning that they represented (Stringer 2014, 153). Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5 represent the interrelationship between the elements of each group, Foundations, Disciplines, and Practical, respectively. The outer elements of the organization chart represent the units of meaning under each category and sub-category. The solid lines denote the structure of the categories derived from Figure 2. The dotted lines represent partnered themes between the categories. Partnered themes are similar units of meaning which show up repeatedly across the categories. The greater the amount of convergence, or partnered themes, across the categories, the greater amount of emphasis has been put on each theme by the expert panel. For example, units of meaning about mentoring show up several times across the categories. In fact, positive

comments about mentoring show up more than any other subject. This represents, therefore, a major theme in the responses of the panel.

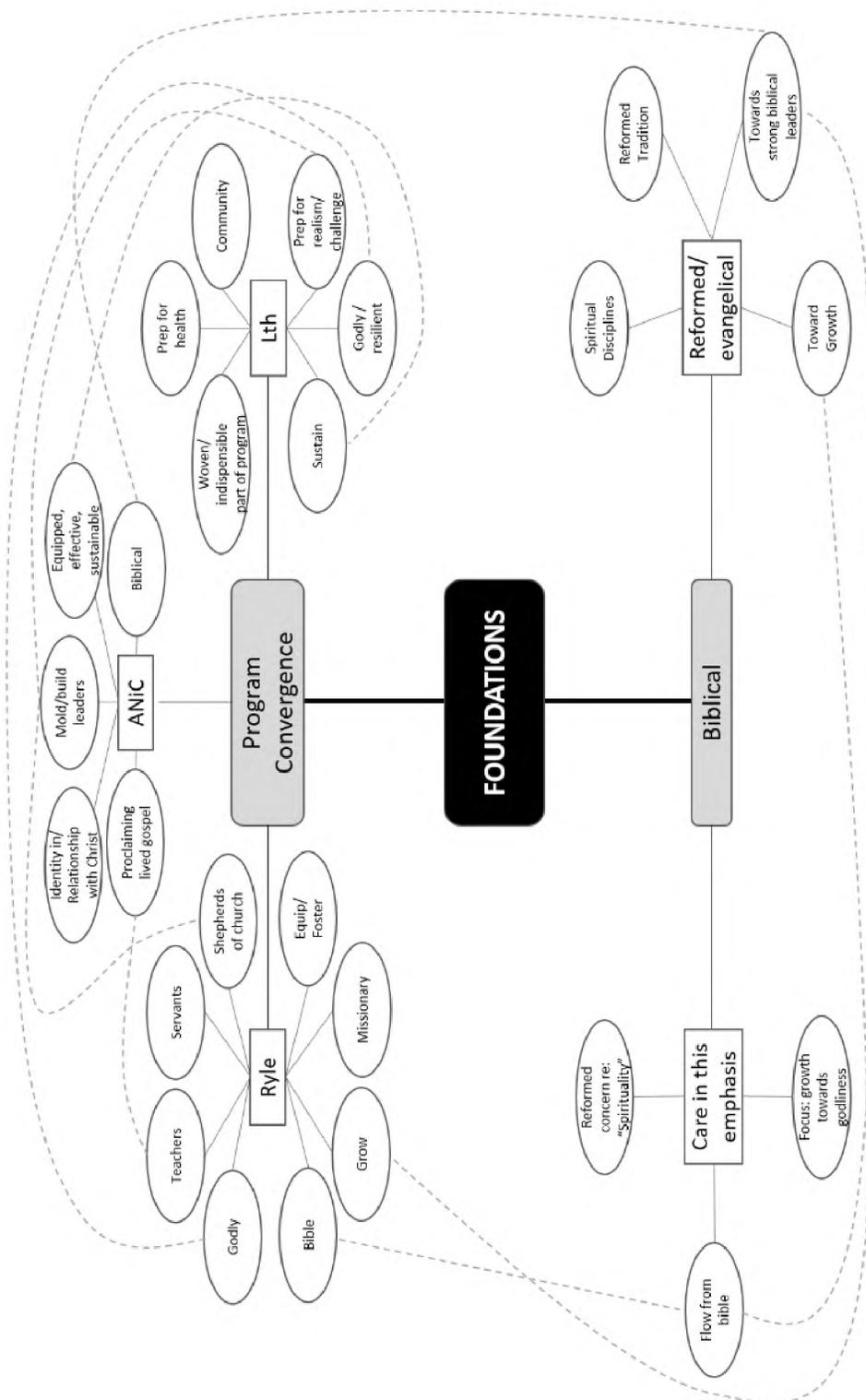


Figure 3. Concept map of the foundations grouping

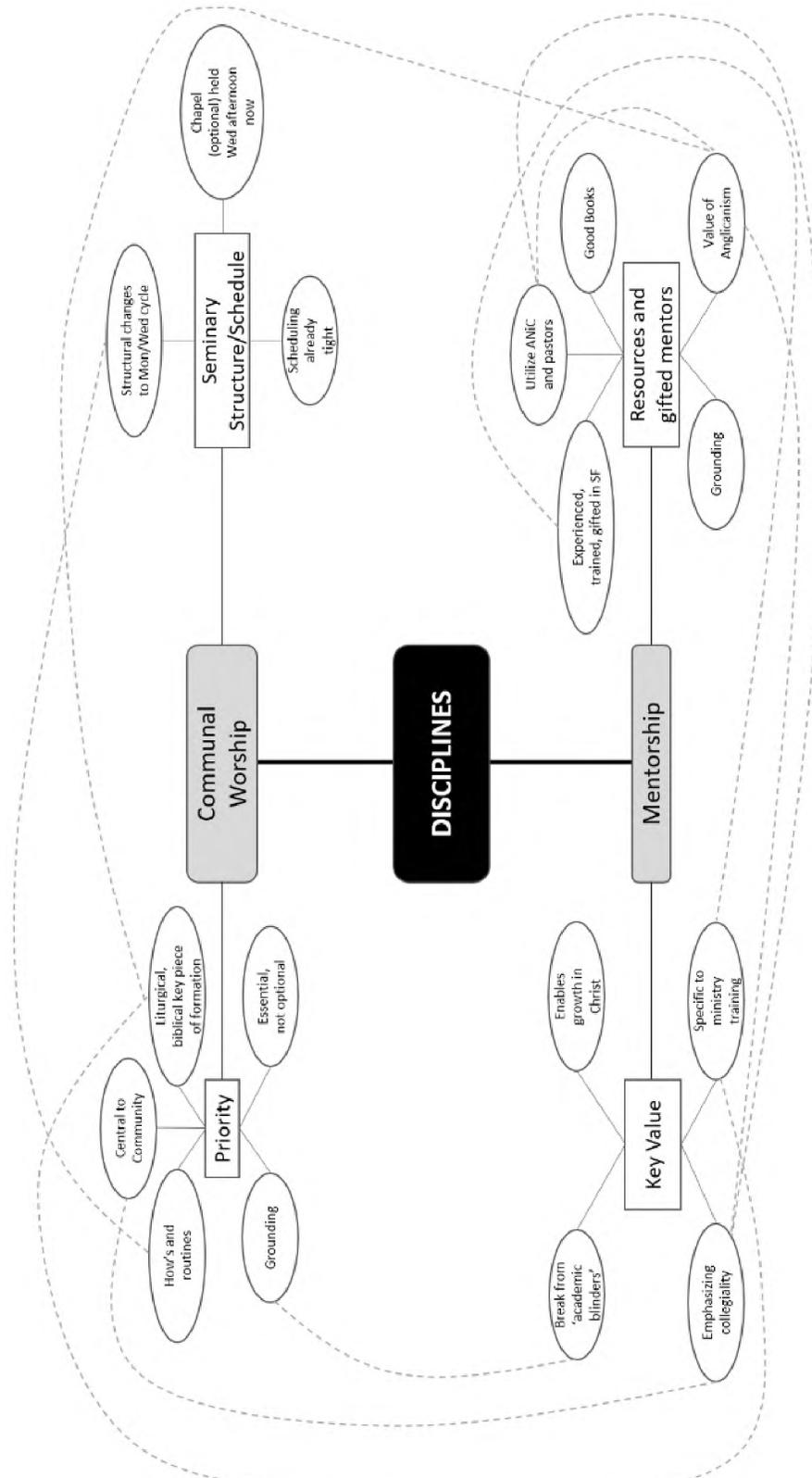


Figure 4. Concept map of the disciplines grouping

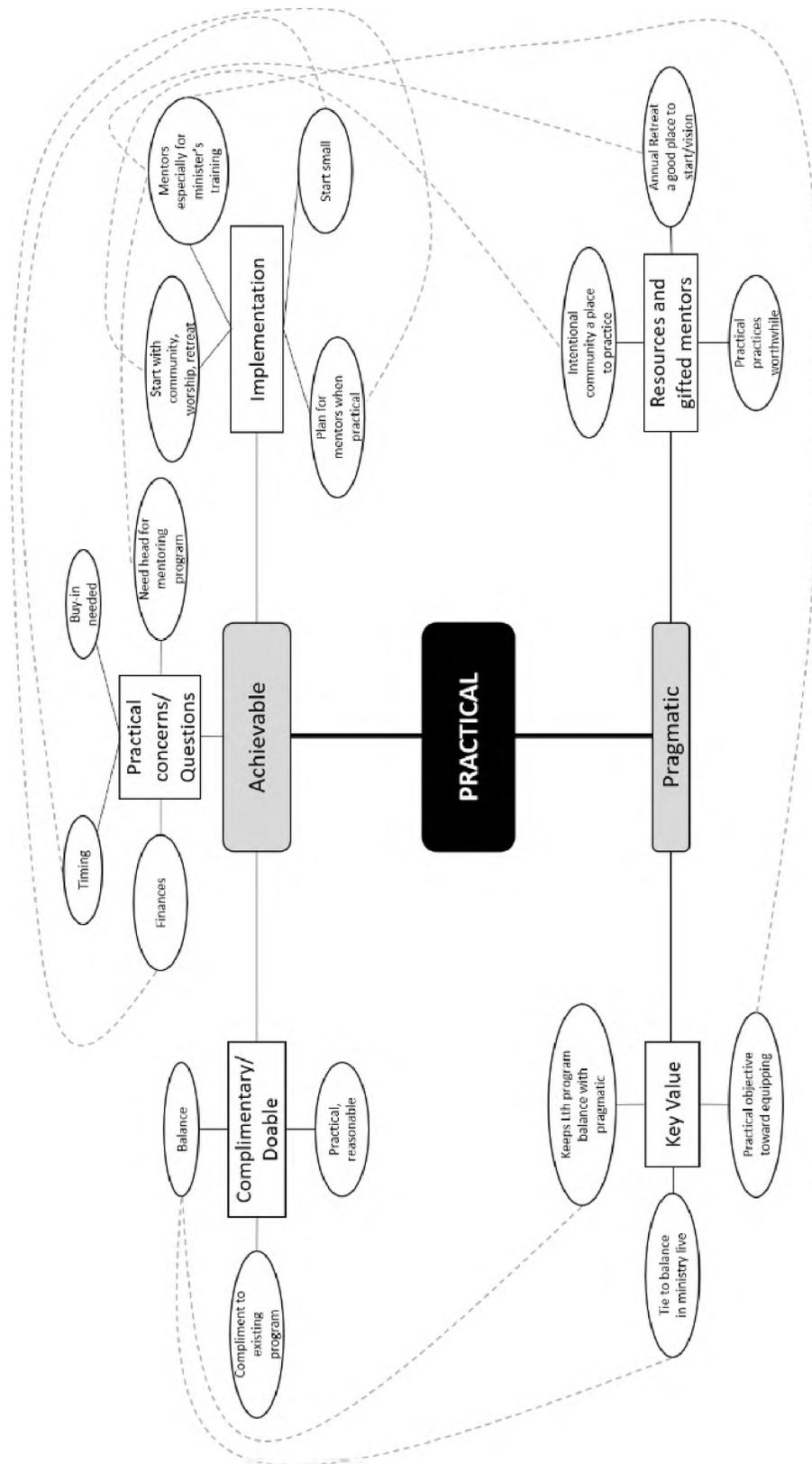


Figure 5. Concept map of practical grouping

The partnered themes (indicated by the dashed lines) identified within each group were compared to those of the other groups. After comparison across the groups, I created a chart (Figure 6) to represent the magnitude of concern for each theme from the perspective of the stakeholders. This was accomplished by measuring the instances of convergence across the groupings. For instance, mentoring, linked with the Anglican Network in Canada and ministry formation, had a total of 12 instances of convergence across the concept maps, and is represented as the largest bar on the graph. The other bars are proportionally smaller, depending on the number of instances.

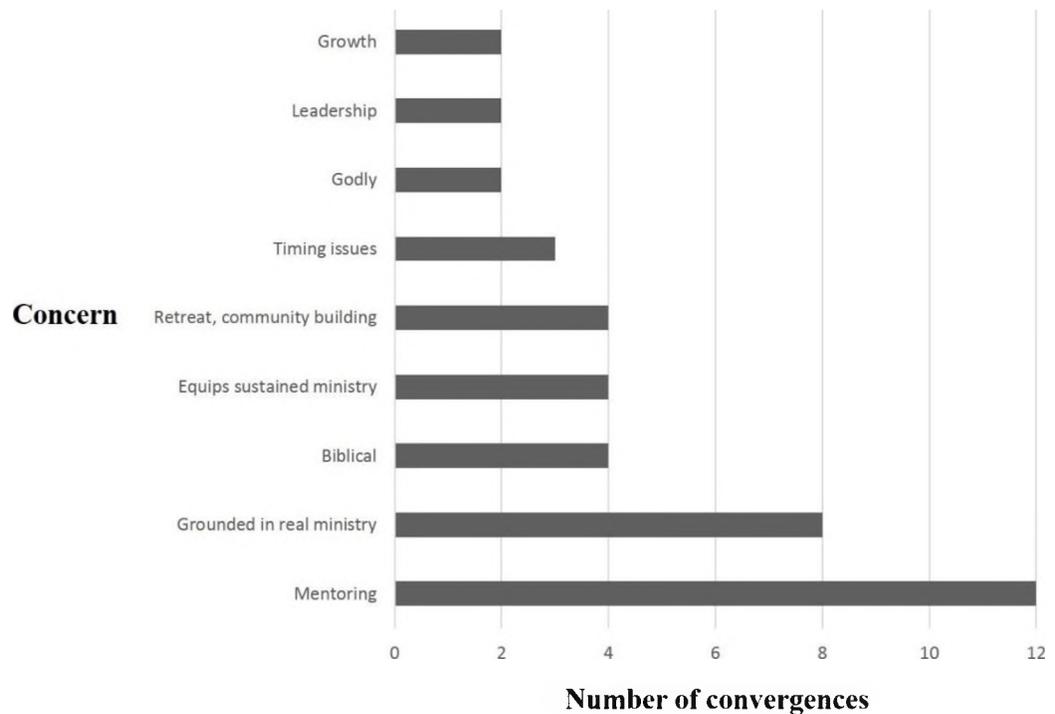


Figure 6. Main concerns of stakeholders

This chart allowed me to identify and visualize the major influences that needed to be taken into account when evaluating the project from the point of view of the

stakeholders. The main concerns of the stakeholders were cross-referenced with the research question to gain greater fidelity on issues, concerns and confirmations with respect to the desired outcome of the project. The research question, in particular, was concerned with the biblical nature of the program, the probability for spiritual growth of the participants, and the practicality for the Seminary in the near to mid term. The evaluation was used to measure the outcome of the proposed program, make recommendations for future processes for the development of a spiritual formation program development, and recommendations for the Ryle ministry training program.

Outcome

My desired outcome was to develop a spiritual formation program for those studying at Ryle Seminary for ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada, which was biblically based, beneficial for the spiritual formation of students and achievable by the school. Based on the findings of the appreciative inquiry summit, I recommended an intentional program to augment the present classes in Spiritual Formation at the Seminary. Returning to the first phase of my research, the following is the result of the appreciative inquiry which was put to the expert panel.

Program Design Statement

Based on the themes which arose from the Inquiry, as well as the definition of Spiritual formation in the reformed-evangelical tradition, the

students authored the following design statement as the vision for the program:

Grounded in the Bible and flowing from the Reformed-Evangelical tradition, the Ryle Spiritual Formation program exists to equip ministers to build sustainable ministries and witness in the real world, with a focus on accountability, prayer, and mentorship.

A powerful theme, identified by the group and confirmed by the field notes, coming out of the appreciative inquiry was the desire to build a spiritual program geared towards the realism and rigour of ministry life. The students mentioned building and maintaining resilience through spiritual formation several times throughout the process. Therefore, the recommended focus of the program was to build resilient leaders in ministry. The next most important theme, as far as frequency of and priority in discussion, was a Bible and prayer focus. The group was interested in a biblically-based program arising out of their evangelical heritage, while exploring other Christian traditions from that perspective. This was to be achieved through: mentorship in spirituality in ministry by qualified spiritual leaders; intentional community with a formative and accountability focus; communal worship; and an annual retreat in September for all members of the Ryle community. Other important themes identified, which were put forward to serve as guiding markers for the program, were opportunities to pour out in ministry, such as taking leadership in facets of the program, and using spiritual curriculum/teaching that allow for growth markers to be identified, not only in the student's lives, but in the lives of those to whom they minister. The four elements of the spiritual formation program, as well as some coordinating instructions, were recommended to apply the main themes of the appreciative inquiry as

follows.

Mentorship.

Spiritual direction, in the form of spiritual friendship/mentorship, was recommended. This was to be provided by qualified evangelical ministers (ministry degree and experience with some training or experience in spiritual formation) as part of the internship program of the school. Where a student was not involved in the internship program, it was proposed that they engage a spiritual mentor agreed upon by the Academic Dean and/or Principal. The frequency and focus of this mentorship is to be tailored to the student, except that they should not meet less than monthly and the meetings are to include time devoted to the rhythms of biblical meditation and prayer, as indicated by the major place this theme held for the group.

Intentional community.

Intentional spiritual community building was recommended in two forms: a monthly meal between classes (bring your own, potluck, or a restaurant) with a focus on building the community of fellowship, and weekly 30-minute small groups (3-5 people). Considering the major theme of community and realism in ministry, the appreciative inquiry group made specific recommendations about this element. The small groups put forward were recommended to be self-directed, giving students an opportunity to pour into the lives of one another, and were to include a devotional (verses and or class topic in consultation with the

spiritual formation professor and Seminary leadership), personal discussion, connection to God, and the maintenance of a group prayer list.

Communal worship.

Communal worship denoted participation and leadership in the chapel life of Ryle, with teaching specifically around the inner-life of the pastor. Guest speakers were proposed to be engaged to deal with pastoral spirituality from personal experience. Again, with opportunities for students to minister to one another.

Annual retreat.

An annual retreat in September for the Ryle community would set the tone for spirituality and allow the students to develop personal spiritual mission statements for the year. The recommended focus of the retreats is enjoying God and building community, including an over-arching theme, as well as some teaching and guided discussion. The preference was for a retreat that is not too intensive, with real opportunity for non-structured interaction, testimony, and defined prayer/worship times.

Coordinating recommendations.

The summit participants recommended that all classes include a small percentage of final grade based on participation in the communal life of Ryle Seminary, including the facets of the spiritual formation program. The percentage of this mark was also recommended to be higher for the spiritual formation

courses, as well as the internship program.

Expert Panel

In phase two of my research, the outcomes of the appreciative inquiry as detailed above were put to the expert panel for assessment. The main concerns of the expert panel, as represented in figure 5.5, were mentoring, the practical nature of the program in balancing the academic formation with practical spiritual formation, the biblical nature of the program, the equipping of students to be effective and resilient in ministry, and the role of community and worship in grounding the program. Applying these responses to the research question, the feedback from the expert panel confirmed that the program was biblically based, was likely to lead to spiritual growth and formation for the students, and, largely, was practically achievable for the Seminary.

Biblical

The expert panel unanimously confirmed that the program was biblical, in the tradition of reformed evangelicalism. As one responder noted, “I think that the biblical basis of the program is quite strong. There is a strong focus on the spiritual disciplines within the reformed tradition.” Furthermore, the importance of maintaining this emphasis was also a reoccurring theme. First, in the use of practices that were consistent with following the life and witness of Jesus. Second, the care in this focus was important to address the reformed-evangelical hesitance with spirituality in the broad-sense. One expert responded, “special

care ought to be made to ensure the implementation of any such program flowed from this foundation, and stayed true to the biblical, evangelical-reformed stance of the seminary.”

Likelihood of Spiritual Growth/Formation

Likewise, the expert panel was unanimous in their conclusion that the program would lead to the spiritual formation and growth of the students. Of note was the proposed program’s role in balancing the academic nature of the Licentiate curriculum, grounding the students in a pragmatic spiritual, personal and professional balance for ministry life. One expert noted that the main objective of the proposed program itself seemed to be equipping students for their future gospel ministry, emphasising “practical objectives, as opposed to theoretical ones.” Particularly, the panel pointed to the effectiveness of the program’s chosen disciplines for building servant leaders and shepherds for ministry, who focus on personal godliness to “proclaim a lived gospel.” Finally, several comments were made pointing to the likelihood of the program to build personal resilience for effective and sustained ministry.

Achievability

Concerns were raised by the panel on the achievability of the program in the short term, particularly with respect to timing and the scope of implementation. While the aspects of intentional community and the annual retreat were relatively easy to phase into the program, the communal worship and

mentoring presented an issue for scheduling and timing issue for the school. It was pointed out that the seminary runs classes on Mondays and Wednesdays with a tight schedule between classes. One expert commented, “Unfortunately, some students only have Monday Classes. Monday scheduling has been traditionally tight (having a Monday service would take up either lunch or dinner break, which is only an hour each), and up to now we have not been able to solve this scheduling issue.” To fully implement the worship, alongside the intentional community, would involve structural changes to the seminary program. One recommendation was to “start small” not letting the “perfect” stand in the way of the good. Also noted was the scope of the mentoring program, as a champion would be needed to lead and direct the mentoring aspect, finding suitable and qualified mentors and providing training where required. As such, the mentoring aspect might be limited by finances. At the same time, mentoring was also highlighted as central to the efficacy of the program towards growth and formation. One practical suggestion was that, for the students who were training for ordained ministry, spiritual mentoring could be partnered with the emerging internship program. The assumption was that the experienced gospel ministers chosen by the seminary to work alongside students would also be the most appropriate to provide spiritual mentoring. At the same time, training the mentors how to provide spiritual friendship could happen in concert with the training to supervise an intern. Again, although not achievable in the short-term, it is possible in the mid-term, specifically for those training for ordained ministry. Another practical suggestion was that a phased in approach to both the

community and mentoring aspects would be most appropriate.

Implementation

The results of the two aims of biblical nature and likelihood of spiritual formation were as expected for the program. However, I did not anticipate the issues around achievability and logistics. The assumption had been that the students, particularly those who were in their third year of the inaugural cohort, would be aware of the scheduling issues and practical ability of the school to provide the program in the shorter term. Although, according to the panel, the mentoring and worship aspects still seemed achievable within the mid-term, more focus on the practical implementation of the program during the summit may have mitigated this issue.

Research Conclusions

This research project designed a program of spiritual formation for students studying for ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada at Ryle Seminary. The program of spiritual mentorship, intentional community, communal worship, and annual retreat was assessed to be biblical, probable to lead to the spiritual formation of the students, and practically achievable within the near to mid-term of one to three years.

Implications

Although the assessment of the spiritual benefit and theological grounding of the program were as expected, I was somewhat surprised that the summit did

not provide the practical detail necessary to pass the expert panel without issue. A phased in approach to the worship, as recommended by the panel, starting with a monthly community service in the first year (short-term), looking to move to a bi-monthly program within the next three years (mid-term), would answer the issues of timing. For the mentorship, while the marrying of the spiritual formation program with the internship program answers most of the scope concerns, I am surprised that this concern didn't arise during the summit. One option which was considered during the research planning process was to have the college staff take part in the appreciative inquiry. The concerns raised by the panel, then, would likely have been addressed. However, this would have presented an ethical issue of power imbalance between the individuals involved. The best adjustment to the project methodology seemed to be taking a longer period for the appreciative inquiry summit. Another evening would have allowed the time and space to identify champions for each aspect of the proposed program, and to identify focus on practical logistics and details.

This research could have implications for the school, as it could lead to a greater focus on student spiritual and vocational formation. The out-of-class elements of the program were assessed to be central to the contextualization of academic learning, and the increased probability of resilient, sustainable, and effective future ministry for the students. My hope is that program development will continue with annual assessments of the program, such as a similar appreciative approach with an expert panel.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research portfolio has been to illustrate the personal and professional growth that has come as a result of my research throughout the Doctor of Ministry program. The themes which most resonate throughout my study have been old self/new self, the beatific vision, personal resilience and God's sovereign grace.

Perhaps the most poignant conclusion that I have come to is that true spiritual reformation is a matter of becoming, rather than accomplishing. Kyle Strobel (2013, 13) writes, "Spiritual formation is not simply doing spiritual disciplines. Spiritual formation is about a life oriented to God in Christ by the Spirit." The Reformed tradition is about "a clear vision of God as the whole world's Maker and King" (Packer 1990, 129). Following the Puritan tradition, the spiritual disciplines serve as means of God's grace if and when they orient the Christian to God. The means of grace effectively show believers how to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God as an act of spiritual worship, living out the word of Paul in Romans 12:1 (Willard 1991, 19). God calls Christians not to an ethic, not to a work or a discipline, but to an enjoyment, a delight of Him in relationship through Christ. As mentioned, delight in God comes through the beatific vision, looking to Jesus in thought, word, and deed. The four foundations, and various means of grace are simply means of enjoying, seeing,

and knowing God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. A model of spiritual reformation, therefore, is not an invitation to legalism.

The Baxterian foundations and organization of the various means of grace found in my model are not a checklist for earning God's favour or personal glory. When one approaches the various foundations of this model, it is often a matter of playing and discerning which area of spiritual praxis to work on, rather than taking it all on at once. In this way, spiritual reformation becomes growing into different layers as one is called; as one examines, watches, and is shown which area or foundation is next by the Holy Spirit. This happens through discernment as one is always in the Word, in prayer, and in watchfulness. Mulholland issues an appropriate thoughtful word:

When spirituality is viewed as a static possession, the way to spiritual wholeness is seen as the acquisition of information and techniques that enable us to gain possession of the desired state of spirituality. Discipleship is perceived as 'my' spiritual life and tends to be defined by actions that ensure its possession. Thus the endless quest for techniques, methods, programs by which we hope to 'achieve' spiritual fulfillment. (Mulholland 1993, 12)

For this reason, my model is focussed on a framework and understanding of the spirit of the disciplines, offering a number of ways the particular means may be carried out. These will be different in each context, or may even be different for each person at different stages of their lives: "Holistic spirituality is a pilgrimage of deepening responsiveness to God's control of our life and being" (Mulholland 1993, 12). One option may be to engage one of the many spiritual and personality inventories such as Mulholland's (1993, 64-73) *Holistic Spirituality* charts which coincide with Jung's model of human personality. Guides such as these can help

believers identify where the various means may bring areas of their lives under God's grace.

Seeing spirituality as an act of God's grace is also an important distinction to make as it highlights that neither we nor any of our ministers of formation are the agents of our spiritual formation. There is no sure pathway or technique to achieving holiness, as it is a work of the Holy Spirit. Mulholland (1993, 25) comments, "if I had said spiritual formation was a process of 'conforming ourselves' to the image of Christ, I suspect we would have been much more comfortable. The difference between conforming ourselves and being conformed is the vital issue of *control*." This is because like Martha (Luke 10:38-42), Christ wants to move us from a state of constantly trying to do for God, to a state of being. Whereas our culture has reversed the biblical order of being and doing, we are called to get the order correct. We are called to ensure that our doing in the Christian life flows out of our being as God's children (Eph. 1:3-6; Mulholland 1993, 27-30). Mulholland (1993, 31) comments that in this spiritual formation becomes "the great reversal: from habitual expectation of closure to patient, open-ended yieldedness" as we step out of the worldly obsession with cause, effect and return on investment.

Personal Outcomes

On a personal level I have learned to be far less achievement oriented in my spiritual life as a result of the research for this portfolio. The pressure of achievement-oriented spirituality works against the purposes of God for His

people. Rather, I have come to recognize the importance of experimentation in Christian praxis. Howard (2018, 98) calls this playing and enjoying the freedom to interact with God through a variety of means, reflecting on what this play means to us. The Lord desires a dynamic relationship with His people, rather than robotic followers simply going through the motions.

Ministry Outcomes

In my ministry, I have moved beyond the parochial concerns of my immediate context to a broader view of ministry and training. Through reflecting on my own story, I have discovered a heart for the stresses endured by pastors and chaplains as they live out their vocations. I have become convinced that ministry training must go deep into practical spiritual formation with students in order to prepare them for the rigours of service to God. I have learned to view ministry through the lens of God's call to continual spiritual growth. Each aspect of ministry, from board meetings to evangelism, needs to be steeped in an affectionate, dynamic engagement with God through the Holy Spirit.

Next Steps

As Ryle Seminary moves forward, I hope that it will use the program outlined by this research to begin the process of intentional spiritual formation. The four recommended courses of action, mentorship, community, worship and retreat, can be viewed as containers holding the various means of grace to be experienced by the students. It is recommended that the program be implemented beginning with the most simply integrated course of action as determined by the

principal, academic dean, and professor of spiritual formation. This could begin with the main themes the various disciplines under the headings of word and prayer as noted as primary in the research itself. These could include teaching and practice in biblical meditation, group and individual study, personal prayer and contemplation. It is also hoped that the seminary will continue to develop the program through a continual cycle of implementation, observation, and action research on an annual or biennial basis.

Going forward personally, I feel a call to working with organizations to develop spiritual formation programs for their ministries. First, I am particularly interested in ministry formation and education, whether in military chaplain training systems, at the denominational level, or in civilian ministry education. Second, I am continuing my work in developing spiritual resilience resources for military personnel. In my present context, the Government of Canada and the chain of command have shown interest in any and all resources shown to lead to the hardiness and resilience of soldiers and their families. Finally, I am interested in being engaged with my worshipping community in deepening our communal and individual relationships with the Lord. I continue to have a heart for the local church, whether involved as a minister, associate, or visiting guest. This is part of the impetus for my mission to pastoral formation as the spiritual health of the pastor directly effects the health and vitality of the ministry to God's people.

I feel that there has been a new level of vitality added to my ministry through engagement in this Doctor of Ministry program. I gain excitement at the prospect of enriching the lives of God's people though introducing them to the

ways and means of the deeper Christian life. In addition, as I allow the Holy Spirit to form me for God's glory and my good, I look forward to the ministry He has for me in the future.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Facilitator's Appreciative Inquiry Notes

Night 1

DEFINE: 20 mins

- Stock "Spiritual Formation" (SF) introduction and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) introduction talk.
- Discuss need for intentional SF program at Ryle – set as intentional focus and centre of gravity.
- Ask: any experience with SF personally or in a group? How was it made possible? What do you value being at Ryle (explanation – looking to contextualize the program)?

DISCOVER (Appreciating and valuing "What is"): 30 Mins

- Ask: When has the seminary been most spiritually reforming? What are the strengths the seminary offers to build SR? What is your experience with good SF (sermon, practice, influence). (Prompts: What happened? What are the key things you remember?) How did the SR affect the community? In order to shape the program, what Spiritual trait, act, feel or spirit do you want the program to include/have (Hammond 2013, 43)?
 - Optional questions: If you could design a SF program, what would it look like? (Prompts: What is really working well (not well) in your spiritual life right now? What changes have impacted your spiritual life positively? What have you witnessed that has inspired your spirituality (Hammond 2013, 44))?
 - Coordinating Instructions: Remember that stories are key to the discovery phase (Cooper and Whitney 2005, 27). Look in particular for what the interviewee actually experienced in SR. How did they contribute to the experience? What systemic factors/policies/ministry made it possible? Also collect "quotable quotes." If there is no personal experience, turn to something that has been witnessed (Hammond 2013, 29).

DREAM (What a collective future might be): 30 Mins

- Return to the findings. Looking for key stories and themes, not every detail. What was most exciting. Tweak to the positive.
- Looking at our definition of SF, where are the gaps?
- Facilitator leads group in finding common themes in the 'mess' of all the findings. Looking to discover what circumstances made it possible to provide extraordinary conditions for SR with this particular group.
- After themes have arisen: What is best outcome of SF program? Imagine 3 years from now, what does it look like at Ryle? What does the student experience look like?

Night 2

DESIGN (Developing direction based on combined thinking): 40 Mins

- Post themes around the room on chart paper and summarize the previous night's events. Highlight each theme/item on the chart paper. Remind everyone where each came from.

- Give each participant 3 "sticky dots." Get them to place a sticky dot on the themes/items they wish to explore further (Hammond 2013, 33).

- Lead the group to create provocative "Design statements" from the notes/items most highlighted (Cooper and Whitney 2005, 39). These are used to describe the ideal state of circumstances that will foster the environment (Hammond 2013, 33).

- Provide sample provocative statement: "Ministries in all regions share a basic common vision in relation to the denomination's core mission, intent, and direction. It is an exciting, challenging, and meaningful direction which helps give all partners a feeling of significance, purpose, pride, and unity. The denomination uses whatever time and resources are needed to bring everyone on board and thus continuously cultivates "the thrill of having a one-church feeling", of being a valued member of one outstanding national partnership (Cooperrider 2018, Case Western Reserve University AI Commons).

- A Design Statement: Identifies themes of the best (most voted for). Identifies circumstances that made it the best possible (details like skills/people/values/ministries). Takes examples and envisions what might be. Encapsulates all to describe an idealized future.

- To assess a statement ask: Is it provocative? Is it grounded in examples? Is it what we want/need? Is there enough "how" and is it achievable/realistic? Is it affirmative? Can we do it? How best (Hammond 2013, 34)?

- *If there are issues with the group doing this as a whole, split up into pairs.*

Destiny: (Begin process of outlining a possible program for Ryle) – 40 mins

- Look at each provocative statement and outline possible steps forward. Recommend a possible "champion" for each item.

- Link program to measurable results (including data on how people 'feel')

- Brainstorm how to leverage "untapped resources" within the school, local churches and local community (Hammond, 2013, 39).

Appendix B

Questions for the Expert Panel

Please answer the following questions in assessing the proposed Spiritual formation program (Fitzpatrick 2011, 321 & 326).

- 1- What is your impression of the program?

- 2 - What do you see as the main goals and objectives of the program?
How do these goals and objectives coincide with those of the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) and/or Ryle Seminary?
Are the goals/objectives important to ANiC/the seminary?

- 3 - Make comments on:
The biblical basis of the program
Achievability of the program for the college
Overall probability of leading to spiritual growth for the students (is the program in line with the students' spiritual needs in prepping for ministry in ANiC?)

- 4 - Are there aspects of the program that can be improved from your point of view?
Which and how specifically?
Are there biblical, achievable alternatives with a high probability of leading to spiritual growth which you feel could/should be included? If so, please list and explain.

Appendix C
Letters and Consent Forms

Information Letter for DMin Research

Dear _____,

My name is (Rev. Maj.) Shaun Turner, and I am a student at Tyndale College and Seminary conducting a project in Spiritual Formation for my Doctor of Ministry, Action Research Project. The purpose of this research is to study the process of developing a program in Spiritual Formation for students preparing for ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada. I plan to construct an intentional program of Spiritual Formation based on the research along with the Puritan (Reformed-Evangelical) model of Spiritual Formation, and input from the mission, vision and priorities of both Ryle Seminary and the Anglican Network in Canada.

The study will include guided process of Appreciative Inquiry towards designing a program of Spiritual Formation for students at Ryle Seminary. This process will include the group taking the steps of Defining the problem, Discovering past solutions and present capacities, Dreaming of possibilities, Designing steps for a program, and resolving as a group to reach the Destiny of our intent. Once the Appreciative Inquiry is completed, I will be taking the results and notes from two trained researchers to add granularity to the program. The proposed program will then be distributed to an expert panel for assessment.

Confidentiality with respect to the study will be respected. All names will be kept confidential in all reporting and/or writing related to this study, using pseudonyms if necessary. I will be the only person who keeps the notes-taker's recordings of the project. This study will be published through Tyndale College and Seminary as a part of my portfolio towards my Doctor of Ministry studies.

Respectfully,

The Reverend Major Shaun Turner, DMin(Cand), CD
12 Porter Street
Ottawa, Ontario
613-301-0127

Consent Form for Panel of Experts

Introduction: My name is (Rev. Maj.) Shaun Turner, and I am a student at Tyndale College and Seminary conducting a project in Spiritual Formation for my Doctor of Ministry, Action Research Project. My telephone number is 613-301-0127. My professor is Dr. Mark Chapman and he can be reached at Tyndale Seminary, 416-226-6620. The Research Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary can be reached at reb@tyndale.ca. You may contact any us if you have questions or concerns about this study.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to study the process of developing a program in Spiritual Formation for students preparing for ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada. I am trying to learn more about leveraging existing capacities to meet student spiritual needs.

Procedure: If you consent, you will be asked to join a group of your peers in forming an expert panel to assess my designed program of Spiritual Formation for students at Ryle Seminary. This process will assess the program based on the three priorities of biblical-basis, achievability, and design.

Time Required: The process will take thirty minutes of reading and one hour to prepare a digitally written assessment of the project.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may still refuse to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw from the study at any time. You will be reimbursed for personal costs incurred in your participation, particularly Anglican Network in Canada gas mileage for those outside the National Capital Region.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with this process. However, as with any process involving personal experience, it is possible that you might feel distress in the course of the assessment. If this happens, please inform me promptly.

Benefits: While there is no guaranteed benefit, it is possible you will enjoy the process of working with your peers in assessing the program or that you might simply find the deliberation meaningful. This study is intended to benefit the students of Ryle Seminary by enlivening our discourse on the theology and practice of Spiritual Formation.

Confidentiality: Your name will be kept confidential in all reporting and/or writing related to this study. I will be the only person who listens to the recordings of the project. If necessary, I will write pseudonyms—made up

names—for all participants. Unless you specify in writing that you wish to be identified by name.

If you wish to choose your own pseudonym for the study, please indicate the first name you would like me to use for you here: _____

Sharing the results: I plan to assess my designed intentional program of Spiritual Formation based on the results of your discussion. Results of the study can be provided upon request once the Research project has been completed and submitted.

Publication: I will publish this study through Tyndale College and Seminary as a part of my portfolio towards my Doctor of Ministry studies. I will continue to use pseudonyms (as described above) and I may alter some identifying details in order to further protect your anonymity.

Before you sign: By signing below, you have read and understood the relevant information and are agreeing to participation in the research study. You are indicating free consent to research participation by signing this research consent form. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction, you may also ask questions in the future. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you.

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print name: _____¹

¹ Adapted from: Sensing, Tom, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011) 235-236.

Consent and Non-Disclosure Form for Notes Taker

Introduction: My name is (Rev. Maj.) Shaun Turner, and I am a student at Tyndale College and Seminary conducting a project in Spiritual Formation for my Doctor of Ministry, Action Research Project. My telephone number is 613-301-0127. My professor is Dr. Mark Chapman and he can be reached at Tyndale Seminary, 416-226-6620. The Research Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary can be reached at reb@tyndale.ca. You may contact any us if you have questions or concerns about this study.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to study the process of developing a program in Spiritual Formation for students preparing for ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada. I am trying to learn more about leveraging existing capacities to meet student spiritual needs.

Procedure: If you consent, you will be asked to join a group of students from Ryle Seminary for their Appreciative Inquiry Summit in taking field notes to record the proceedings as they work towards a designed program of Spiritual Formation for students at Ryle Seminary. This process will involve recording results, observations of participants, and your own perception of the events.

Time Required: The process will take two one and a half hour sessions over successive Mondays at Ryle Seminary. It will also include reading a session on notes-taking from Tom Sensing's book *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* and a 30 minute discussion with myself on how to take notes for the study.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may still refuse to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw from the study at any time. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. You will be reimbursed for personal costs incurred in you participation, particularly Anglican Network in Canada gas mileage for those outside the National Capital Region.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with this process. However, as with any process involving individuals sharing personal experience, it is possible that you might feel distress in the course of the assessment. If this happens, please inform me promptly.

Benefits: While there is no guaranteed benefit, it is possible you will enjoy the process of working to take notes of the proceedings or that you might simply find witnessing the deliberations of others meaningful. This study is intended to

benefit the students of Ryle Seminary by enlivening our discourse on the theology and practice of Spiritual Formation.

Confidentiality: Your name will be kept confidential in all reporting and/or writing related to this study. I will be the only person who keeps the recordings of the project. If necessary, I will write pseudonyms—made up names—for all participants. Unless you specify in writing that you wish to be identified by name. **By agreeing to take notes you are agreeing to non-disclosure of the proceedings with any other part other than the researcher and testifying that you will keep confidential all aspects of the proceedings which you witness.**

If you wish to choose your own pseudonym for the study, please indicate the first name you would like me to use for you here: _____

Sharing the results: I plan to assess my designed intentional program of Spiritual Formation based on the results of the discussion and your notes. Results of the study can be provided upon request once the Research project has been completed and submitted.

Publication: I will publish this study through Tyndale College and Seminary as a part of my portfolio towards my Doctor of Ministry studies. I will continue to use pseudonyms (as described above) and I may alter some identifying details in order to further protect your anonymity.

Before you sign: By signing below, you have read and understood the relevant information and are agreeing to participation in the research study. You are indicating free consent to research participation by signing this research consent form. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction, you may also ask questions in the future. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you.

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print name: _____ ²

² Adapted from: Sensing, Tom, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011) 235-236.

Consent Form for Appreciative Inquiry Summit

Introduction: My name is (Rev. Maj.) Shaun Turner, and I am a student at Tyndale College and Seminary conducting a project in Spiritual Formation for my Doctor of Ministry, Action Research Project. My telephone number is 613-301-0127. My professor is Dr. Mark Chapman and he can be reached at Tyndale Seminary, 416-226-6620. The Research Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary can be reached at reb@tyndale.ca. You may contact any us if you have questions or concerns about this study.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to study the process of developing a program in Spiritual Formation for students preparing for ministry in the Anglican Network in Canada. I am trying to learn more about leveraging existing capacities to meet student spiritual needs.

Procedure: If you consent, you will be asked to join a group of your peers in taking part in a guided process of Appreciative Inquiry towards designing a program of Spiritual Formation for students at Ryle Seminary. This process will include the group taking the steps of Defining the problem, Discovering past solutions and present capacities, Dreaming of possibilities, Designing steps for a program, and resolving as a group to reach the Destiny of our intent.

Time Required: The process will take two one and a half hour sessions over successive Mondays at Ryle Seminary.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may still refuse to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw from the study at any time. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. You will be reimbursed for personal costs incurred in you participation, particularly Anglican Network in Canada gas mileage for those outside the National Capital Region.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with this process. However, as with any process involving personal experience, it is possible that you might feel distress in the course of the conversations. If this happens, please inform me promptly.

Benefits: While there is no guaranteed benefit, it is possible you will enjoy the process of working with your peers in an Appreciative approach to building ministry programs or that you might simply find the conversation generated meaningful. This study is intended to benefit the students of Ryle Seminary by enlivening our discourse on the theology and practice of Spiritual Formation.

Confidentiality/Anonymity: Your name will be kept confidential in all reporting and/or writing related to this study. I will be the only person who keeps the notes-taker's recordings of the project. If necessary, I will write pseudonyms—made up names—for all participants. Unless you specify in writing that you wish to be identified by name.

If you wish to choose your own pseudonym for the study, please indicate the first name you would like me to use for you here: _____

Sharing the results: I plan to construct an intentional program of Spiritual Formation based on these evenings of meetings, along with the Puritan (Reformed-Evangelical) model of Spiritual Formation, and input from the mission, vision and priorities of both Ryle Seminary and the Anglican Network in Canada. Results of the study can be provided upon request once the Research project has been completed and submitted.

Publication: I will publish this study through Tyndale College and Seminary as a part of my portfolio towards my Doctor of Ministry studies. I will continue to use pseudonyms (as described above) and I may alter some identifying details in order to further protect your anonymity.

Before you sign: By signing below, you have read and understood the relevant information and are agreeing to participation in the research study. You are indicating free consent to research participation by signing this research consent form. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction, you may also ask questions in the future. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you.

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print name: _____

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³ Adapted from: Sensing, Tom, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011) 235-236.

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