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Tyndale University College & Seminary

The Baptized Community:
Community Formation as Seen through Anglican Baptismal Ecclesiology
and the Liturgical Practice of Morning Prayer

A Research Portfolio
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Ministry
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by

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Research Portfolio Approval

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ABSTRACT

Beginning with *The Book of Common Prayer*, the first version of which was published in 1549, Anglicans have mediated their spirituality through participation in a common spiritual life. This is to say, formation toward Christlikeness is not to be understood as an individualized process whereby the individual grows in Christlikeness in an isolated and privatized manner. Rather, formation toward Christlikeness is a Spirit-led process that primarily occurs within the community of faith. The baptismal community is the very context of Christlike formation. This portfolio looks at communal formation through three, integrated components. Firstly, communal formation, along with its various components and nuances, will be described through an appeal to the Anglican baptismal liturgy. Secondly, scenes from the author's own autobiography will serve to illustrate how communal formation may be practically experienced. Lastly, the author's own research into the practice of Morning Prayer will highlight the importance of shared liturgy within communal formation. The portfolio argues that one is not formed individually, rather one is called to participate in the formation of the community. This is seen as occurring through immersion in shared liturgy, embodied action, and evangelistic mission.

DEDICATION

There are many people to whom this document is dedicated. Many thanks to the esteemed community at Tyndale University & Seminary. Thank you for your knowledge, your care, and your love for the Lord. A special thank you to Dr. Uriah Pond for journeying with me during the final steps of this degree. Your attentiveness to detail, your humour, and your willingness to make sure I was clear and consistent in my writing was of tremendous value. Mostly, however, I wish to thank Tom, Matthew, and Jane. Much of what is written has been influenced by the conversations we shared over the years. You have each become important friends in my life; may you all be blessed in your future ministries.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC: Anglican Church of Canada

BAS: *Book of Alternative Services*

BCP: *Book of Common Prayer*

TGBV: *Transposition of the great blood vessels*

GLOSSARY

The Book of Alternative Services (BAS). This is the main liturgical resource governing worship in the Anglican Church of Canada. It is the second of two authorised liturgical texts. Published in 1985, the BAS is a contemporary re-working of the basic Anglican liturgy, as originally outlined in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The BAS contains the liturgy of the Morning Prayer.

The Book of Common Prayer (BCP). This is the primary authoritative liturgical text for Anglicans worldwide. The BCP has a formative function within Anglicans, due to the inclusion of the “Solemn Declaration” and “The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.” The BCP is not being used for this study due to its retention of ‘old-English’ which may prove difficult for some participants.

Community spiritual formation. The Spirit-led process by which the community is immersed in, and embodies, a baptismal ecclesiology, leading to transformation toward inward Christlikeness and outward mission.

The daily office. The daily office refers to liturgies said at certain hours of the of day. In some traditions, the daily office includes seven separate liturgical rites. In Anglicanism, the daily office refers primarily to liturgy of Morning Prayer, Mid-day Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline. The daily office prescribes both the readings and prayers suitable for specific days.

Liturgy. The term commonly used to describe the forms and patterns of public worship in various religious settings. The term liturgy is taken from the Latin phrase meaning “the work of the people.” In this way, liturgy has a wider definition that simply the written form of worship as it speaks to a shared action,

prayer, and worship. Given this, the paper will use the term in two ways. Firstly, liturgy will refer to a shared embodiment of worship amid a community of faith; a way of being. Secondly, liturgy will also be used in the technical sense to refer to formal and patterned order of worship. The context of discussion should make clear which sense is being used.

Mission/Missional. The outward expression of the Christian community's inward Christlikeness as expressed primarily through embracing the call to justice and the call to evangelism. Scripturally this can be seen in Christ's summary of the Law in Mark 12. The mission of the Christian community is to: 'love the lord your God . . . and love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:30).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Some faith-stories and DMin portfolios contain dramatic conversions. In Damascus-Road-like fashion there is a shedding of the old life of doubt and sin as one embraces new life in Christ. These stories read like the sun exploding over a mountain ridge. Night turns to day, and what once was black and cold becomes bathed in warmth and light. These conversions are dramatic and glorious. My growth in faith and ministry is not so dramatic; it involves a gradual immersion in the light of the gospel, a continuous brightening like the dawn on a cloudy morning.

Of the areas of brightening I have experienced, the most prominent has been the important role the Christian community plays in formation. In fact, I contend throughout this portfolio that spiritual formation, rightly understood, is communally oriented. The Spirit forms a body of people, united under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This is the normative reality of formation as seen throughout scripture. When St. Paul writes, “we are being transformed into his image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18)¹ he is speaking

¹ Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise specified.

to a community, not to an individual hearer. This is not to say, however, that the individual is not an important element in formation. Obviously, there are individuals to whom Paul writes, and individuals who make up the Christian body. We are, after all, talking about human formation. Paul's cry for the Christlike formation of the individual Corinthian, however, occurs as a result of the individual's immersion in the Christian community. Individual formation occurs via participation in the more normative formation occurring in the community.

When speaking of communal formation, it is important to recognize the inherent connection between communal formation and personal formation. The spiritual formation of the Christian community does not preclude God acting upon the individual in any formative capacity. Yet the formation of a person necessarily points beyond the individual to the formation of a wider body. Bonhoeffer insightfully describes how the individual necessarily exists in relation to the community. For Bonhoeffer (2009, 50), one cannot be an individual without the existence of others to which the individual stands in relation; the "I" needs the "You." This creates a chicken-or-the-egg scenario when speaking of communal formation versus individual formation; arguing for one as opposed to the other is simply an exercise in frustration. The two must be held together. Bonhoeffer (2009, 80) goes on to describe that "in God's eyes, community and individual exist in the same moment and rest in one another." Therefore, when it comes to the Spirit's work of formation, one cannot speak of the formation of the individual without reference to the formation of the community.

The formation of the community, therefore, while not denying individual formation, does oppose an *individualized* understanding of spiritual formation. An individualized conception of formation privatizes one's relationship with Christ, creating a "Me + Jesus" spirituality. Morrow (2008, 39) describes this as "rugged individualism and 'lone-ranger Christianity.'" A formation rooted in individualism sees the individual "alone with God [as] the pinnacle of spirituality" (Morrow 2008, 39). Such a view denies the essential connection between the individual and the wider community of faith. More importantly, lone-ranger Christianity denies that individual spiritual formation is "for the sake of others" (Mulholland 2016, 19). Individualism fundamentally changes how one engages in spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, do not exert their full formative capacity when exercised only in a privatized or individualized manner. Private disciplines of spirituality rarely move the individual Christian beyond the realm of religious self-satisfaction.

My own experience of formation echoes this reality. My prayer life grew as I came to see my individual prayers as a participation in the larger prayers of the ecclesial community. In this way, the role of liturgy has become increasingly important in my life. This is evidenced most strongly in my devotional practice of attending to Morning Prayer. Though I engage in the liturgy of Morning Prayer individually, the liturgy is a communal liturgy through which I participate in corporate worship. Liturgy speaks not simply to rites and rituals, but to the Church's ongoing life of devotion. By way of the liturgical texts upon which Anglican worship is structured, I participate in the ceaseless and eternal worship

of Christ's Church. In this way, the practices and liturgies laid out in our liturgical texts mediate spiritual formation in the Anglican tradition. These texts—most notably the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP), the first version of which was written by Thomas Cranmer and published in 1549, and in Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services* (BAS)—hold an important formational role in the expression of Anglican spirituality. More than a mere record of liturgical phrases, these works hold a formative function; they outline the church's "spiritual formation program" (deSilva 2008, 61). Furthermore, these prayer books highlight the importance of "common life." For Anglicans, to be stalwart in the faith is to engage in a life of common liturgy and prayer. This is why Cranmer chose to name his liturgical opus *The Book of Common Prayer*. The liturgical texts of Anglicanism seek to outline the habits and disciplines necessary for a communal spiritual life. It is therefore difficult, and rare, to be an Anglican in isolation.

It follows that spiritual formation in the Anglican tradition primarily concerns itself with the formation of a people, as opposed to the formation of an individual. In fact, this can be clearly seen in "The Solemn Declaration", which opens the BCP. This document, which to this day is authoritative to Anglicans, states "It is in faith that this Book of Common Prayer is offered *to the Church*, with the hope that those who use it may become more truly what they already are; *the people of God*, that New Creation in Christ which finds its joy in adoration of the Creator and Redeemer of all" (Anglican Church of Canada [ACC] 1962, vii; emphasis added). The primacy of the community in formation rings loud and

clear. The life of faith depicted in the BCP, and later in the BAS, is to be understood in the context of the corporate body.

As a life-long Anglican, some of my earliest memories of faith involve the church community. In fact, I am hard-pressed to find any formative moment in my spiritual history that does not involve the wider context of the community of faith. Growing up, my family attended church every Sunday, and I naturally developed a defined spot in the church where I liked to sit. My parents would sit in the second pew on the left-hand side and I, along with my brother and some of our friends, would sit in the front pew. I can still remember the pew's darkly stained wood and the red leather cushion that ran along the seat. Sitting in this pew, Sunday after Sunday, I would faithfully read through the liturgy.

I recognize that during this period, I would have spent a lot of time in Sunday School. St. Andrew's was not a small church, and there were many young families in the congregation. The church boasted a large Sunday School, one that would often spill over into the living room of our house next door. Still, while I was an active member of the Sunday School, I do not have one singular memory of a Sunday School class. Christmas pageants, church parades, pancake dinners potluck events, yes; Sunday School, no. The most vivid memory I have of Sunday morning church is solely linked to sitting amid the congregation, reading the liturgy.

My memory of the liturgy is tied to a game I would diligently play in that front pew. At the start of the service, I would begin reading the BAS and see how far I could get before the service ended. I would read through the introductions,

the rubric notes, and the rites themselves. This created a sense of familiarity with the structure and language of the church at prayer. Sunday after Sunday, I played this liturgical game which instilled a sense of ownership of the liturgy. I was comfortable with these words, and there was a sense in which the Anglican service was “my” service. My ownership of the liturgy was not simply a familiarity with the rites and roles of the church; it spoke to a deep desire to be caught up in the reality expressed by the words and actions themselves. An example of this is when I was almost struck by a speeding car.

I did not see the car approach me. I cannot recall the colour or make of it. The only thing that registered to me was my bicycle flying out of my hands as the car struck the front wheel. What happened next is outside of my own recollection, for my next memory is sitting in the back of police car. I am told that a member of St. Andrew’s was walking behind me and had seen the whole thing take place. The driver of the car, having noticed that I was unharmed, looked as if he was about to drive away, and would have, except for the booming voice of the parishioner. "Don't you dare leave here!" he bellowed. This parishioner then walked me to the sidewalk and waited with me until the police arrived.

I sat in the back of the police car, not really thinking about anything. At some point the driver of the car sat in the front seat, staring back at me, as the officer took statements from the people gathered around. The driver was a young man, probably in his late twenties. He had black hair and a five o'clock shadow for a beard. He was wearing a brown jacket. He stared at me, declaring how sorry he was. He explained that he never drives that fast, and that he was studying law

and had just recently learned about traffic violations. I kept hearing him say “I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. I am glad you’re ok.”

As I listened to this man speak, I could feel his sorrow, and the guilt over what had occurred. As he apologized over and over, I felt a strong desire to pronounce his forgiveness. Sitting on the tip of my tongue, and filling my heart and soul were the words “The Lord forgive you.” I did not, however, say anything. I remained silent. I wanted to speak these words, and in my own mind and heart I did speak them, but my mouth remained silent. I have tried to understand what was going on within me as I sat in that car. Was I hearing the voice of God giving me a divine word to speak to this young driver? The words of forgiveness were loud within me. Moreover, the words of forgiveness seemed apropos to this situation in a profound way.

Never before had I felt the desire to echo a liturgical rite outside of Sunday morning service. I did not merely want to forgive this man; I wanted him to know that he lived under the forgiveness of God, and that the church was declaring him forgiven. In my six-year old way, I wanted to embody the church for him, to speak into his loss of inner peace, and to offer mercy for his grieving soul. I wanted to minister to him. These words of forgiveness arrived into my heart and captivated me. They burned within me like a fire.

It has only been recently that I have realized how much these early years set the foundation for my relationship with the church, and with the Lord. The Anglican liturgy mediates the way I both understand and live out my faith. The liturgy gives expression to the deep internal movements of my relationship with

God and has become the very framework for my life of prayer. What is more, in those times when my life takes me away from the liturgy for a few weeks, either because of sickness or holiday, I miss the familiar cadences of liturgical worship.

It is this reality to which I speak when I write that the Anglican liturgical texts are formational; they speak to the way in which the liturgy creates a way of life. Worshipers in the Anglican Church do not merely ascribe to ecclesial and theological doctrines. Despite the rationality implicit in Anglican theology and polity, the liturgy calls the church to engage in a specific way of embodying faith in the world. Habits and practices are instrumental to Anglican observance. To be an Anglican is to live as an Anglican. The Anglican catechism is a clear example of this. The catechism outlines a system through which Anglicans live their devotional lives. The catechism reads:

Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for himself a Rule of Life in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and the order of the Church; wherein he may regularly consider the following;

The regularity of his attendance at public worship and especially at the Holy Communion.

The practice of private prayer, Bible reading, and self-discipline.

Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into everyday life.

The boldness of his spoken witness to his faith in Christ.

His personal service to the Church and the community.

The offering of money according to his merits for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas. (ACC 1962, 555)

It is not enough for the individual Anglican to frame a devotional life in a solitary or individualized manner. One's life of faith must involve "attendance at

public worship” and “personal service to the Church and the Community.” Rule of life, public worship, offering of money, all these serve to embed the individual within the framework of corporate life and prayer. DeSilva (2008, 12) speaks of this formative role of the BCP in this manner:

These rites put the words into the mouths of worshipers so that the intentions and commitments they express will sink down deep into the heart and come to expression in changed lives. They teach us what to desire and what to seek from the Lord, both trimming away what is self-serving and opening our minds and hearts to the full range of what God desires to work for us, in us, and through us. They form in us the habits of the most significant spiritual disciplines valued by Christian disciples through the centuries – adoration, prayer, self-examination and confession, as well as listening to and being shaped by Scripture. By means of these disciplines, we draw close to God and grow more attuned to the mind of Christ.

These liturgical texts are not solely a record of prayers and practices. By establishing the very language through which faithful observance is understood and embodied, the liturgy both educates and forms the people of God.

Community formation by way of a shared liturgy is what I wished to explore in the research portion of this portfolio. The liturgy of the Morning Prayer is an important one for Anglicans, yet one often overlooked. Importantly, the very language of the rite itself makes clear that Morning Prayer is a corporate rite. The question I explored was: Does participation in a shared liturgy immerse the individual in a corporate spirituality? Could one’s individual experience of Morning Prayer lead them to a deeper recognition of their own formation within community?

My desire to explore community formation is rooted in a concern that spiritual formation literature often overlooks communal spiritual formation.

Formation in Christlikeness is too easily viewed as a goal of the individual; an endeavor of the solitary Christian. The means of formation (the habits and disciplines which inform formation) are those which an individual performs (or consumes) as expressions of personal faith. Community, or communal practices, are mentioned only as an aid to this personal and privatized spiritual formation. Communal practices, when mentioned, appear to be nothing more than practices an individual performs in the company of another individual: person A performs his unique and individual discipline beside person B who performs hers. While claiming community, this model of formation remains individualistic leaving community formation secondary to individual formation.

While the importance of the individual in spiritual formation cannot be denied, it is imperative that we recognise that the scriptural witness regarding formation is predominantly communal. Ratzlaff observes that the entire narrative of scripture betrays individualism. He writes: “It is certain that justification in the Old Testament was understood to have social-ethical dimensions. It is unthinkable that a Jew then would have appealed to his personal justification as having some meaning unrelated to his being a member of the covenant community” (Ratzlaff 1976, 111). From the opening movement in Genesis, in which God’s creative and redemptive identity is linked to the establishment of a holy people, Holy Scripture assumes a corporate faithfulness.

This communal emphasis is naturally carried over into the formation of the faith community around Jesus. The calling of the disciples was the calling forth of a new community. We hear this echoed in Jesus’ high priestly prayer.

Jesus prays, “I pray also for those who will believe in me . . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20–21). In this prayer, Jesus expresses that the unity of the disciples occurs through a communal immersion in Trinitarian life and faith. This has implications to the very way we understand formation for true spiritual formation is “the intentional *communal* process of growth in our relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Wilhoit 2008, 23; emphasis added). Personal, or individual, formation occurs as the individual participates in the Spirit’s activity through which the community of faith is formed in likeness to Christ. Scripturally, the normative location for formation is the community of faith. The individual is formed as part of God’s wider work in forming the community.

The primacy of communal formation, then, begs the question: how is communal formation best understood? In what ways does a community undergo spiritual formation? It is my contention throughout this paper that the Anglican liturgy of baptism provides a useful framework for understanding community spiritual formation. The community of faith, formed in baptism, devotes itself to corporate prayer as an essential embodiment of its Christlike existence.

Baptism is an engaging model of formation because, contrary to popular understanding that views baptism as a rite focused upon the individual, the Anglican Church views baptism as a communal activity. Donne (1999, 102) underscores this notion when he observes, “The church is Catholic, universal, so

are all her actions; all that she does belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me.” Similarly, deSilva (2008, 55) notes the corporate dimension of baptism when he explains that “Baptism assumes a corporate spirituality.” The rubrics concerning the baptismal rite make this clear. The rubrics read: “Baptism is the sign of new life in Christ. Baptism unites Christ with his people. That union is both individual and corporate ... Christians are not just baptized individuals, they are a new humanity” (ACC 1985, 146). This is concurrent with the way scripture speaks of baptism (see Ephesians 4.1-6).

In this way, the Anglican baptismal liturgy is a wonderful depiction of community formation. Baptism and spiritual formation are intimately tied together. The church becomes formed through baptism insofar as it assumes a baptismal identity through the corporate acts of renunciation and affirmation. This baptismal identity, however, is not simply affirmed in word. Through baptism, the church turns to Christ and pledges to embody its baptismal identity through particular spiritual disciplines, of which four are primary. These activities (the Apostle’s Teaching, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread, and Prayers) become the means by which the community embodies its baptismal identity. Furthermore, such actions also provide the context for spiritual transformation. In engaging in such shared liturgies, the community interacts with the Spirit of God in their midst. Shared embodiment therefore leads to shared transformation. The community becomes inwardly and outwardly formed in Christlikeness, through shared liturgical embodiment and missional engagement. Figure 1, on the following page, charts this movement.

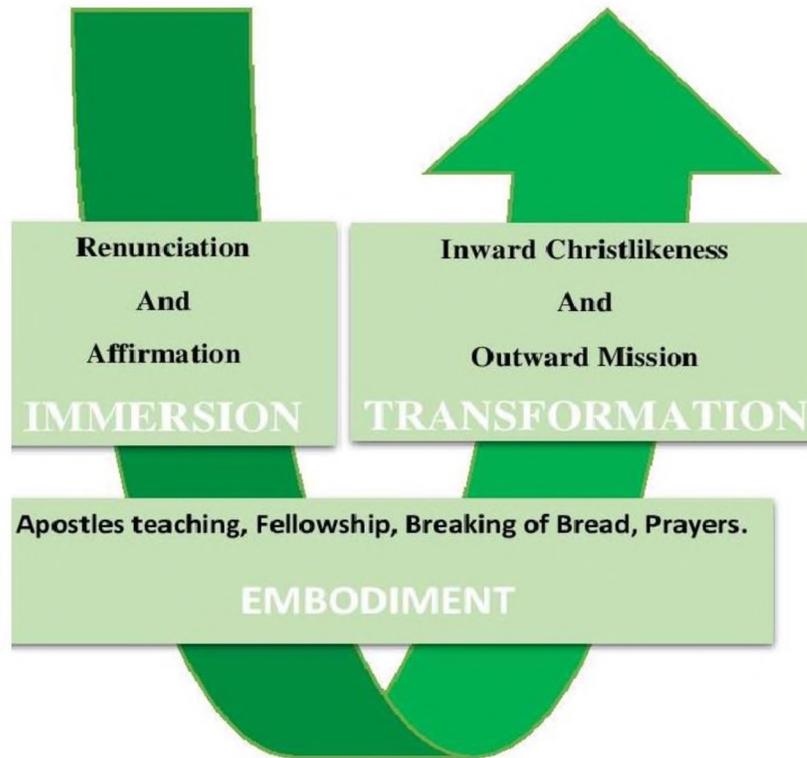


Figure 1. Baptism as formational mode

Scripture, continuously ties baptism to the life and witness of the faith community. This is seen prominently in the book of Acts where an appeal to baptism is frequent. More profoundly, however, is Christ’s own participation in baptism as a means of identification with the wider history and story of Israel.² Not only does Jesus enter the baptismal waters at the start of his earthly ministry, but he also describes his impending death as “a baptism to undergo” (Luke 12:50); the entire ministry of Jesus is seen through the lens of baptism.

² For a good treatment on what is known as Jesus-as-Israel Christology, see J. A. Gibbs (2002).

Paul similarly links baptism to the community's participation in the death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3–5). Given this biblical witness, baptism is a useful and biblical framework for looking at the formation of Christ's community of faith. For these reasons, I define community spiritual formation as the Spirit-led process by which the community is immersed in, and embodies, a baptismal ecclesiology, leading to transformation toward inward Christlikeness and outward mission.

In the following pages, I elucidate the various components of this formational process, and highlight certain practices that facilitate growth in community formation. As evident in this chapter already, scenes from my own life and formation will be interspersed throughout the more theological discussions. These scenes, taken from my autobiography, serve as illustrations and examples of the formational component being discussed. I have framed this portfolio in this manner because the formational model presented in the subsequent pages is the epicenter of my doctoral studies. Prior to my enrolment in the doctoral program, I prayerfully held before the Lord what possible area of formation I might explore. In almost audible fashion, I heard the Spirit speak "Formation of Community." This has been the direction of my entire doctoral studies; every essay and project has sought to help me understand the subtle nuances of community formation. The model of community formation presented here has become the lens through which I understand both Christian formation and Christian ministry. This model flowed into my research project exploring the baptized community's devotion to prayer, as expressed in Morning Prayer. My

three years studying community formation, through the lens of baptismal ecclesiology, has defined my theological voice.

Furthermore, this portfolio highlights the passion I have for my own denominational heritage, as well as the belief that Anglicanism can lend an important voice to the topic of community formation. Not only does the Anglican baptismal liturgy call for a corporate formation, it also assumes a corporate mission. That is, the community acts together as one unified body carrying out a unified mission. The call to inward Christlikeness as well as outward mission is clearly expressed in the liturgy of baptism. The corporate body, as a whole, is therefore formed through baptism, and it is through baptism that the Church is sent out to live a baptized life.

CHAPTER 2

THE COMMUNITY AS LOCUS OF FORMATION

I was born with a rare congenital heart defect called "Transposition of the Great Blood Vessels (TGBV)." This means that the two main arteries of my heart (the pulmonary and the aorta) are reversed, thus changing the flow of blood throughout my body. In this condition, the heart pumps oxygen-rich blood from the lungs (which would normally be pumped into the body) back to the lungs. Meanwhile, the oxygen deficient blood (normally pumped to the lungs for oxygenation) is pumped back into the body. As one can imagine, this situation is quite serious. Without oxygen-rich blood circulating throughout the body, the body is unable to function properly. Without intervention, death is certain. As one friend informed me, after looking up my condition in her medical textbook, the first phrase of TGBV's description reads; "Not compatible with life." Therefore, my first heart surgery occurred barely 24 hours after my birth. The surgeons created a hole in my heart to mix the two different streams of blood (the oxygenated and the non-oxygenated), thereby allowing the oxygenated blood to reach my brain and organs.

If I were to report every doctor visit and surgery that took place during the first months of my life, I would barely be able to speak about anything else. My parents kept meticulous records in my baby book, yet under the heading

“Doctor’s Visits”, they simply wrote, "*Far too many to list!*" From all reports, it was a difficult first year of life. I was in frequent pain. The agony I suffered was often so great that my body would convulse under its effects. All my parents could do was rock me, desperately praying for the pain to pass. I was in and out of the hospital regularly, and while the doctors all reported that I was a “strong little boy,” everyone knew the fatal diagnosis. Unless treated through aggressive heart-surgery, there was no way that I would survive past my first year.

I underwent open-heart surgery when I was six months old. To put this in perspective, surgery took place while my heart was roughly the size of a golf-ball. The surgeon, Dr. Dobel, performed the “Mustard-Senning Operation.” He folded portions of my heart in upon itself to create baffles, which re-direct my blood to their appropriate channels. I have heard this surgery referred to as “pulmonary origami.” Here is how the surgery has been explained to me. Imagine a pair of pant legs created from the outside sack of the heart (the pericardium). While technically my blood still flows in a transposed manner, the “origami” created in the inside chamber of the heart, diverts the flow of blood to the appropriate “pant leg” thus redirecting the blood. For this surgery, a machine froze my body for over six hours, while adult hands folded my tiny heart into various chambers. The surgery was a profound success. I am (as it has been told to me) one of the oldest survivors of this surgery living without a pacemaker. What is more, I have largely lived my life without further complication.

What is intriguing to me about the first year of my life is how the power of God moved within my family and the faith community to secure my life. As I

mentioned above, TGBV is an extremely rare condition, yet, there have been three separate cases of it in my own family history. Directly affecting those early months of my life is the tragic story of a child born to my mother's cousin. Several years prior to my own birth, her child was also born with TGBV, although tragically, he died within the first month of his life. The death of a child creates grief beyond compare. I have no frame of reference to speak about what pain and heartache my mother's cousin and her husband would have been feeling at this moment, and how much courage it must have taken for them to agree to have their newborn child autopsied, which, from all reports, created a huge conflict within her family. There were members of her family who vehemently opposed the autopsy of a child, and who continually tried to convince them that this was a horrible, despicable, and ultimately sinful action to take. As my mother's cousin journeyed through the intense feelings of loss and grief, she also faced rejection from family. Ultimately, she and her husband agreed to the child's autopsy out of an inner conviction that it would prove to be helpful in the future.

My family always knew about the child's death, and the family strife that occurred over the decision for an autopsy. It was only after I was born, and my surgery successful, that my mother's cousin confessed that her child was born with TGBV as well. She remarked to them that the success of my surgery brought closure and healing to the grief surrounding the birth of her own child. In my life, she saw the outcome of her child's autopsy. There is no way that anyone could possibly discern whether the child's autopsy directly contributed to my survival,

yet this speaks to my understanding of my life being one which was immersed in a wider story of God's activity.

Yet there is more to this "wider story." My mother's sister was pregnant at the same time as my mother, and my cousin was born just thirteen days after me. As it happened, my aunt had an appointment with her doctor just one day after my own birth. She was dropping her oldest child off with my father when my mother called to inform him of my transfer to the Children's Hospital for further care. He relayed this message to my aunt who, in turn, relayed this fact (and my condition) to her physician. This doctor, in addition to being a family physician, also worked in genetics at the Children's Hospital. Upon hearing of my transfer, he called the head of cardiology and asked if he could take me as his patient. Additionally, he contacted his good friend, Dr. Dobel, for assistance. Dr. Dobel, as it happened, was the top cardiac surgeon in Canada, if not North America, at the time.

"As it happened", it is such a simple phrase. It speaks to the acts of providence surrounding the first year of my life. To many, these events may seem like happenstance, random occurrences and lucky breaks. Yet I see the subtle and purposeful movements of God. I see how God's activity upon human life often occurs through the mediation of the wider community. Akin to the book of Ruth, which stands out for the seeming absence of God's activity, God was at work behind the scenes, a fact gloriously expressed in the small yet powerful phrase "as it happened" (Ruth 2:3). Thus, from my earliest days, I had an internal awareness of God's divine hand on my life. I simply cannot see my life apart from God's saving hand. God saved me! This is as much a theological reality in which I live

my life, as is it a physical one. I echo the Psalmist who writes, “my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart” (Psalm 73:26). Yet, again like the book of Ruth, the saving hand of God occurred through the random occurrences and conversations of people committed to the Lord.

The unyielding certainty in God’s saving activity upon me created a blessed atmosphere in which I have continued to live my life. God has never been an abstract thought. There has never been a sense of God “out there” - beyond that which I could think about or imagine. God has always been one who called me into relationship. Not only did I view God as one “with me,” but God was also one who acted. Yet God never acted *ex nihilo*. God did not act independently of others. God called people together, to work together in pursuit of God’s plans and purposes. Through the prayers of family, friends, and churches throughout the country, through the coincidences and happenstances of chance conversations and random relationships, my life continued. Due to this, I have always had a profound recognition of God’s work within the community of faith. The moments through which one becomes aware of God’s interaction upon the individual is part of a larger tapestry of divine activity within the community. As Bonhoeffer (2009, 260) notes, “we do not believe in the call of individuals, but rather in that of the church-community.” The fact that the individual may not, in the precise moment, be aware of how their personal formational experience ties into the wider sphere of God’s communal work does not negate God’s call upon an entire community.

God’s activity within the faith community impacts the field of spiritual formation for it establishes individual formation as being concurrent with

communal formation. The Holy Spirit often forms the individual through immersing him or her in the on-going formation of the community. The formed individual is necessarily a member of the body of Christ. Without this understanding, community formation can be mistakenly depicted as simply an upward scaling of individual formation. For example, the communal discipline of prayer is indistinguishable from the individual discipline of prayer; it simply becomes multiplied. When this occurs, however, the notion of community is reduced to merely a gathering of individuals, “a collection of atomistic individuals who happen to love the same Saviour” (Smith 2016, 148). In such a model, the community is dependent upon the individual, and engagement in community becomes a matter of personal choice.

If community is a discipline to be chosen, then, community exists only insofar as the individual chooses to engage in the discipline. Just as one may choose to engage in *lectio divina*, one may choose to engage in the discipline of community as an aid to one’s individual formation. Upon disengagement, or upon the refusal to engage in community at all, all notions of community cease, and the individual is left to his or her own individual practices (see Figure 2 on page 22). In fact, if community is an optional discipline, then one may assert that community is not needed at all!

This is precisely the argument behind books such as Kelly Bean’s *How to Be a Christian without Going to Church*. Bean (2014, chap.1) argues, “I could do without offering plate marches, prayers demanding God do what we ask, long sermons, artificial hospitality, perky singing, simple answers, and exclusion I had

sometimes witnessed.” Bean writes her book as a committed Christian yet defines herself as a “non-goer.” She is simply a Christian person who has given up the church. Her life in Christ is a churchless life in Christ.

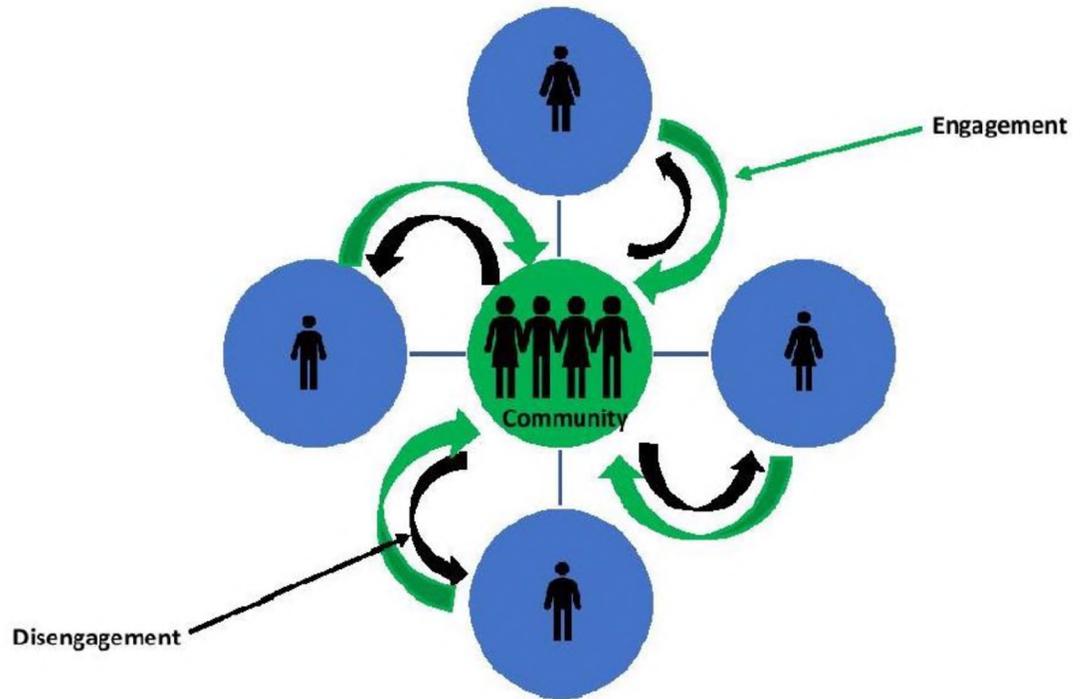


Figure 2. Community as individual (optional) discipline

While Bean attempts to describe how community remains an important part of her spirituality, she writes about how she replaced a messy and uncomfortable community with “authentic” activities such as ceramic classes, parties, and picnics. Apparently, Bean understands Christian community to be formative only insofar as one enjoys the community. True community, however, includes a sense of brokenness. Such brokenness, and the frustrations that come with it, does not betray authentic community; rather brokenness calls the community to embrace a radical commitment to forgiveness.

Space does not allow for a full exploration on the various ecclesiological problems associated with divorcing active Christian faith from the gathering of the *ecclesia*. Bean builds her depiction of a churchless faith community upon the foundation of enjoyment and pleasure. For Bean, authentic community exists when one chooses to engage in pleasurable activities with a select group of like-minded individuals. Vanier (1992, 29–30) reminds us, however, that this is not how true community works, insisting, “Community is the place where are revealed all the darkness and anger, jealousies and rivalry hidden in our hearts. Community is a place of pain, because it is a place of loss, a place of conflict, and a place of death. But it is also a place of resurrection.” The Christian community calls us to move past our self-focused pleasures in order to meet, and perhaps be challenged by, Christ in the other. In community, we are called to die to the self so we can be raised as part of the body of Christ.

The belief that Christian community is an optional discipline denies the purpose of God’s establishment of community in the first place. Theologian Simon Chan (2006, 23) notes that God’s vision for the establishment of the church precedes a vision for the creation of the world, and thereby the creation of the ‘individual’:

The church precedes creation in that it is what God has in view from all eternity and creation is the means by which God fulfills his eternal purpose in time. The church does not exist in order to fix a broken creation; rather, creation exists to realize the church... God made the world in order to make the church, not vice versa.

If the church is the primary locus of God’s purpose, prior to the creation of the world, God’s primary desire is for the formation of a community and not solely the formation of an individual. That is to say, God’s heartfelt desire for the

formation of the person is necessarily connected to God's activity in forming the Christian body. The church is not a divine afterthought. This primacy of God's activity in forming the community of faith implies that the formation of an individual flows out of the Spirit's work of forming the community. Chan 2006, 24) explains:

we are not saved as individuals first and then incorporated into the church; rather, to be a Christian is to be incorporated into the church by baptism and nourished with the spiritual food of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.”

The individual is formed primarily through engagement with the Christian community, not the other way around. Gathering together with like-minded individuals for an afternoon of pottery classes or picnics may be enjoyable, but it does not constitute a formational community.

This tie between community formation and individual formation manifested itself in my family in a unique way. I grew up in Sidney, a small sea-side town on Vancouver Island. During this period, growth in personal faith for my parents coincided with our physical proximity to the local church. Our first house in Sidney was 10109 Pleasant Street. It was a comfortable, yet uncreative type of house. Still, it was the place where friendships were formed and a connection with the church began. My parents, at this point, were not weekly church goers. They would have self-identified as Christians, yet their faith was not as strong as it would be in the future. It was during this time that a connection was formed with the church that would become our spiritual home, and to which I would continually return. This connection originally occurred through the presence of my grandparents who were avid church goers and diligent in taking

me to Sunday School. Through their witness, and weekend retreats like Marriage Encounter and Cursillo, faith began to play a more prominent role for my parents, and this in turn reshaped the faith of my family.

After a few years in the house on Pleasant Street, we relocated to a house clear across town, yet only five minutes away. Our church community, St. Andrew's Anglican Church, was one block east of this house. The move to closer proximity to the church mirrored the spiritual movement within my parents. There seemed to be a calling to new life. The house on Second Street saw my parents hosting house-groups and prayer nights. Several nights saw our house filled with people, praying, and singing. I distinctly remember walking down the alleyway to attend church on Sunday mornings. The progression is an interesting one. During the house on Pleasant Street, my church involvement occurred through my grandparents, yet by the time we lived on Second Street, we were, as a family, making our way to church together.

My family's next move was to the rectory of the St. Andrew's Church. This was a grand A-frame style house located on the church property. Living on the property of the church mirrors how much our life became intertwined with the life of the church. My Father became the "Parish Worker" at St. Andrews, which was a catch-all-title meaning he was the janitor, verger, and youth-group leader all rolled into one. Our social network consisted almost exclusively of church people, and it was in this house where my father received his own call to ministry.

It is hard to imagine where my family would have ended up if we had not become attached to the formational community of St. Andrew's. The important

point in this narrative is that the individual formation for my father, mother, and us children, occurred as a by-product of my family's immersion in a formational community. Howard (2018, 67) explains this well: "A congregation supplies the context of individual members' spiritual formation." Thus, an individualistic understanding of community (i.e., as a voluntary discipline to be chosen) misunderstands the nature and the dynamic of Christian community and divorces individual formation from what God is doing in and through the community of faith.

If formation is primarily individual in nature, one would assume that a group of transformed individuals would make for a transformed community. Community development consultant Peter Block, however, argues against this very idea. Block, speaking from the field of secular community development notes how community formation is understood to be something altogether different than the formation of individuals. Block (2008, Introduction) writes, "we have already learned that the transformation of large numbers of individuals does not result in the transformation of communities." For Block, community formation calls for future co-creation, a shared immersion in the very future into which the community is being formed.

For the Christian community, it is the work of the Holy Spirit that unites a group of people in a common spiritual life. The community, through the guidance of the Spirit, lives out the future into which they are jointly led: "the congregation itself is also being formed into Christ as a unique corporate self" (Howard 2018, 67). Not only does God call forth the community into existence, God's Spirit

sustains, and forms, the life of the community. The Church is an *ecclesia*, a called-out community, one rooted in the presence and activity of the Spirit.

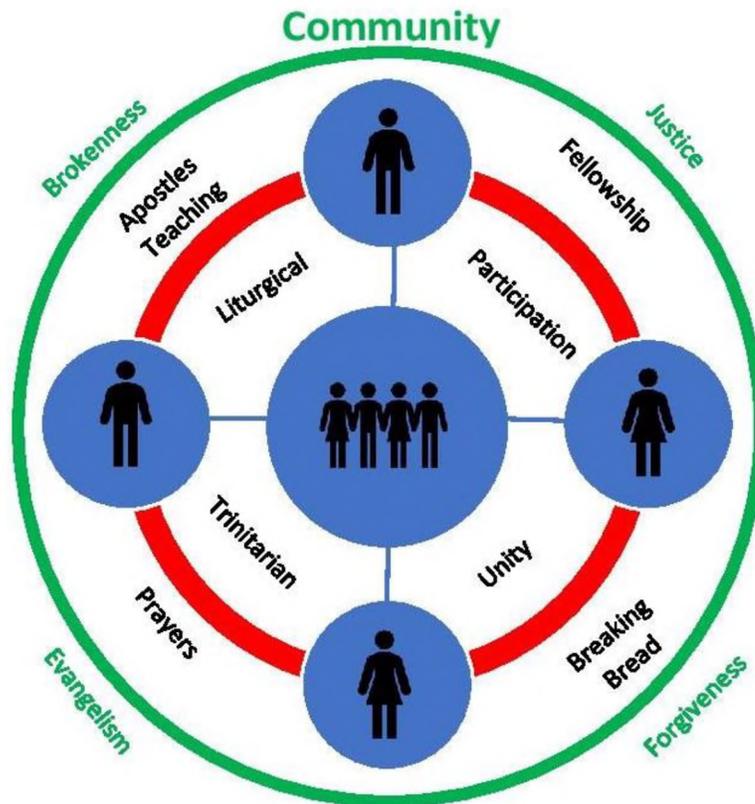


Figure 3. The baptized community

Figure 3 details the essential characteristics of a baptized community. It depicts a community that embraces its baptismal identity, engages in a shared liturgical life, and reflects both inward and outward Christlikeness. The inner terms, circling the gathered congregation, refer to the fundamental qualities which define the baptismal community. These are that which make the gathered congregation inherently a Christian community, thus separating it from other social gatherings or clubs. The remainder of the present chapter will explore the

nuances of these four defining elements of Christian community. The middle ring denotes the embodied actions serving to unite the individuals within the community. The four terms, taken from Luke's description of the Christian community in Acts 2, form the basis of a common spiritual formation. Chapters four and five will explore how each element is liturgically embodied in the life of the church. The terms on the outer circle (Brokenness, Forgiveness, Justice, and Evangelism), while continuing to define central elements of community formation, indicate the characteristics of the community of faith evidenced to the world. While the world outside the community of faith may not observe the community's engagement with the Apostles' teaching, it will notice the community's engagement in justice and evangelism. Chapters six and seven will look at these elements of the baptized community.

Importantly, Figure 3 illustrates that individual spiritual formation, and any discipline pertaining to that formation, is appropriately understood as part of the Spirit's wider work of community formation. As will be seen in the research regarding Morning Prayer, individual engagement in the rite still amounts to participation in communal prayer. There is a mystical quality to the community of faith, one in which the individual and the community can exist together. Engagement with any element within the above model constitutes an immersion in community formation, even if the particularities of the discipline or structure occur "individually." Given this communal emphasis, the recognition that the Christian community is a unified, Trinitarian, participatory, and liturgical body is

an important element in understanding the distinctiveness of the Spirit's formative work in the creation of a baptized community.

A Unified Body

Any definition of community must accommodate a multiplicity of parts or components. Community cannot exist in the absence of any appeal beyond the singular. There must be connections beyond the lone individual. This multiplicity, however, must be rooted in unity. Community speaks of one unit, one identity. Bonhoeffer (2009, 78) writes, "A community is a concrete unity. Its members must not be viewed as separate individuals, for the centre of activity lies not in each member, but in all of them together . . . Thus an individualistic starting point precludes understanding community." The individual is caught up in a story and identity beyond the self, one shared amongst the various members.

Speaking of this unity, Paul images the Christian community as a body. Paul writes: "The body is a unity, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So, it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12). The Church does not consist of *bodies* of Christ; rather it exists as one, singular, unified body. While we may speak of *congregations*, this multiplicity still speaks to a singular, unified body. The language of body is instrumental to a biblical understanding of community for it locates the community's sense of unity within the person of Jesus Christ. The Church is a singular unit only insofar as it is held together in, and by, Christ Jesus. Pettit (2008, 21) observes:

As a believer in Jesus Christ you are part of the body of Christ and are connected to other members of the body. We are to grow in relations to,

not apart from, the other members. The body metaphor is not simply a catchy way of describing Christianity – it is Christianity! It is the manner in which God designed his kingdom program to operate. We are not called to carry our cross in isolation. We are not called to growth in isolation. We are not called to maturity in isolation. We are called to growth *in the body* we are called to become spiritually formed *as a body*.

The individual Christian is a member of this one body, existing in Christ Jesus. In this way, the individual must exist in communion with fellow Christians. This is the essence of Jesus' high priestly prayer in John chapter 17, that "they may be in us" (John 17:21). To say that the unity of the community is found in the community's establishment in Jesus Christ is to more fully say that the unity of the Christian body is held within the Trinitarian unity between Father, Son, and Spirit.

God's communal nature as revealed in the opening pages of scripture is significant to the discussion of community formation, for here we uncover the purpose of creation previously alluded to by Chan. The communal God creates humanity to live communally. The opening chapter of Genesis refers to God creating "them" in the image of God (1:27). While Genesis 2 contains an alternative creation account, in which only the male is created during the seven days of creation, there is still the divine assertion that humanity is to be called into community. Here we read the divine pronouncement that "It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18). Humanity, bearing the image of God, exists in relation to the wider community to which they belong. Grenz, (1996, 79) points out that "this aspect of the biblical narrative suggests that humans in relationship with each other reflect the divine image in a way that the solitary individual human being cannot." This is further endorsed by Van Gelder, (2000, 96) who, in

his writing on the essence of the church, states that “God’s existence as a social community serves as the basis for us to understand the social nature of the church. The church is a relational community because God is a relational God.” The unity of the Godhead speaks to the very unity of the community of faith.

Given that the Triune God creates humanity to exist in community, the foremost location for spiritual formation is within the community of faith. It is upon the community that the transforming power of the Spirit is bestowed (see Ephesians 5:15-20). The individual engages in personal spiritual formation by way of participation in this corporate spirituality. Boa (2001, 419) articulates this corporate spirituality well, insisting that “true community in Christ is not a collection of lonely or isolated individuals, but a dynamic interaction of people who know they are accepted and beloved in Christ.” Community is not attained when individuals gather together as individuals; rather, the unity of the body is created when there is a unity of action, purpose, and identity. The individual members of the body take up a corporate identity. One cannot adopt a “Me + Jesus” spirituality within the Christian community when the very notion of spiritual life and formation is understood to be rooted in community.

A Trinitarian Body

Still, the question remains: what is it that distinguishes the *Christian* community from other gatherings of individuals? Does any unified gathering of multiple individuals constitute a divinely inspired community? Is there any difference between the local congregation and the local chapter of, say, the Rotary Club?

The Christian community is first and foremost a community with the Triune God. The community of Christ's followers participate in this divine communion. Grenz (1996, 215) argues that "our fellowship is nothing less than our common participation in the divine communion between the Father and the Son, mediated by the Holy Spirit." Embodiment in Trinitarian reality distinguishes the Christian community from other communities. Volf (2001, 223) articulates the trinitarian basis for Christian community, arguing that:

the Faith that human beings receive from God places them into a relation with God. Faith is not, however, merely the 'flight of the alone to the alone' (Plontius). Because the Christian God is not a lonely God, but rather a communion of three-persons, faith leads human beings into the divine *communio*. One cannot, however, have a self-enclosed communion with the triune-God – a 'fouresome,' as it were – for the Christian God is not a private deity. Communion with God is at once also communion with others who have entrusted themselves in faith to this very same God.

The community of faith has trinitarian roots for it is a community founded in the second member of the Trinity. The unity of the community Volf describes is not a product of human activity. Mere intellectual agreement, similarity in belief system, national identity, or socio-economic status cannot create the unity of true Christian community. Calhoun (2015, 178) claims, "We are one because we belong to and are one with Christ." Christ alone, as part of the divine Trinity, forms and sustains the ecclesial body.

The Trinitarian basis of communal spiritual formation is important for it highlights the Triune God as the principle actor in formation. The community is spiritually formed by way of the Triune God acting upon the community to form it into a deeper expression of Christlikeness. It is this trinitarian underpinning that establishes the spiritual formation as *Christian* spiritual formation (Howard 2018,

14–15). Christian community can only be defined as communion with the Triune God. All communion with fellow members serves this principle function. The Trinity, therefore, is not merely a model of communal life or formation. The community of faith as a trinitarian body fundamentally declares the One in whose presence the community gathers and to whom the community reaches out.

A Participatory Body

Community is a living entity more than a structural framework; it depends on the active and unified participation of all members. As we have seen, this participation is linked to the trinitarian nature of the community; the community of faith is a trinitarian body insofar as it participates in a trinitarian reality. The Holy Trinity is not a mere doctrine to be parsed, but a reality that the community is called to inhabit: “It is by *living* within the trinitarian life that the church discovers its ‘primary identity’” (Chan 2006, 15; emphasis added). Participation in the community refers to a sharing in the united life in which all members partake. This participation leads to a state of *koinonia*, a fellowship shared with God and with the other members of the community.

This participation, however, is not limited to time and space. The nature of Christian community goes beyond what can be seen and recognized by the physical and the finite. Perhaps the most profound statement of this is found in the book of Hebrews and the author’s reference to being “surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1). Here, the picture of wider Christian community involves the faithful activity of believers on earth and in heaven. For the Christian, death does not remove one from being a member of the community.

To assume this would be to assume a model of community dependent upon engagement/disengagement with death being equal to disengagement from community.

The community of Christ, however, is not merely the collection of individuals in physical or temporal proximity. Formed by Christ and held together in Christ, the community extends beyond all physical boundaries of time, space, and even earthly life itself. Christian community occurs through shared participation in this spiritual reality. Again, Bonhoeffer (1954, 25) is helpful:

Now we are in him. Where he is, there we are too, in the incarnation, on the Cross, and in his resurrection. We belong to him because we are in him. That is why the Scriptures call us the Body of Christ. But if, before we could know and wish it, we have been chosen and accepted with the whole Church in Jesus Christ, then we also belong to him in eternity with one another.

Like a cheering crowd at a sporting event, the “cloud of witnesses” create the very atmosphere of faithful worship in which the community participates.

Participation, as a continuous spiritual activity, affects how we understand the nature of spiritual disciplines. As we will see later, the discipline of Morning Prayer, prayed alone in the privacy of one’s home, is a participation in the prayer of the ecclesial body. As the individual prays alone, one lends his or her voice to the communal activity of prayer occurring around the throne of God.

In Anglicanism, the use of plural language in liturgical rites emphasizes the participatory nature of the community. Targoff (2001) describes how the use of plural language transforms individual prayer into a corporate activity. Specifically referencing Morning Prayer, she writes: “Instead of the church supplying space for private worship, the home was now imagined as an additional

site for common prayer” (Targoff 2001, 34). Prayers at home are part of the wider activity of prayers in the church. Thus, when I begin the office of Morning Prayer with the phrase “Lord, open our lips” and end with the recitation of the “Our Father,” I am reminded that my prayers are not solely my own, but are a participation in and communal activity.

For example, my own formation and call to ministry, occurring as part of the wider prayers of the church, was beautifully highlighted to me during my first year of ministry. As it happened, my first placement out of seminary was in the very church in which I grew up, St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, in Sidney, British Columbia. Some of the community had changed over the years, however there were still many people present from our original engagement fifteen years prior. As the assistant priest of the parish, one of my main tasks was to visit a man named Moe,³ and the home-group that met in his house. This group gathered weekly to uphold each other through family crises, loss of jobs, recurring illnesses and the death of loved ones. They prayed together, they laughed together, they cried together, but more than anything, they loved each other.

On one occasion, Paul (the designated minutes-keeper) pulled out a piece of paper. "I want you to see something," he said to me. "I have been keeping records of our gatherings since we started. I want you to see that on this day, 15 years ago, this group spent time praying for your father as he discerned a call to ministry." I had not even been aware that my father had been a part of the group

³ All names of parishioners throughout the portfolio have been changed.

in the early days of its formation. As I heard Paul describe the event of praying for my father, I thought back to all the times that I sat in my bedroom listening to the gathering of people in our living room. They laughed (sometimes exuberantly), they studied, they prayed. I had never considered that, at that time, my father was engaged in a deep process of discernment, and that this community was a support and a guide for him. Deeper still, I had an internal acknowledgement that the prayers of this community, unbeknownst to them, deeply affected my own call to ministry.

I always held a great separation between my father's call to ordained ministry and my own. I would aggressively deny any connection between the two. Whenever people would reference me “following in my father's footsteps,” I would state categorically that my call to ministry had nothing to do with what my father did for a living. In many ways, this is true. The various elements of what informed my own call to ministry, the inner stirrings of the Spirit, the dream that I had, the places of external confirmation, these had nothing to do with my father. Yet I now saw that his own call to ministry paved the way for the ministry to which God would call me. I wonder what would have become of my family if this community had not surrounded my father in his time of discernment. If St. Andrew's did not become the spiritual home for my family, would my father's own life have been transformed? Would he have felt the stirrings of his own call to ministry? If not, would the call to ministry have been awakened in me?

There was a deep blessing in this conversation with Paul. I saw the outcome of the many years of community fellowship and prayer. It was yet

another instance of God's hand of providence working through the community of faith. My call to ministry became not just a decision that I had made, and made happily, but it is now seen as a participation in the ongoing, prayerful, activity of the community of faith.

A Liturgical Body

The community of faith is not merely a doctrinal assertion. A united, trinitarian, and participatory community is realized through embodied action. As Johnson (2008, 79) has so eloquently put it, the community of faith exists as people gather “in one location to act in concert as the people of God.” This “acting together” necessitates that the community of faith embody corporate worship. Liturgy, in this sense, is not merely a description of an overly-formulated structure of worship. All communities have a liturgy. Willimon (1979, 60) notes that while some worshipping communities define themselves as non-liturgical and “claim to have no form of worship other than their spontaneous responses ... their participants know when someone is not doing it right or when someone has spoken out of turn or has said the wrong thing.” Insofar as all communities embody worship, all communities are liturgical.

This liturgical emphasis is implicit in Paul’s image of the community as a “body.” In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul’s first reference to the Christian community as a “body” occurs in the context of a discussion about the Lord’s Supper. Paul writes, “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of

the one bread” (10:16–17). For Paul, the very understanding of the Church as the body of Christ is directly tied to how the community worships together. The community acts together in a unified participation in Christ’s sacrifice.

It is this liturgical emphasis that makes Christian community a spiritual reality and not just the physical gathering of people. Community formation occurs as members act as the people of God in worshipful response to the presence of God in their midst. It is via the shared actions of all participants that the community participates in the trinitarian reality and corporately responds to the presence of God. These embodied actions have a formative function for the community. Smith (2013, 125) is insightful in describing how liturgy is implicit in all of life:

It is because I ‘picture’ the world as *this* kind of place, this kind of ‘environment,’ that I picture ‘the good life’ in a certain way that draws me toward it and thus construe my obligations and responsibilities accordingly. While my actions and behavior are, in a sense, ‘pulled’ out of me because of my passion orientation to some *telos* – some vision of the good life and what it means to be human – my love and longing for that ‘good life’ is itself a signal that I conceive a ‘kingdom’ as something that attracts me. So, in some sense, imagination precedes desire. My longings are not simply ‘chosen’ by me; they are not self-generated ‘decisions.’ I don’t wake up on Monday morning and say, “From now on, I am going to long for X.” We don’t choose desires; they are *birthed* in us. They are formed in us as habits, as *habitus*.

Liturgy is formational precisely because it gives expression to the very *telos* of life. Referring to Block’s (2008) terminology, it is through liturgy that the community “co-creates” the future it is called to inhabit. The community inhabits the world in a particular way, imagining an ultimate goal of life, and subsequently pursuing that goal through embodied action. Thus, as Smith (2009, 48) concludes, humanity is rightly understood as *homo liturgicus*, liturgical beings. Liturgy,

however, does more than simply define the aim of life, it points to what is loved and worshiped (Smith 2016). Liturgy, defined as the work of the people, is more aptly understood as the *worshipful* work of the people.

An important element in Smith's understanding of liturgy is his placement of community practice. Individual habits and disciplines necessarily flow out of the habits and disciplines of the community. The *telos* of life is a social vision (Smith 2016, 11). For Smith, both the intention to pursue this *telos*, and the very vision that it entails, necessarily flow out of communal liturgy. These forces of habit are often engaged in without conscious acknowledgement, they are "the quiet, unconscious operation of liturgical formation" (Smith 2013, 141). For Smith, communal liturgies precede individual ones. Smith argues that the individual expressions of one's cultural life testify to a deeper, communal, formation. The individual unconsciously lives out a communal reality, a common life. It is precisely the communal basis of such activity that gives these liturgies their formative power.

The purpose of the embodied action, then, is not to please the individual, but form the community in worship. When liturgy is viewed as a solitary action, done by the individual in his or her pew, the effectiveness of the liturgy is based on a personalized criterion of enjoyment. Was the music the style of my liking? What liturgical book was used? Did the preacher talk too long? Such questions presuppose that the purpose of liturgy is to gratify individual preferences. Yet this betrays the very definition of liturgy as a work of the people. Liturgy is the very means by which a "group of people become something corporately which they

had not been as a mere collection of individuals” (Schmemmann 1963, 25). Meyers (1994, chap.1) writes, “For us ... the liturgy is formative of the church. In the liturgy, in the midst of our praise of God, we remember and act out our identity. We describe to ourselves who we are, what we intend and hope for.” Via liturgical embodiment, the community is formed as the people of God.

Christian community is a unified, trinitarian, participatory and liturgical body. Instead of being defined through individual engagement/disengagement, formation in community embraces the entirety of Christian life. Prayers said in the private sphere of one’s home remain part of the wider prayer of the church. This will be evident in the later discussion regarding the liturgy of Morning Prayer where, though alone, one is formed in community through participation in the ecclesial liturgy. These shared liturgies form the basis of the community’s baptismal reality. The community, acting together, renounces that which betrays God’s kingdom, while at the same time, affirming the community’s identity as the body of Christ. The liturgies of renunciation and affirmation, therefore, serve to immerse the community in baptismal reality and identity.

CHAPTER 3

FORMATION AS IMMERSION IN BAPTISMAL ECCLESIOLOGY

Jesus began his ministry with an act of immersion. In fact, the entirety of Christ's messianic ministry can be understood through the language of baptism given that Jesus refers to the cross as "a baptism to undergo" (Luke 12:50). Furthermore, not only does Jesus define his own life and mission through the language of baptism, he similarly calls his followers to "drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with" (Mark 10:39). Although scripture refers to both Jesus' immersion in the Jordan and his death on the cross as a baptism, we should not see this as two separate baptisms. Jesus' life and ministry, from Jordan to Golgotha, amounts to a singular baptism; a baptized life. Similarly, the Church's life and ministry can also be described by way of baptism. Christ calls the community of faith to be formed through immersion in Christlikeness and to "immerse [others] in Trinitarian reality" (Willard 2002, chap.13).

Sadly, baptism today rarely takes on such a communal or missional focus. Baptism is often understood individualistically, a rite involving an individual before God. It speaks not to entrance into communal faith, but to a solitary action in time. When thought of this way, baptism becomes little more than a rite of individual religiosity, a ticking of the pious box. Schmemmann (1963, 67)

comments on this trend: “From an act of the whole church, involving the whole cosmos, [baptism] became a private ceremony, performed in the corner of the church by ‘private appointment,’ and in which the Church was reduced to the ‘minister of sacraments.’” This privatisation of baptism results in the privatisation of Christian life, one separated from the life and witness of the Christian community.

Just as an individualisation of community negates the essential nature of community, this privatisation of baptism is opposed to the communal nature of the rite. Baptism does not belong to the individual but to the community of faith; it is an “ecclesial sacrament” (Wood 1999, 26). Again, Schmemmann (1963, 68) is helpful: “It is not ecclesiology that gives baptism its true meaning; it is rather in and through baptism that we find the first and fundamental meaning of the church.” Schmemmann is arguing against baptism being viewed as a mere rite of religious observance. One is not baptized simply to fulfill certain dogmatic requirements of the religious institution, nor does an individual (or a family) engage in baptism in some individualised manner. For Schmemmann, the rite of baptism forms the community of faith. To be baptized is to receive the call to live baptismally within a baptized community. The gathered congregation does not merely observe a baptism, they participate in it and are continually formed by it.

This communal understanding of baptism is not merely a new twist on an old practice. The church has continually held a communal focus for the rite. The Didache’s instructions on baptism illustrates this very point. Chapter 7 reads: “Before the baptism, moreover, the one who baptizes and the one being baptized

must fast, and any others who can” (“Didache” 1994, 12). The call to corporate fasting in preparation for the celebration of baptism is a means for the entire congregation to recognise, and participate in, their own baptismal identity. Corporate participation is fundamental to this communal understanding of baptism. Willimon (1979, 157) notes that “baptism must be a communal event because the identity it confers is socially structured and communally derived. It is an identity that is not only given by the community but that is forever responsible to and dependent upon the community.” It is the church, not the individual presider, that baptizes. Thus, it is the church corporate that declares the recipient’s baptismal identity, an identity shared with the entire community. Baptism and the formation of Christian community go hand in hand.

The liturgy of the Anglican Church has much to offer regarding the connection between baptism and community formation. The congregation gathered around the baptismal font are active participants in the rite; they are not mere passive observers. Upon the opening of the rite, the gathered community is addressed in this way: “Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?” (ACC 1985, 155). This question calls the congregation to declare its identity as a baptized body, and to pray for the baptismal candidate. Following the intercessory prayer, the community rehearses the creedal proclamation. This creedal rehearsal is introduced with the words “Let us join with those who are committing themselves to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant” (ACC 1985, 158). Again, the baptismal identity of the community is brought to the forefront.

Perhaps the most telling instance of the community's participation in the baptismal rite occurs at the end, wherein the community of faith receives the newly baptized. Importantly, this is not solely an Anglican dynamic of baptism, but has been a consistent part of the church's baptismal practice. In the ancient world, for example, reception would have taken the form of providing white robes for the newly baptized. Meyers (2015, 20) notes that "by the fourth century, when adult baptism was still the norm, candidates for baptism stripped off their old clothes and descend naked into the font. Coming up from the water, they were given new white garments." The act of clothing the baptized with white robes, as much as a signification of their new life in Christ, was also a sign of reception into the community of believers.

In the BCP, the priest closes the baptismal rite by voicing a similar reception. Speaking on behalf of the congregation, the priest says, "We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him [sic] with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he [sic] shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified" (ACC 1962, 528). The BAS contains a similar reception, although the reception is spoken by the congregation. At the bidding "Let us welcome the newly baptized", the congregation responds "We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and *share with us* in his eternal priesthood" (ACC 1985, 161; emphasis added). These words of reception are telling. Effectively, the community receives the newly baptized into itself, the baptized community. It is this constant renewal of the community's baptismal identity that Schmemmann

(1963) spoke of in suggesting that baptism creates the identity of the church. Corporate participation in the baptismal liturgy identifies the church as a baptismal body. The community then calls the newly baptized into a new state of existence, one which is defined by union with God and participation in communal life.

The communal nature of the baptismal rite flows seamlessly into the community's call to a singular baptismal life. As Smith (2009, 183) reminds us, this baptismal life is a social reality: "Baptism is not just a picture; it also *does* something. As a sacrament, it *makes* what it promises; a new person and a new people. As such, it is profoundly a social reality." At every step of the way, baptism points the individual to the reality that one's life of faith cannot be understood outside active participation in the community of faith. The efficacy of the sacrament does not lie in the priestly prayers, or even in the positive responses to the candidate's examination. The efficacy of the sacrament lies solely in the act of immersion, for it is through the baptismal waters that the individual becomes immersed in the trinitarian reality lived out by the entire community.

Various rites within the Anglican Church reflect this immersion into a communal reality. The ordination service, for example, expresses this immersion quite well. My own call to Anglican ordination came through a vivid dream when I was fifteen years old. Not surprisingly, my call took on a community focus. In this dream, I saw a church with people filling all the pews. The church itself was unrecognizable, as was the lone figure of the dream, seen only from behind. This figure walked to the front of the church, clad in white clerical robes. A stole hung

around his neck. He was clearly youthful, between mid-twenties to early thirties. Suddenly the individual in the dream was surrounded by a myriad of other individuals, all vested in robes and stoles. The young man knelt in the center of this priestly circle while the circle of clergy laid hands on the individual and prayed for him. At once the scene changed. I was no longer looking at this scene in the church but was now hovering over my own bed. It was as if my dream contained a picture of myself dreaming. In this place of hovering, I saw myself smiling. I smiled the type of smile that you only give when you are authentically pleased, when everything in your life seems to be moving in absolute harmony. It was a smile of satisfaction, of enjoyment, of excitement. It was a smile of rejoicing.

I did not so much wake from my dream as feel that I was ripped out of it. I awoke with a deep inhale of breath, and my body seemed overly sweaty. Deep within I knew God had spoken. I needed no one to interpret this dream for me, the message was clear. I instantly knew this scene in the church to be the service of ordination to the Anglican priesthood. During this service, the one to be ordained kneels in front of the bishop, with the congregation behind them. After vows are spoken, the clergy of the diocese surround the individual and prays for him or her with the laying on of hands. It is a profoundly moving experience. The newly ordained priest is blessed by the community of clergy. This circle of prayer, however, has a deeper function. The laying of hands from the fellow clergy testifies that the priest cannot stand on the outskirts of community; no ministry is ever done in isolation. Despite the absence of water, the liturgy of ordination

reinforces the central idea of immersion; the newly ordained priest begins his or her ministry by way of immersion into communal life and ministry. In fact, Meyers suggests that “ordination as a sacrament must find all its meaning in baptism” (Meyers 2015, chap.3). Ordination reaffirms the individual’s immersion in the community of faith.

Baptism calls the community to embody a life defined by, and directed toward, life with the Trinity. In this way, the church calls the baptized individual to participate in the “eternal priesthood” of the church (ACC 1985, 161). Thus, the baptismal liturgy forms the community into the very body to which the liturgy speaks. Yet, the question remains: beyond the mere recitation of liturgical responses, how does a community re-enter its own baptismal identity, and re-embodiment its immersion in Trinitarian reality? This immersion can be understood as signifying two actions: renunciation and affirmation.

Renunciation

Renunciation speaks to the act of turning away from that which negates life with, and in, Christ. Anglicanism primarily views baptism as an image of death and resurrection rather than one of mere purification. Yet more than merely imaging the death and resurrection of Jesus, Paul states that baptism is a *participation* in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3–4). Baptism pronounces a burial of the old self. Through acts of renunciation, the community (and individuals within the community) take up a new identity, thereby leaving old structures and ways behind. Vanier (1989, 72) explains:

To enter into a new covenant and belong to a new people, a community with new values, we have to leave another people – those with whom we

have lived – with other values and other norms: wealth possessions, social prestige, revolution, drugs, delinquency, whatever. This passage from one people to another can be a very painful uprooting, and usually takes time. Many do not achieve it, because they do not want to choose or to cut themselves off from their old life. They keep a foot in each camp and live a compromise, without finding their real identity.

To rise out of the baptismal waters, one must first be plunged into them; to rise into new life, one must first deny the old. Baptism calls for a complete renunciation of all that does not pertain to God's kingdom. It is through this renunciation that the community becomes fully submerged in the divine reality of their redemption. Paul points to Israel's history as evidence for this complete renunciation, noting that Israel was "baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:2). To be immersed into God's redemptive act, Israel had to fully renounce their Egypt-defined existence. Israel's "baptism" meant a turning away from that which hindered both their redemption and their identity as the people of God.

The community of faith becomes immersed in the reality of redemption as it becomes crucified to the world (Galatians 6:14). This crucifixion to the world must involve a turning away from the idolatrous kingdom(s) of the world, and the spiritual forces that betray the Kingdom of God. Smith (2009, 187) argues that "baptism is a moment when Christian worship articulates an antithesis with respect to the world. In constituting a people, God constitutes a *peculiar* people – a called-out people who are marked as strange because they are a community that desires the kingdom of God." Within baptismal existence, the community continuously turns away from the obstacles to Christian life and growth, traditionally described as the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The Anglican baptismal liturgy gives voice to this threefold renunciation, although rearranging the order slightly. The liturgy reads, “Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?”, “Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?”, and “Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?” (ACC 1985, 154). Here, “sinful desires” speak to matters of the flesh, “evil powers of the world” speak to the false kingdom of the world, and “the satanic forces of wickedness” speak to a renunciation of the devil. The community’s immersion in a baptismal identity is an ongoing process of turning away from idolatrous desires, kingdom, and worship. Smith (2013, 187) articulates this well: “Though such renunciations are ritualized at the time of baptism, they are meant to be not a singular event but a way of life.” One is never to rise out of the waters of baptism and return to old ways.

The liturgy of confession is one way the community of faith continuously embodies renunciation. In fact, Bonhoeffer links the rite of confession to the rite of baptism, claiming that confession recovers one’s baptismal life. In confession, one experiences the very healing and new life that was originally met in baptismal waters. He writes: “What happened to us in baptism is bestowed upon us anew in confession. We are delivered out of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. That is joyful news. Confession is the renewal of the joy of baptism” (Bonhoeffer 1954, 115). Confession unifies the church in a shared baptismal life through the act of a shared confession. The corporate language of the rite itself plays a significant formative role.

Within the confessional liturgy, the solitary voice joins the chorus of other voices in the prayers of the church. Even if confession is made in the auricular fashion, as in the Rite of Reconciliation of the Penitent, the liturgy of confession and absolution is a liturgy of the church corporate. The corporate language of the general confession has a unifying function. The members of the church become united as the body of Christ, not in their accomplishments but in their brokenness. One's confession is not merely an individual confession, but a joining in a corporate expression. In confession, the community of faith affirms its corporate identity as those in need of Christ's grace and mercy. Boseli (2014, chap.2) writes, "The entire living church in all its living members says, 'I have sinned.'" The rite of confession rightly belongs to the church community, not the penitent *individual* alone. One renounces the world, the flesh, and the devil, not as an act of the individual will, but as a participation in the wider renunciation made by the Christlike body.

Biblically, the ministry of John the Baptist highlights the prominence of renunciation within the act of baptism. For John, baptism naturally presupposed a radical change of life. John preached that those who had two shirts, or an abundance of clothing, needed to "share with those who had none"; tax collectors were called to "not collect more than was required"; and soldiers were to refrain from "extorting money and false accusations" (John 3:10–14). Having risen from the baptismal waters, the newly baptized were called to a new way of inhabiting life, one involving communal and social implications. Baptism immerses the individual into a communal spiritual reality, one that necessarily involves a

renunciation of old ways. As a member of the baptized community, one rises from the baptismal waters and begins to live a new life; one lived in the world, but not of the world.

This restructuring of life carried on through the second and third centuries, during which the rite of baptism necessarily called for acts of radical renunciation. Baptism prompted profound changes in the lives of individuals, and communities. DeSilva (2008, 46) notes that in the first centuries of the church:

those who made their living by making idols, for example, or by killing (that is, as professional soldiers), or by prostitution or magical arts had to change their occupation. They could not be engaged in business that would perpetuate the violent expansion and maintenance of the Roman domination system, the false religion that legitimated it, or any business that compromised their loyalty to God or obedience to his commandments in other ways.

Baptism immersed the individual, or in biblical times “whole households” (Acts 16:33), into a new existence. This new life demanded a radical renunciation of all that previously defined life, so that the individual could embody his or her immersion in a new Trinitarian reality. Such immersion, however, was not to be sustained individually as the rite necessarily immersed the individual in a formative community, enabling him or her to continue the newly ordered life.

Affirmation

However, renunciation is only part of the picture. It is not enough to simply turn away from idolatrous worship, kingdoms, and habits. While the vows of renunciations amount to a turning *away*, there must be something *to* which the community turns. Baptism is not merely a rite of negation or death. Acts of renunciation must lead to acts of affirmation, just as Christ’s death paves the way

to resurrection. Having renounced all that is contrary to God's kingdom on earth, the community now "reaches out for all that God offers" (deSilva 2008, 50).

Affirmation of baptismal life is how the church pursues its new life in the grace of Jesus.

The essential link between the community's renouncing of a life opposed to Christ's formative activity, and the affirmation of life in Christ, has been beautifully illustrated by the recent renovation project at the parish I serve. When I arrived at Holy Cross as rector of the parish, the church was in the beginning stages of a renovation project. The idea of renovation had been attempted by the parish for the previous 20 years, all without success. The proposed plan depicted the complete demolition of the current building and the erection of market housing, which would include space for a new church sanctuary. There were two big attractions to this plan. Firstly, the project was marketed as an environmentally conscious project. It included rooftop gardens, energy-efficient technology, and the continual recycling of rainwater. The second attraction, and perhaps the most important for the community, was the installation of stained-glass windows, and the organ pipes from a previous parish. In truth, it was this second attraction which drove this project and all the previous attempts before it.

The architectural company the church was using appeared to be on the up-and-up, with its CEO a member of the church itself. As the project progressed, various members of the congregation began to uncover unsettling facts about the project we were pursuing. It was revealed that the architectural company we were working with had experienced various legal problems. Furthermore, several

reports, from across Canada, began to surface which indicated the presence of future lawsuits, and a possible tie to Ponzi schemes. There was an amazing act of providence and grace as this information was unavailable at the start of the project. Yet now, at the very point in which Holy Cross would have to commit further time and money, various members of the community spontaneously began to Google-search this company unearthing the potential danger.

Roughly one year into the project, and my incumbency, I stood in front of the congregation and detailed the information that had been passed on to me and declared that we were no longer pursuing the building project. I knew that the congregation would naturally feel dejected and depressed; another building project had failed! I put the building committee on hold and advised the congregation to take a break from worrying about the building. The church needed some time to breathe, to pray, and to listen. One year later, the building committee met again, this time to figure out what needed to be done to improve the accessibility of the building. The spirit of the committee was markedly different. Previous attempts at the building project had focused on the inclusion of stained-glass windows, and the installation of an old pipe-organ, relics from the church's own history. The committee actively turned away from this focus and toward what was truly needed for the congregation to become the community God had called us to be.

Although no specific liturgical act of confession took place, the Holy Cross community, under the leadership of the building committee, engaged in an act of renunciation. The committee consciously set itself against the faulty drivers

for previous renditions of the renovations. The matter of organ pipes and stained-glass windows represented a self-focused desire, a desire to create the church to our own liking. This desire to center the renovation around the installation of pipes and windows set the church upon a 20-year course of building project mishaps. It was now recognized that the constant focus on the installation of historic items was keeping the community from engaging in the witness and ministry to which Christ called the community.

This act of renunciation was paired with an act of affirmation. In renouncing the self-focused desires that drove previous renovation plans, the community opened itself to communal affirmation. In focusing on what was needed in the parish, the church affirmed God's calling to make the building open, inviting, and most of all, accessible. Thus, a new vision was created. The project centered on the installation of an elevator, accessible washrooms, and main-floor offices. Organ pipes were not considered; stained-glass windows were thought of only as a possible add-on to the main work of accessibility. Six years after I arrived as Rector of the parish, the renovation project was completed.

Affirmation, as renunciation, speaks to the matters of kingdoms, worship and habits. The community of faith renounces the faulty expressions and manifestations, in order to grasp the true reality of its life in Christ to which the community is called. Mirroring the threefold renunciations, the Anglican liturgy includes a threefold affirmation. The affirmations read: "Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your saviour?", "Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?", and "Do you promise to obey him as your Lord?" (ACC 1985,

154). The vow to obedience speaks to the habits of life; trusting in Christ's grace and love speaks to the kingdom to which the community is subject, and the turning to Jesus Christ and accepting him as the Saviour naturally speaks to the issue of worship. Having renounced the faulty expressions of these things during the vows of renunciation (the world, the flesh, the devil), the candidate now accepts the role of Jesus Christ in the right ordering of life. Baptism speaks to rising to new habits, a new kingdom, and new worship: "We determine to place our focus, our attention, our *intentions* on Christ and to say, '*this* is the direction I am going in the baptismal life'" (deSilva 2008, 50). The vows of affirmation amount to a conscious awareness of life open to the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.

DeSilva (2008) does well to highlight the matter of intention in baptismal living. It is intention which leads the community to full participation in a life with God. Law (2011, chap.2) passionately argues that one's intention is the driving force behind life with God. He claims: "And if you will here stop, and ask yourselves, why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you, that is neither through ignorance nor inability but purely because you never thoroughly intended it." Without an intention to actively engage in a life with God, all spiritual habits and structures will be betrayed by the disposition of our hearts. The various renovation mishaps at Holy Cross revealed an inner intention set upon a desire for self-focused beautification. Simply, proposed building projects focused on a church centred on historical artifacts. Intention, therefore, lies at the heart of the community's engagement in

renunciation and affirmation. The community renounces the faulty kingdom, defined by the world the flesh and the devil, only so that it can take up an alternative kingdom – a kingdom defined by the Spirit of God and embodied through immersion in baptismal reality.

Of course, not every community will engage in a renovation or building project. How then can renunciation and affirmation be seen in regular communal life? Returning to the rite of confession, turning toward an alternative kingdom rooted in God's steadfast love and infinite mercy is precisely the vision of confession. The community offers its confession of sin in light of God's promise of forgiveness. Confession, therefore, is a discipline of affirmation just as much as it is a discipline of renunciation.

Swamy (2018) links God's desire for reconciliation to God's relational initiative, an initiative expressed, primarily, in creating the very ones God chooses to be in relation. "From the beginning, it is God's openness and initiative to relate with the world that remains the foundation for all acts of reconciliation. (Swamy 2018, Reconciliation). Importantly, Swamy understands reconciliation as more than simply erasing sinful transgression. Reconciliation is primarily about the reestablishment of relationship. Swamy (2018, Reconciliation) defines reconciliation as: "building and strengthening relationships with radical openness to the other." Reconciliation expresses God's desire to be in relationship with the ones formed for that relationship. While temporally, reconciliation occurs post-fall, God's desire for reconciliation is "founded on an everlasting longing for creation to be in continuous relationship with God who is among us" (Swamy

2018, chap.2). Scripturally, even before God called to Adam and Eve, the Creator had already begun to walk towards them (Genesis 3:8-9).

Understanding confession as rooted in God's relational longing, changes how one views the liturgical act of confession. One confesses not merely because one has fallen in sin; rather confession occurs as a response to one's own creation – a creation rooted in God's loving and relational desire. In fact, this is seen in the Genesis 3 account wherein God searches for Adam and Eve. The question "Where are you?" in Genesis 3:8 is an instance of God's desire to initiate a relationship. God is proactive in calling to two wayward individuals. Furthermore, this question can be seen as an invocation to confession; Adam and Eve are invited to confess their physical and spiritual location. While Adam and Eve both deflect ownership and blame, thus failing to offer full confession, the link between confession and God's relational initiative is clear. God calls Adam and Eve to confession as part of God's journey to them.

This is precisely why, in Anglican liturgy, the call to confession references the constancy of God's love and mercy. The BCP issues the invitation to confession so that "we may obtain forgiveness of the same by his infinite goodness and mercy" (ACC 1962, 4). Similarly, the BAS contains multiple confessional invocations, all of which are rooted in the compassion and mercy of God. The rite of confession is an affirmation of the loving presence of God. Confession, therefore, is worshipful. In fact, so strong is the worshipful nature of confession that Chan suggests that confession of sin cannot exist apart from the

confession of faith. Confession of sin and profession of faith are two sides of the same worshipful act. Chan (2006, 133) writes,

A proper theology of confession must recognise its close link with the profession of faith. In Scripture, *homologeîn*, to confess, is both a confession and a profession . . . This truth is embodied in the faith we profess, especially in the Apostles' Creed. Brunner is right, therefore, when he says, "A confession of sin will be possible where there is a vital profession of faith.

Contained within the act of confession is the affirmation of the church's faith in the gospel of Christ. This echoes the historical understanding of the rite itself.

Within the history of the church, the act of confession always contained this dual nature. The church recognised that the penitential act was a "confession first of faith, then of praise, and only then of sins" (Dallen 1986, 32). Confession takes place not because one is besieged by the vengeance of the Lord, but because one is encountered by the loving call to redemption. In this way, the rite of confession holds together the church's renunciation of all that obstructs God's ways, as well as its affirmation in the gospel of Christ.

Affirmation without intention is nonsensical, for how can you affirm a life you do not intend to embody? Without intentional affirmation of baptismal identity, the community of faith fails to engage in its own identity. A life removed from devotion to God necessarily leads one to destruction. To affirm baptismal reality is to place the community in the position to *embody* that reality.

CHAPTER 4

EMBODIED ACTIONS NECESSARY FOR COMMUNITY FORMATION

Despite Law's (2011) passionate exhortations regarding the importance of inner intention, the mere intention of a group of individuals to see themselves as a community will fail to bring about transformation. Spiritual transformation within the community will not occur by posing propositional truths about a community's nature or identity. Intention must flow into embodied action.

"Outward actions are necessary to support inward tempers," explains Law (2011, chap.15). Just as disciplines and habits form the soul of an individual, so too the embodied actions of the community form its spiritual reality. Having immersed itself in the Trinitarian reality through renunciation and affirmation, the community is called to embody this immersion.

There is an intimate connection between inward tempers and outward actions. Baptismal identity is necessarily a lived-out identity. Law (2011, chap.15) goes on to explain:

For our souls, in a great measure depend upon our bodies; as we have a great power over our bodies . . . [W]e are masters of our outward actions; as we can force ourselves to outward acts of reading, praying, singing, and the like, and as all these bodily actions have an effect upon the soul; as they naturally tend to form such and such tempers in our hearts; so by being masters of these outward, godly actions, we have great power over the inward state of the heart...and thus it is owing to this union that we have so much power over ourselves.

The church's embodiment of baptismal life is seen primarily in its liturgical life. The community of faith is a "community of practice" (Johnston 2008, 79). Without embodiment, formation simply cannot occur. Appendix A contains a list of various disciplines useful for communal formation. Luke's description of the newly baptized community, found in the book of Acts, however, outlines four primary habits of the baptized community. Luke records:

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:41-47)

The newly baptized community, immersed in Trinitarian reality, began to live out its baptism through four main practices: apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers. These habits were not merely actions taken up haphazardly, for scripture affirms that the community "devoted themselves" to these practices. With singleness of intent, these four actions became the behaviors by which the community lived out their baptismal reality. Therefore, it is instructive for us today, as we can still point to these four actions as the way by which the community of faith engages in spiritual formation.

The primacy of these four actions has not been lost in the baptismal rite, at least for Anglicans. Within the Anglican rite, this four-fold embodiment holds a prominent place. At every celebration of baptism, the community re-affirms

devotion to living out the baptismal life as seen in Acts 2. The congregation is asked, “Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching, and fellowship, and the breaking of bread, and the prayer” (ACC 1985, 159). These four disciplines, as originally seen through Acts, are the very means by which “we pledge ourselves to a spiritual formation program” (deSilva 2008, 61). The disciplines mentioned in Acts become “a body of spiritual disciplines that enable us to discover how to live in ways consistent with our beliefs and how to find strength in God and one another for persevering in those ways” (deSilva 2008, 61). Therefore, these four disciplines provide a useful framework for understanding the spiritual formation of the community.

The Apostles’ Teaching

The baptized community is centered on the kerygmatic proclamation of the Gospel. Importantly, this was a communally formational process, not merely one of individual study. To be devoted to the apostles’ teaching meant to sit and learn about Jesus from those who had been with him. The apostles taught as they had been taught, recounting what Jesus said and did. To be baptized was to join a company of people centred on the good news of Jesus. The message of the gospel formed the community gathered under it.

Too often has the emphasis on the apostles’ teaching been divorced from any association with the life of the faith community. The apostles’ teaching has become another way of speaking of the importance of personal bible-study, an appeal to gospel-based information gathered for the betterment of one’s private life in Christ. When thought of in this way, the apostles’ teaching becomes

shorthand for the *content* of the gospel. Devotion to the apostles' teaching does not refer to a formative function of the gospel, but to the information to be mined from the scriptural text. Mulholland (2000, 51) describes this as an informational understanding of scripture. The image Mulholland puts forward is of a person, head bowed and bible open, highlighting intriguing bits of newly-attained knowledge. This is not a bad image per se, but is this what the early Christian community did when they "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching"? Did the 3000 new believers sequester themselves in private chambers to study scriptural implications? Archbishop Rowan Williams (2014, 29) believes not, suggesting:

. . . instead of that picture of the Bible as a book held in the hands of a solitary reader alone in a room, have in your mind another kind of picture, one in which somebody is proclaiming God's story to a gathering of diverse people – and all of them asking themselves, and asking one another 'How do we find ourselves in this? How are we going to be renewed together by this reading?

Luke's description of the Christian community being devoted to the apostles' teaching is a description of a communal formational practice. *Hearing* the apostles' teaching, as opposed to merely *reading* it, highlights the communal nature of this discipline. For the early church, devotion to the apostles' teaching in an individualistic manner would seem nonsensical. Teaching occurred before a community that gathered to listen. In fact, the practice of silent reading, while the normal practice of individuals today did not become common until the 10th century (Studzinski 2009, chap. 1). Until this point, the discipline of reading had a communal and social element. One engaged with the scriptural witness only in the context of the larger community of faith.

The consequence of such an informational understanding of scripture is that it presupposes that one can be in control of the Biblical word. “We bring it under *our* control. Having done this, we then seek to justify our control (interpretation) and defend it against other controls (interpretations), so we can use the information to impose our agenda on the world” (Mulholland 2000, 52). Such an attitude denies that devotion to the apostle teaching is a matter of listening, not simply learning. As Williams (2014, 21) notes, “The Christian life is a listening life” and the “Bible is a book heard more than it is read.” When the goal of the apostles’ teaching is merely the imparting of gospel-based knowledge, scripture becomes a tool that is used, not a word to be received. This denies the fundamental posture of discipleship, which is to sit under the spoken word, to listen and receive.

The apostles’ teaching is not merely the theological information held by the community; it is that which forms the community. In fact, Hawkins and Parkinson (2004, 117) declare that a community’s devotion to scripture is the greatest indicator of community spiritual growth. Scripture forms the community itself; the life of the church is inextricably tied to scripture and scripture is the text of the community. Personal reading is but an extension of the primary arena of scriptural meditation, the community of faith. Bianchi (2015, chap.2) writes: “My conviction is that the need to read Scripture in the Spirit flows naturally for the Bible’s centrality in the life of the church. It is a task on which the church’s present and future hinge.” Devotion to the apostles’ teaching, then, occurs as a function of one’s immersion in the community of faith.

As the life of the church is tied to the act of listening to God's voice, mediated through proclaimed scripture, it is important that the community of faith cultivate times of silent listening. At the parish of Holy Cross, this has taken the form of the communal practice of scriptural meditation. Once a month, members of the parish come to listen and meditate on the passage of scripture using the four classic movements of *lectio divina* – listening, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. These evenings are not merely a gathering of individuals. The community gathers and engages in *lectio divina* together. The group then shares what they feel God is saying to the community. For me personally, *lectio divina* still remains an important discipline for my spiritual life, and the effectiveness and importance of the practice has only increased since it has become linked to the wider communal activity. That is, my personal experience of *lectio divina* has deepened as my practice became linked to the devotional life of the church in which I am immersed. The congregational emphasis of *lectio divina*, as practiced at Holy Cross, unites me to the community under a shared devotion to the apostles' teaching.

Interestingly, in his extensive tome *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, Kees Waaijman (2002) equates the contemplative reading of scripture with the liturgical life of the church. Using the popular four-fold structure of *lectio divina*, he remarks that the liturgy of the church is the “contemplative moment *par excellence*” (Waaijman 2002, 145). He draws a direct relationship between contemplative reading and liturgy: “After the readings have been read (*lectio*) in the liturgy of the word, ruminated on by the homily (*meditation*), and

related to God by the prayers, God himself is received as gift in the body of the Messiah (*contemplatio*)” (Waaigman 2002, 145). For Waaigman, the church’s liturgy is a contemplative reading of scripture. Furthermore, he is not alone in this analysis. Boseli (2014, chap.7) also writes:

the liturgical texts of the Missal are the mature fruit of the church’s reception of the Scriptures. They are the purest essence of the church’s reflection of the Word of God. For this reason, we can say that the Missal is the result of the *lectio divina* that the church has carried out through the course of its history.

The church’s liturgy is formative because it provides a meditative reflection on the apostles’ teaching.

Lectio divina, which has become a popular discipline in individual formation, is thus a wonderful way to image what communal formation through the apostles’ teaching looks like. In the practice of *lectio divina*, the movement of reading is not focused on understanding the divine word, but on dwelling within it. In hearing the words of scripture, scripture becomes the very atmosphere in which the community gathers. It is the divine word itself that forms the community. Bonhoeffer (2009, 226) claims that “a Christian church-community whether a publicly visible congregation or a house-church is held together by its assembling around the word.” Peterson (2006, 116) notes that as a practice of contemplative reading, “*lectio divina* is not a methodical technique for reading the Bible. It is a cultivated, developed habit of *living* the text in Jesus’ name.” Hearing the text in this contemplative and meditative fashion allows the community to embody it.

In the Anglican tradition, the movement of the liturgy echoes the movement of *lectio divina* in a remarkable way. The liturgy opens with a hearing

of scripture. Standing before the congregation, the Celebrant proclaims, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (ACC 1985, 185). In the BCP, the rubrics indicate that the priest “shall say in an audible voice the Lord’s prayer, with the collect following” (ACC 1962, 67). This is followed by the reading of scripture itself, of which four readings occur; Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament, and Gospel. Each reading contains a requisite liturgical response ensuring that the congregation does not merely hear the word but interacts with it. Upon the hearing of scripture, the newly formed community of faith is invited to respond, and thereby moves to a period of focused meditation.

The purpose of hearing scripture, and being defined by it, is to meditate on that which was spoken and heard. Guigo II’s formulation (2012, Meditation) of *lectio divina* describes meditation this way: “So, the soul approaches the text to meditate on it... It is not enough to just read through the text; meditation must penetrate it, and gazing into all the obscure corners, to get to the heart of it.” Having been formed by the spoken Word, the community enters the divine reality more deeply. Meditation opens the community to the scriptures, inviting the scripture to speak.

Liturgically, this occurs through participation in the sermon, and the recitation of the creeds. The sermon is not just an exposition of the text or a declaration of meaning through an appeal to scholarship or source-criticism. Such things may be helpful in the study of a text and the crafting of a sermon, but the sermon is fundamentally more than a regurgitation of information mined in study.

The sermon is to be a meditation on the scripture, allowing the scripture to unfold its implications upon the gathered congregation. Shields (2008) argues that Acts evidences the formative role of preaching. He writes that “the consistent pattern in the book of Acts and in the apostolic writings is that preaching played a significant role in the renewing of the Christian mind and the spiritual transformation of believers” (Shields 2008, 249). The apostolic witness suggests that the process of listening to sermons involved engagement through prayer and discussion: “Preaching gets people to talk about God and his word” (Shields 2008, 267). Preaching demands dialogue and response. Thus, listening to the declaration of the gospel, either spoken or read, can be described as “an active attending to the sacred text with the hope of discovering what it might be suggesting and a readiness to do what it is asking” (Studzinski 2009, chap.2). Through the ministry of preaching, the community engages the text of Scripture with the intent to be formed by it.

This means that the sermon cannot be understood as something the preacher does alone. The congregation, having been constituted by the word itself, now engages in a corporate meditation, seeking to uncover how the word speaks into their communal lives. Peterson (2006, 99) notes, “As we take the text into ourselves, we find that the text is taking us into itself.” This sense of reading ourselves and our lives becomes a way the congregation “allows the text to soak into us” (Wilhoit and Howard 2012, 79). In listening to a sermon, the congregation engages in such self-examination, as directed by the scripture on which it is meditating. The sermon and the creedal recitation are meditative

moments calling the congregation to a time of prayerful rumination upon the biblical word. In the flow of the liturgy, it is here that the congregation seeks to uncover how they are called to incarnate their faith in Christ. These elements of the liturgy, then, are not simply avenues for exploring the doctrines of the church but are places where the community is called to embody the reality in which they have been constituted, and in which they are continually being formed.

Having gone through a time of immersion in the scriptural word, and having ruminated on that word, the community now enters a time of focused prayer. Liturgically, this is seen primarily through the rites of confession/absolution and the intercessions. Oddly, Waaijman (2002) omits the movement of *oratio* from his contemplative description of the liturgy. This stage of *lectio divina*, however, can be directly seen in his reference to the community “relating to God by the prayers” (Waaijman 2002, 14). In the practice of *lectio divina*, and in the liturgy of the church, the community allows the text of scripture to inform the prayers which are offered at the appropriate time. Howard (2012, 70) claims that “the external word becomes an inner word and text becomes prayer.” In prayer, the community gives expression to the internal workings of the Spirit.

Finally, the stages of *lectio divina* reach their climax in contemplation, wherein the goal is union with God. Wilhoit and Howard (2012, 119) write: “As we contemplate scripture we become aware of our union with God in love.” In contemplation, the community is concerned with being in God’s presence more than performing an activity. This union with the living Word, flowing out of a community’s partaking of that Word, is precisely what occurs through the

Eucharistic celebration. Bianchi points to the eucharist as the grand fulfillment of the community's desire for divine union. Thus, the Eucharist is the chief expression of contemplation. In contemplation, the community of faith becomes, itself, transformed into a body which incarnates the presence of God in the world. Contemplation calls for "getting the text into our muscles and bones, our oxygen-breathing lungs and blood-pumping heart" (Peterson 2006, 109). Furthermore, Bianchi (2015, chap.7) writes:

Contemplation is not an ecstatic state or 'visions.' It is the gradual transformation of our gaze so that it becomes like God's way of seeing. As this happens, we gain a spirit of thanksgiving and compassion, discernment, patience, and peace. Just as the Word points to the Eucharist, so *lectio divina* makes us Eucharistic people.'

In the Eucharist, as well as in contemplation, the community takes in the presence of Christ. The presence of Christ, feasted upon, is that which is incarnated in everyday life. Thus, the goal of contemplation is to work the divine word into the fabric of the community's life and witness. Just as the Eucharistic presence of Christ becomes that which forms one's existence in the world, it is contemplation that allows scripture to maintain a speaking voice amid the structures and activities of daily existence.

There is a deep connection between a contemplative reading of scripture and the life of the Church. Bianchi observes, "The Bible is intrinsically connected to the liturgy" (Bianchi 2015, chap.2). Thus, one can understand the nature of contemplative reading by observing the flow of liturgy, particularly in a Eucharistic rite. The movement from the Liturgy of the Word to the Liturgy of the Eucharist, mirrors the four-fold movement of *lectio divina*: *lectio, meditation,*

oratio, and *contemplatio*. In this way, the Eucharistic rite can also be understood as inherently contemplative; it is a rite aimed at the community's unification with God through immersion in the formative word. Furthermore, "because reading Scripture is an ecclesial act, we cannot approach it as a purely technical issue. We need to talk about it in the context of two broader topics: the life of the church, and what it means to be human" (Bianchi 2015, chap.2). To assert that the contemplative reading of scripture is nothing more than a private practice of biblical meditation essentially denies the very framework in which contemplative reading should occur. Thus, it is my contention that the contemplative reading of scripture should not be removed from the life of the community and the flow of the divine liturgy.

The Fellowship

The second habit through which the community embodies its baptismal identity is devotion to fellowship. Fellowship lies at the centre of community because it forces the individual to recognise the call to common spiritual life. For both Israel and the Church, to be a person of faith was to be a person in a faith community. Calhoun (2015) speaks to this in the opening of her *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, claiming that spiritual disciplines are approached, and engaged in, within the context of community. She writes, "I believe this is the way spiritual disciplines are to be learned. We are to learn them in relationships. . . . For me all these disciplines come with faces and names and times and places" (Calhoun 2015, 23). An individual is formed as he or she is immersed in a formational fellowship.

My own experience echoes this reality. The fellowship provided by the parish I serve, The Anglican Parish of Holy Cross, has been incredibly healing for me. Up to my first year at Holy Cross, I had not realized how much I felt the constant need to prove myself to the church I served, and to the wider diocese. As my father was also in ministry on Vancouver Island, I felt continuously in his shadow. No matter what I did, my ministry was an extension of his. All my successes, insights, or aptitudes were met with an appeal to my father. Because of this, I never felt accepted or valued. This was coupled by a difficult few years in pastoral ministry.

Holy Cross provided me the sense of healing and encouragement I desperately needed. At Holy Cross there was no priestly shadow to fight against, either my father's or that of a previous rector. Here I felt I could stand on my own merits, and fully accept the identity and life into which God was calling me. More importantly, I felt accepted and loved. Gone was the scramble for acceptance in which I lived previously. This was a discovery of submission. I would relinquish myself into the plan and purpose of God. In submission, I found freedom and joy. More importantly, my own sense of confidence in my individuality and identity emerged the more I allowed myself to be caught up in the healing of the fellowship. The more I immersed myself in the community, the more I felt blessed as the individual God had created me to be.

Fellowship is not merely a matter of perception or feeling, it is a reality held by the entire Christian body. Johnston (2008, 80) notes, "The focus on *koinonia*, however, is not so much emotional feeling of community, but the

experiential practice of community.” Fellowship within community, therefore, can embrace brokenness precisely because Fellowship is an embodied reality chosen by the community, rather than an emotional state felt by members of the community. The fellowship of the community is a state in which all members participate. Thus, the fellowship of the community is part of the participatory nature of the church. Johnston (2008, 80) writes: “Used of Christian community, *koinonia* describes mutual participation in one another’s lives and the resulting sense of interpersonal connectedness: first of believers’ fellowship with the triune God . . . and second of believers’ fellowship with one another.” Thus, Paul’s doxology, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship [the *koinonia* - the enmeshing, the participation] of the Holy Spirit be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:14) suggests that fellowship amounts to a participation in each other’s lives and in the Trinitarian reality.

This is pictured most profoundly in the eucharistic liturgy. Paul uses the term *koinonia* to describe the community’s participation in the eucharist. Paul writes “is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation [*koinonia*] in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation [*koinonia*] in the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16). Bonhoeffer (1954, 68) reminds us that “the table fellowship . . . is *our* daily bread that we eat, not my own. We share our bread. Thus, we are firmly bound to one another not only in the Spirit but in our physical being. The *one* bread that is given to our fellowship links us together in a firm covenant.” Fellowship, particularly via the eucharist, calls the Christian to recognise his/her participation in the larger reality of the

worshiping body of the Church. The eucharist does not merely unite us to God through some individual rite of connectivity; it is a communal rite by which the community participates in Christ's resurrection. A community, devoted to fellowship, naturally becomes a community devoted to the Breaking of the Bread, which is the third practice of the baptized community.

The Breaking of the Bread

While Luke specifically mentions the communal devotion to the breaking of the bread, this begs the question, to what does this devotion point? Does it simply refer to the act of communal meals? After all, Luke records that "they broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46). Is this breaking of bread just another instance of fellowship? If this is the case, what would distinguish devotion to fellowship from devotion to breaking of bread? Does the breaking of bread refer solely to the presence of food in a community gathering? Should verse 42 be rendered "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, *eating*, and the prayers"?

The early Christian community celebrated the breaking of bread within the context of a common meal called the agape feast. Paul highlights this form of gathering in his first letter to the Corinthians. Here Paul states that the focal point of the Agape Feast is the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Furthermore, Paul criticizes the Corinthian church for neglecting this essential focus. He writes: "When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk" (1 Corinthians 11:20–21). The Agape Feast, as a shared meal

of the Christian community, was both a re-enactment of the Last Supper as well as a celebration of the Lordship of Jesus. For the Christian community, therefore, the breaking of bread became an action by which the community oriented its life around the person of Jesus Christ.

This is consistent with what is seen in Scripture. Take, for example, Jesus' miraculous provision of food for a crowd numbering over five thousand. Having been presented with fish and bread, Matthew records that Jesus "took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them, and gave them to the disciples" (Matthew 14:19). Furthermore, Luke's account of Jesus journeying to Emmaus with two disciples is another instance of this. Having been invited to stay with the forlorn disciples, Luke describes the scene: "When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them" (Luke 24:30). It was in this moment, the moment of the breaking of bread, that the disciple's eyes were opened, and they recognised Jesus. These passages read eucharistically as Jesus reveals his identity as the bread of life – a truth most fully revealed through the last supper.

These instances in Jesus' ministry prompted the early community to engage in this practice of breaking bread, not as a strict memorial of a past teacher, but as a way through which the community embraced the risen Lord who was present in their midst. The breaking of bread, and the Eucharistic liturgy that formed out of it, became the way the community engaged in "communion" with the presence of the Jesus. "Holy Communion," writes deSilva (2008, 87), "is an expression not only of our being joined inwardly to Christ, but also of our being

knit together with one another into the *people* of the new covenant.” It is in the celebration of Eucharist that the community lives out its identity as the body of Christ to the fullest degree. It is here that the community, joined together in faith, partakes in the presence of God.

In the celebration of the Eucharist, the community is united as the body of Christ through their participation in Christ’s presence. Eucharist has a formative quality because “the congregation itself, if Paul is correct, becomes a symbol of the real presence of Christ” (Willimon 1979, 183). The community receives the body of Christ in order to become the body of Christ in the world. This means that the individual cannot receive the elements of the Eucharist in an individualistic manner. Given this, one can observe the celebration of the Lord’s Supper even if one is not present at the Eucharistic feast. Yet to do this, one must understand the communal nature of the rite, and one’s active participation in the Christian community. St. Theophan the Recluse states:

If it is impossible to go to church, then do not let the hour of the Holy and Divine Sacrifice pass without sighing and turning to God. If possible, stand in prayer and make a few prostrations. . . . At the moment the Divine Sacrifice is celebrated in church, something occurs that is more awesome and greater than anything on earth or heaven; but it occurs invisibly, spiritually, before the face of the infinite Triune God, the holy angels, the entire assembly of the heavenly Church, before the eyes of faith of all who struggle and live on earth. It is invisible, but real nevertheless. Therefore, the believer should not let these moments slip past his attention. When he remembers it, the remembrance alone warms the spirit and enraptures him to God, by which grace is drawn down. (Theophan 2006, 276)

The Lord’s Supper is a communal meal; the breaking of bread binds the community together. DeSilva (2008, 88) argues that “there can be no private Communion, no receiving of Christ without receiving one another as sisters and brothers who have also taken Christ’s life into their lives.” Even when

communion is offered to an individual in the context of hospital or care-home ministry it is always understood as a participation in that which is celebrated by the wider church. These times of eucharistic celebration are extensions of the continuous celebration of Christ's body. Though away from the eucharistic altar, the Christian person still joins in the communal meal via the mystical reality shared by the body of Christ. This mystical reality joins the person's individual action with the wider, ecclesial, activity. This will be explored further in the Morning Prayer study.

It is this lack of communal emphasis which forms the basis of Paul's charge against the Corinthian church. Paul describes the selfish behaviour of the Corinthians as leading them toward "eating and drinking judgement" (1 Corinthians 11:29). This judgement is based on the Corinthians' practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper "without discerning the body" (1 Corinthians 11:29). Paul uses the term "body", here, to refer to the community as the body of Christ. DeSilva (2008, 88) explains: "Eating and drinking worthily or unworthily here is not a matter of our private consciences and preparation, but of our openness to the Spirit's desire to knit us more closely together with our sisters and brothers in Christ around the worldwide table of the Eucharist." Willimon (1979, 170) echoes this argument, and points to the historical context of Paul's letter as support, arguing that the self-focused celebration of the Eucharist is rooted in a pagan understanding of a sacred meal: "They fail to 'discern the body', thinking that the meal is similar to the sacred meals they may have eaten in their former pagan rites, where one achieved personal immortality by gulping down as much

‘heavenly food’ as possible.” Devotion to the breaking of bread is not to “gulp down heavenly food” but to become transformed into the body of Christ through shared participation in the body of Christ.

The presence of Jesus in the celebration of the breaking of bread became uniquely manifest to me during one Maundy Thursday celebration. My wife Alicia had been sick for several months, suffering from intense abdominal pain. We made several trips to the emergency room, as Alicia would often wake up crying. The doctors ran tests and confirmed that there was an abdominal growth – however they assured us that such a growth was quite common and there was nothing to worry about. Normally, they stated, the natural course of time sees the growth decrease in size, until finally it disappears. However, if that didn’t happen, or if it didn’t happen quickly enough, a simple surgery could be performed to remove the tumor. Alicia and I opted to have the surgery done as quickly as possible, as this pain was restrictive to Alicia’s life and work. She had been off work for several weeks and the pain she experienced would often leave her in tears.

In those times, I prayed deeply for Alicia. During my evening prayers I constantly held her before the Lord, for comfort and healing. There were wonderful moments of grace that descended upon us during this time. After several nights of restless sleep, I would pray that God bless Alicia with one night of deep rest – a night where she would not wake in pain. In God’s loving grace, God would answer this request. Alicia would have a restful night, and wake with a sense of renewed life and energy.

The surgery date came and went. There were no complications with the removal of the growth. Alicia and I prayed together prior to the surgery and I anointed her with oil for healing. It appeared that, finally, this difficult stage of life would be over. Six weeks of post-surgery recovery were all that remained before our lives could get back to normal. All the way along, the doctors had assured us that the mass in Alicia's abdomen was benign. Each doctor we saw confirmed that the mass did not 'behave' like a cancerous growth, and they were 'certain' that it was simply a growth which was pain inducing, but relatively harmless. As per routine, a biopsy was done upon the mass after Alicia's surgery. Upon obtaining the results, Alicia's surgeon immediately called to inform us that after three separate tests, the pathologist confirmed that, despite what everyone had been saying, the growth was a rare form of cancer. We were being referred to the Cancer Center for follow up.

The news hit both my wife and I very hard. As much as I had grown up with my own health-related issues, I never considered my condition "life-threatening." Yet, cancer was different than my odd-but-manageable heart condition. We had both known individuals who had died from cancer, despite all the treatments and drugs. It was like a big question mark had been placed over our future. We could think of nothing in the future, for everything was masked by a cancerous haze. The news consumed everything: vacation plans were cancelled, birthday celebrations would be minimal, Alicia's work, along with the upcoming promotion that would be offered to her came to a grinding halt, and my enrollment in a Doctor of Ministry program (a program I felt very much led into)

was now in question. It was as if there was no footing for us. We felt sad, angry, and confused. It was not so much that our life was now going in a new direction, it was more that our life seemed directionless. We had hit a dead end, and we could see no way through.

Alicia and I made our way to the Cancer Centre a few weeks after the initial news of her diagnosis. The news had sunk in and we began to live out some semblance of life's normalcy. I was tentatively confident that Alicia's surgery had removed all the cancer cells, so I was hopeful that Alicia would not need prolonged treatment. We both believed that we were going to the Cancer Centre to speak in general terms about Alicia's follow up procedures. Would she need a CT scans every 3 months? Would they recommend any medication? Surely chemotherapy wasn't necessary, was it? We sat in the small exam room, waiting for the oncologist. I could feel Alicia's nervousness about what the doctor would say. I tried to be calm and supportive – but internally, I felt lost and confused. The doctor came in and spoke the news that neither Alicia nor I wanted to hear. It was recommended that she undergo six months of chemotherapy. She would have to go on long-term disability and be off work for a year. Her hair would fall out, her energy would be depleted to the point of non-existence, she would most likely vomit continuously. The doctor then presented Alicia with some paperwork: *Sign this. You start next week.*

The day we met with the oncologist was Maundy Thursday. The fact that, as I sat with my wife, weeping in the exam room, the church was gathering for our annual Seder supper is a profound image of how distant I felt from the life I

previously knew. Maundy Thursday has always been my favorite liturgical service of the year. I love the contrast involved in celebrating the Eucharist, followed by the removal of all decorations and beauty. On that night the church is left an empty shell. For me it is a reminder of how the very life and heart of my faith is ripped away, if I disregard the resurrected presence of the Lord. It is not just that my faith would be different – it is that it would not exist. During the stripping of the church I am stripped of my vestments; I take off my collar and I go sit in the pews. Without the resurrection, I would not exist as priest. We end the service, hopefully, in uncomfortable silence, bearing the news that the very life and soul of ourselves, and the church we love, has been put to death.

Of course, these theological thoughts are easy when you sit comfortably in the prayer-desk, never having truly walked the road of suffering and emptiness. In the past, I would enter my uncomfortable reflections, feeling appropriately subdued and contemplative. But it was safe and easy. This year was different. I had known I would miss the Seder supper, based primarily on the timing of Alicia's appointment, and thus I had arranged for someone to take my place at the dinner. Yet, Maundy Thursday is my favorite service, and so I had agreed to be present at the evening service. I drove Alicia home from the Cancer Center, having just been given the appointment for her first chemotherapy treatment, turned around, and arrived at the church roughly 20 minutes prior to the beginning of the service.

I felt as if I stumbled through the service, my words and prayers being spoken from a place of hollowness. We did the foot-washing, and again, I seemed

to simply go through the actions. Inside, I felt a definite disconnect between who I was and who I was to be at the church. It was as if the church was expecting ministry as normal. Yet, they did not know what had just occurred; they did not know that everything in my own life had changed, and that I was not the same person.

This feeling of disconnect changed, however, as I stood celebrating the Eucharist. Behind the altar, I spoke the words that have become so familiar: “this is my body given for you,” “this is my blood shed for you”. As I spoke these words, I heard them echoed back to me, as if Jesus himself whispered the words to me from the liminal spaces of the church. In that moment, I began to cry. This was the reason for Christ’s sacrifice. It was as if I heard Jesus say: *“into the fear of what comes next, into the awaiting pain, into the vomiting and the constant sickness, into the crushing weight of chemo drugs and cancer treatments, my body is given for you, and my blood is shed for you. Into all those dark places I come. You are not alone.”*

It is into a world of lostness and confusion, one where we feel sometimes powerless against the dark things that crash down upon us, that Christ comes and offers himself. In his sacrifice, Jesus enters the places of our inner and outer darkness. As we reach our hands out to receive him once again in bread and wine, we do so not from palaces of ease and comfort, but from the place of agony and heart-wrenching need. Jesus instituted the Eucharist precisely for the times when we stand in the church and feel completely hollow inside, when we feel apart from God’s presence and call.

There, standing behind the altar, I knew I was exactly where I needed to be. The stress, confusion, sadness and anger that so forcefully consumed me did not discredit my priestly identity or remove me from who I was to be in that place. In that moment I was met by Jesus and filled with his love and grace. In that moment, I knew that, while the road ahead would be long and difficult, Christ surrounded Alicia and I, and the power of his resurrection was offered for the road we were walking. Behind that altar, hearing the words of Jesus, I was reminded that our lives were an extension of the very community that we loved, and who loved us. There were no solutions offered, but there was peace.

The Eucharist is fundamentally counter-cultural. Just as the celebration of the Lord's Supper directly contradicted the pagan individualism of the day, similarly, a re-emphasis of the communal nature of the Eucharist can help root spiritual formation in its appropriately communal context. As Wood (1999, 34) states: "The Eucharist is the visible, sacramental sign of all the baptized in communion in the body of Christ within a concrete community that experiences its identity as the body of Christ." The Eucharist thus becomes one of the principle ways of embodying communal identity.

The Prayers

Like all other disciplines, prayer is fundamentally a corporate exercise. Archbishop Rowan Williams (2014, 73) advises, "Prayer is not a narrowly private activity; it is about your *belonging* in the body of Christ, and in the family of humanity." For the community of the baptized, this devotion to communal prayer was expressed primarily through the fixed-hour prayers tradition. We see this

most clearly expressed in Jesus' exhortation against the Pharisees in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus states that the Pharisees love to "pray standing in the synagogue or on the street corners to be seen by others" (Matthew 6:5). This is a reference to the Jewish notion of a set time of prayer. This set time would be faithfully observed by pious Jews, who would stop what they were doing to observe a time of prayer (Arnold 2002, 44). Speaking about this practice, McKnight (2006, chap.3) observes:

Jews at the time of Jesus measured time in a variety of ways – none of them by a clock. There were Morning Prayers and late afternoon prayers and evening prayers, each of which was tied somehow to the worship of the temple. Time was not rooted simply in the economic system or in meal routines but more fundamentally by the temple's worship. Imagine a clock that did not say "3 PM" but "afternoon sacrifice."

Jesus' critique of the pharisaical use of these set times of prayer evidences that this discipline was well established and practiced among the Jewish people of his day. Jesus does not critique the practice of fixed-hour prayer but the twisting of the discipline. In doing so, Jesus affirms the importance of such a rhythm of prayer. The early community retained this fundamental practice. Luke records that the community was "continually in the temple blessing God" (Luke 24:47).

Fixed hour prayer for the early Christians, and liturgically based "hours" of prayer today, grounds the community in a communal reality. One does not enter a fixed hour of prayer alone – rather one joins a community of activity. McKnight (2006, chap.1) argues that it is joining together in prayer across physical space that lies at the centre of the fixed hour rhythm:

The communion of the saints revolves around a life of prayer and worship and service and love – for all times, world without end. Alleluia. Amen. So, the reason we need to get out of our Portiuncola is that the Church is

praying, too, and it asks us to join in the eternal chorus of praise and confession and worship and thanksgiving.

Fixed hour prayer is inherently communal. Just as the community incorporates a recognition of the “cloud of witnesses”, so too in fixed hour prayer, one is called to recognize personal prayers as a participation in the prayerful activity of the wider church. Devotion to prayer, therefore, cannot be equated to simply “saying my prayers” for it calls for a deeper acknowledgement in communal reality.

It is for this reason that Law (2011) understands communal prayer as the very outworking of a community’s intention to live the devout and holy life. As Law was a devout Anglican, his depiction of a life of prayer is structured on the daily office, and the concluding chapters of his book follow the divine hours from Morning Prayer through to Compline. The daily office is a way the Christian community maintains devotion to prayer.

This is a discipline the Anglican Church has continually endorsed, yet seldom follows through on. The rubric for the daily office says “All priests and deacons, unless prevented by sickness or urgency, are to say daily the morning and evening prayer either privately or openly in the church. If the latter case, it is desirable that a bell be rung in order that the people may come and take part in the service, or lift their hearts up before God in the midst of their occupations” (ACC 1962, lvi). This rubric is akin to what St. Theophan the Recluse says about the Eucharist. By stopping and acknowledging the time of prayer, the individual participates in the corporate activity of prayer. Although unable to attend the daily office themselves, they remain part of the mystical company in prayer. The recovery of this discipline is important if the community of faith wishes to engage

corporate spiritual formation. It is not enough for the individuals within community to cultivate a solitary prayer life; the community must be together at prayer.

My own experience with prayer has been a continuing move towards a deeper embodiment in the daily office. The disciplines of morning and evening prayer have become formational for my prayer life. There are two events that stand out. For most of my life, prayer has been a struggle. I had never had a defined prayer life, or had I ever sought one. Prayer was something I deeply valued, but was never confident in. No matter how much I attempted to cultivate my own prayer life, my time in prayer simply spoke condemningly of how often I failed at prayer. There were blessed seasons during which I would dive deeply into prayer, and my prayer life would be alive and vibrant. I would spend afternoons praying deeply in the church. Yet such times were never sustained, and certainly not regular occurrences. Furthermore, despite the call for Anglican clergy to engage in the daily office, I rejected this as a past requirement of an overly structured religiosity. I turned my nose up at the notion of the daily office as a helpful practice of prayer.

One summer afternoon in 2014, I went to my local Starbucks for a time of reading. I have never had a problem reading in crowded coffee-shop. Yet, on this one occasion, the noise seemed overwhelming. Each person's voice made their way into me, upsetting my sense of calm. It was as if all the noise was aimed at disrupting my inner spirit. I felt irritated by the conversations around me. The noise of the coffeemakers seemed overly loud. With each passing moment, I

became more and more flustered. Irritation swept over me, to the point that I wanted to stand up and scream at everyone to simply be quiet. It was then I heard a voice break through all the noise: “*This is how it is within you.*” With that, the noise of the place subsided. I no longer felt bothered by the conversations or the whirring of the machines. Still, I had to exit the place. I felt the need to find a place which would in some sense match the internal quietness that I wanted to cultivate. I journeyed to a nearby park and sat on a bench away from anyone else. The breeze was cool and serene. After spending a brief time in prayer, I picked up my book and started to read where I had left off. As it happened, the book was *Sanctuary of the Soul: Journey into Meditative Prayer* by Richard J. Foster. The passage which I had attempted to read at the coffee shop declared:

Are we present where we are? Sadly, we have to admit that often we are far removed from where we are. Perhaps our mind is stewing over a problem at the office when we should be attentive to our kids. Or we are mentally and emotionally off on a fishing trip when we should be attending to the people around us. Or when we start to pray, we are anywhere but in the presence of God. Recollection is that aspect of meditative prayer that can help draw us more fully into the place where we are. As this becomes a pattern of life, we will find ourselves more alive, more united and whole. (Foster 2011, 68)

God had acted to illuminate a new dynamic in my walk of faith. A sense of calm and internal quietness moved over me. I began to see how internally frenetic I was. Yet more than that, the franticness of my soul was based on the need to link my prayer life into an over arching structure of some kind. Although Foster does not mention the daily office, or fixed-hour prayer, I felt the desire to have my prayers be more than an attempt at personal spirituality or piety. I needed my prayers to participate in a larger activity. My voice needed to be part of the prayers of the church. The next morning, I picked up the BAS and began to work

my way through the morning office. The words on the page did not appear lifeless, or devoid of emotion. Rather, they seemed to unlock what my soul had been longing to pray. Rather than limiting my prayers, the daily office released them.

The second occurrence of the call to structured, fixed-hour prayer was a few months later as I was working in my office. Suddenly I felt an urge to do mid-day prayers. I sat at my prayer-desk, with my prayer book before me, praying the liturgy. As I prayed, I prayed for a family in the parish. Mary was at the hospital giving birth to twin boys. I had previously walked with Joel and Mary through their struggle to conceive and had sat with them as they expressed their anger at God, and their profound feelings of disappointment. I then rejoiced with them when they finally learned they would be having their second and third child. This couple had been in my constant prayers.

As I sat at the prayer-desk, I started to pray for Mary and the boys. I prayed for a safe delivery, for the health for all involved, and for the attentive care of the doctors and nurses. Then, almost as a surge, there was an intense feeling that I ought to pray for the children's breathing. As I started, a rush of prayer poured out. It felt as if the prayer was being pushed out of me by some force within. I asked Jesus to help the boys breathe deeply. I prayed that if there was anything obstructing the breathing, any restriction, block, or damage, that Christ's mighty hand clear it and allow the children to breathe as they should. I prayed specifically that the children give that important first cry.

Later that day Joel stopped by the church to give me a report about the birth of the twins. He told me that when Charles (the younger of the twins) was born, he had difficulty breathing. Joel spoke of how the nurses took Charles immediately from Mary, moved him to a nearby table, and began to check him out. All Joel could do was stand there, trying to look calm and serene. Inwardly, he reported, he was getting more and more nervous as moment after moment passed and no cries came. The nurses huddled over Charles for seven minutes, with no cries coming from the newborn. Joel could see Charles lying limp on the table. Joel was preparing himself to comfort his wife over the news that Charles had been stillborn when, finally, miraculously, Charles burst out crying. I thought of my prayers in the church and inquired when the boys were born. Sure enough, the boys were born at the very time I was praying in the church.

The above situation shows the mystical tie between an individual's prayers and the common life of the community of faith. The common liturgical prayer of the church is powerful and effective because it ties the members of the body together. Targoff (2011, 88) colourfully describes extemporaneous prayer as "a form of devotional sloth" because such prayers are rooted in the lone voice of the individual. The common prayer of the church, rather, contains the voice of the church communal. Targoff points to Donne (1962, 50), who preached:

Let us [not] speak to him in *oration solute*; not *pray*, not *preach*, not *hear*, slackly, suddenly, unadvisedly, extemporally, occasionally, indiligently; but let all our speech to him be weighted, and measured in the weights of the Sanctuary, let us be content . . .to pray in those forms which the Church hath mediated for us, and recommended to us.

Instead of limiting one's involvement in prayer, Donne saw the prayers of the church serving to release the individual in prayer. Liturgy provides both the

structure and the language of prayer, thus ushering the individual into a deeper experience. Donne (1962, 50) believed that extemporaneous prayer could be “subject to falsification,” whereas the liturgy of the church was based on sound biblical reflection. Furthermore, the liturgy also connected the individual with the communal activity of the church in prayer. The individual discovers personal prayer by way of the prayer of the church. Thus, Targoff (2001, 88) advocates that “there should be no distinction between the petitions of the self and those of the church.” This was my experience with the daily office. The daily office did not limit my prayerfulness or dry up my prayers under routine observance. In fact, it was precisely the discipline of saying the unchanging prayers each morning that moved me to a deeper level of my own prayerfulness.

For the church to be devoted to the prayers, the church must unite around common prayer. The daily office functions in this way. “The aim and intention of Morning and Evening Prayer,” writes liturgist Stephen Platten (2017, 113), “was to fashion a pattern of liturgical prayer which would be accessible and a realistic pattern for all who would form their lives after the likeness of Christ.” This was my experience with entering devotion to the prayers of the church through the discipline of Morning Prayer. Given my own experience with Morning Prayer as the mechanism for entering the prayerful devotion of the church community, I was intrigued to see if this would be experienced by others. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself, I researched this in my own parish.

Luke makes clear that this four-fold embodiment leads to the community’s continuous growth in mission and ministry. Individuals, responding to the truth of

the gospel, did not merely take up privatized practices of behaviour; rather they were immersed in a community who shared a particular way of life. Multiple disciplines could be mentioned as illustrations for how a community may embody its baptismal existence (see Appendix A for a further discussion), yet the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and prayers are the four main mechanism through which such embodiment occurs. These four disciplines, therefore, became the means through which the individual participated in the communal formation of Christ's body.

CHAPTER 5

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY

The four devotional practices mentioned by Luke in the book of Acts (the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer) are the means by which the community of faith is formed in Christlikeness. Of these four, the first three are unmistakably communal. Prayer, however, can too easily be seen to be a private and individualised discipline. Yet for Christians, the call to a corporate life in Christ has important implications for an understanding of prayer. The prayer life of the individual is understood as part of the overall prayers of the church. That is, one's individual prayers are a mystical participation in the ongoing prayers of the church. An individualized conception of prayer, however, detaches prayer from the important communal reality. Historian James Dallen (1986, 152) describes how "radical individualization," beginning from the 12th century, effectively "moved people away from the church." He indicates how movement away from the community of faith coincided with an individualization of prayer. Similarly, Bonhoeffer (2009, 186) suggests,

It is a mistaken individualism to rely exclusively on one's own prayer, as if God could not take an intercession as seriously as any kind of prayer; this only demonstrates the perception of prayer as a pious work of the individual, and no understanding of the idea that the church-community leads a single life in Christ.

Both authors articulate the need for the individual to retain a link to the church community as an expression of health, spirituality, and prayer.

The Anglican tradition has much to offer in this regard, as Anglicanism assumes a corporate prayerfulness practiced in common life. The prayer life of the church does not end at the close of Sunday Service. The prayer life of the devout Anglican is a continuous involvement in the liturgical prayer of the Church. Historically, this was most evident through the faithful practice of the daily office through the BCP. Similarly, the contemporary liturgy for Canadian Anglicans, the BAS, maintains this emphasis on the importance of the daily office as an expression of corporate spirituality. In the BAS, the introduction to Morning Prayer states,

Although the worship of the Church in its earliest period was rooted primarily in the weekly gathering of the community for the reading of scriptures, prayer, and the breaking of bread, Christians were expected to pray at other times as well. Early mornings and the hour of rest were regarded as particularly important opportunities for private devotions. (ACC 1985, 36)

While prayer is an important element in the formation of individual spirituality, the liturgical books of Anglicanism depict prayer as corporate activity. The daily office, therefore, is an important expression of a corporate life and spirituality. Engagement with the daily office is an important discipline through which Anglicans live out corporate prayerfulness.

Sadly, the prayerful discipline of Morning Prayer has become a faint memory today, thus betraying a core principle in Anglican spirituality. Too often, the corporate dimension of prayer is lost, replaced by more solitary and individualistic expressions. This movement away from a daily participation in shared liturgy creates a privatisation of prayer, one that divorces the individual

Anglican from the historical spirituality that lies at the basis of the Anglican tradition itself.

As noted, participation in the communal liturgy of Morning Prayer has greatly enhanced my own prayer life. I often find myself deeper in prayer when I recognise that my individual prayers join the prayers of the wider church. Given my own experience, I endeavored to explore whether a re-introduction of Morning Prayer to a small group within my church would increase participation in a corporate spirituality. I anticipated that the shared liturgy of Morning Prayer would be the mechanism through which community formation would be experienced. That is, participants would experience the liturgy of Morning Prayer as increasing their participation in the prayers of the church corporate. It is my contention that the recovery of this discipline lends an important caution against the increased individualism within the church today. It is not enough for the individuals within community to cultivate a solitary prayer life; the community must be together at prayer. In the Anglican context, the daily office is an important tool for embracing this corporate reality.

Research Project

The research project was designed to investigate whether the discipline of praying the office of Morning Prayer would increase a person's experience of corporate spiritual formation. An important element of the study was the specific Anglican context of the study itself. Beyond the specific nuances pertaining to parishioners of Holy Cross, the study involved a group of faithful Anglicans engaging in Morning Prayer from an authorised Anglican prayer book. As the

research was designed to investigate a distinctly Anglican approach to communal spirituality and common prayer, the wider context of Anglican polity and theology is important. (See Appendix B for a more detailed look at the context of the study).

The Morning Prayer study engaged a purposive sample of parishioners, drawn from a general invitation to participate in the study (Appendix C). Volunteers were asked to engage in the office of Morning Prayer each weekday morning for a period of ten weeks (Appendix D). Participants were given a copy of the BAS along with a detailed list of the scripture readings for each day. Additionally, the first group session (which began the research study) trained the participants in how to navigate the Morning Prayer liturgy. An overview of the requirements of participation and a basic theology detailing the importance of the daily office within Anglican spirituality also occurred during this first group session (Appendix E). Furthermore, I outlined the various reporting requirements of the study and expressed that confidentiality would be kept in all discussions, and in the reporting of the data. Question, clarifications, or problems with the study were addressed as needed during personal conversations and the two group discussions. Participants received, and signed, a letter of informed consent prior to officially engaging in the study (Appendix F).

The participants of the study were all active members of the church, although each participant's personal identification with Anglicanism varied significantly. Length of Anglican identification span from as little as seven years, to more than seventy years in active attendance at an Anglican Church. Similarly,

while ten of the participants grew up in an active Christian home, two of the participants came to faith particularly through the ministry at Holy Cross within the last seven years. In addition to this variation in participants experience with Anglicanism, there was a wide variation in participants' knowledge of church, the biblical text, and the way of prayer. Roughly half of the participants had a previous working knowledge of the liturgy of Morning Prayer, while the other half saw this liturgical office as something completely new. There were nine women and three men in the study. Half of the participants were retired, and two of the participants were younger parents with teenagers and younger children at home.

The corporate nature of the daily office was specifically highlighted throughout the study. Although the study investigated the rise of community formation through participation in Morning Prayer, participants engaged in the office of Morning Prayer at their own home, and at a time that was most convenient for them. This was an important element in the study. While the importance of praying in the morning was emphasized (after all this was the *Morning Prayer* study), standardizing the location and time of Morning Prayer was not a part of the study, as it was believed it would adversely affect the ability of some volunteers to participate. More to the point, however, it is my contention that engagement in shared liturgy creates a mystical participation in a communal practice. Thus, it was important to see if participants experienced the reality of community formation as they said their prayers at home and at different times throughout the morning.

The Morning Prayer study used a Narrative Research methodology to explore how each participant experienced communal spirituality through the practice of Morning Prayer. Narrative research is designed to examine an individual's "lived experiences" (Sensing 2011, 157). Furthermore, narrative research encourages "the exposure of both information and interpretation [as] an appropriate means by which researchers can examine their beliefs and practices" (Sensing 2011, 158). Sensing also describes how narrative research is useful in gathering a "life history of a corporate body rather than an individual" (Sensing 2011, 159). These elements made this methodology the perfect tool for both ministry and research.

The Morning Prayer Study used four principle tools for data collection. Firstly, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding their present experience of prayer (Appendix G). Participants were asked to describe their prior experience of Morning Prayer, the frequency of liturgical prayers, the overall sense of God's presence, and their perceived sense of connection with the life and ministry of the wider church. The same questionnaire, with slight augmentation, was given at the middle and the conclusion of the study (Appendix H). I assessed the data by comparing the three questionnaires and highlighting the occurrence of community-laden terminology (e.g., community, church, fellowship, liturgy, Morning Prayer) in the individual responses.

Secondly, those in the study were also required to submit a weekly journal entry. These journal submissions contained participants' own self-reflection on their experience of Morning Prayer. The frequency of community-laden

terminology was the interpretive tool used for analysis of these journal submissions. The journal entries were structured around three unchanging questions:

- Was there a day/days when you were not able to attend to Morning Prayer? If so why?
- Please describe your experience of Morning Prayer over the past week.
- Important to Morning Prayer is the communal aspect of the office. Through Morning Prayer you join in an activity of the church. Please reflect on how you have experienced this communal reality through your practice of Morning Prayer.

These questions were intentionally open ended. The third question was written specifically to serve as a “teaching tool”, intended to guide the participants into reflecting on the communal nature of Morning Prayer and their life in Christ.

Thirdly, I guided two group-discussions, one at the mid-point and one at the conclusion of the study. These guided discussions were a time of mutual edification and sharing regarding each participant’s experience of Morning Prayer. The sharing of personal stories and experiences was an important element in the study, for it reinforced the underlying principle of Morning Prayer as a corporate discipline. During these group discussions, I listened for further clarification on the participants’ experience with Morning Prayer, providing necessary prompts to facilitate discussion if/when necessary. I collected data in the form of field notes (Stringer 2014, 110). Through such notes, I recorded my thoughts, observations and impressions of the conversation, noting the specific

words or phrases used throughout discussion. When needed, I performed a “member check” (Stringer 2014, 110) to ensure an accurate recording of the participant’s comment. Field notes also included content gleaned from spontaneous or informal data, used with permission given through verbal consent.

Engaging in qualitative research within the parish I serve involved many ethical considerations. How could my role as researcher infringe on my pastoral responsibilities? Would participants feel obligated or pressured to provide positive responses to questions posed? (Appendix I details the various ethical considerations of the study, and the specific steps taken to alleviate said risks). Ultimately, the trusted relationship I have built with the parishioners in the study is an important element of the study itself. It is this very relationship that increases the benefits to the participants as well as decreases the risks. The risks associated with group sharing, for example, are no greater than experienced by parishioners during regular ministry. Group sharing in the context of Bible studies, prayer groups, and book studies is a familiar practice within the parish and holds no greater risk than participation in regular ministry activities in the church.

To ensure pastoral care of the participants, however, I enlisted the past Bishop of the Diocese as the chaplain of the study. The Bishop’s role was two-fold. Firstly, he oversaw the research to ensure appropriate accountability by myself as both priest of the parish and researcher of the study. I was directly accountable to him in the execution of the research, therefore his role ensured the care and safety of all the participants. The bishop ensured I acted within the

ethical guidelines set out by the Research and Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary and the Tri-Council Policy Statement for Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2). Secondly, he was a resource person for the participants themselves. If a participant had a concern with the execution of the study, or his or her own experience of Morning Prayer, the Bishop was on hand to lend pastoral support and care. Based on the measures taken to limit all risks associated with the study, the study was approved by the Research and Ethics board of Tyndale Seminary on September 21, 2018 (Appendix J).

Research Data

In total, 30 questionnaires and 90 journal submissions were collected throughout the study. Additionally, field notes were written during two group discussions and during several spontaneous conversations. On average, participants submitted seven out of the ten required journal submissions. Full attendance was not achieved in the group conversations. The first gathering saw eight of the twelve participants gathered, while the second gathering included seven participants. The questionnaires, journal submissions, and field notes made up the data on which the findings of the study are based. As the journal submissions were submitted, I used “colour coding” to highlight recurring words and statements occurring across participants (Appendix K). These codes emerged from the data itself. When all journal submissions and questionnaires were coded, five themes emerged from the data, specifically: the development of a habitual practice, positive emotional responses, connection to community, deeper experiences with God, and frustrations.

Development of a Habitual Practice

One of the first themes to clearly emerge from the data pertained to how Morning Prayer became an important and habitual spiritual practice. Prior to beginning the study, the participants had no previous habit of Morning Prayer. The first questionnaire revealed a desire amongst all respondents to develop a more rigorous prayer-life. For example, in response to the initial question: “Please describe how you would like your prayer life to develop through participation in the Morning Prayer Study?”, Lorraine wrote; “I would like my prayer life to become more important as part of my daily activities.” Similarly, Jennifer wrote “I want to make prayer a DAILY habit, a regular HABIT. . . I want to DAILY worship God, not just in times of need or joy, or in a group, but regularly.” Such statements were echoed by all participants. The regularity of the study, with the requirement to pray the daily office each morning, was not seen as a drawback to the study. Participants took part in the study out of a desire to deepen their devotional life and experience a deeper expression of Christian community.

The data revealed that the practice of Morning Prayer established a formative habit for the participants. Figure 4 highlights how, by week five of the study, eight of the twelve participants specifically reported that the practice of Morning Prayer had become an important routine in their lives. So impactful was Morning Prayer on the establishment of a deeper prayer-life, that five of the participants made specific mention of how they prayed the morning office on Saturday and/or Sunday (i.e., days not required for the study).

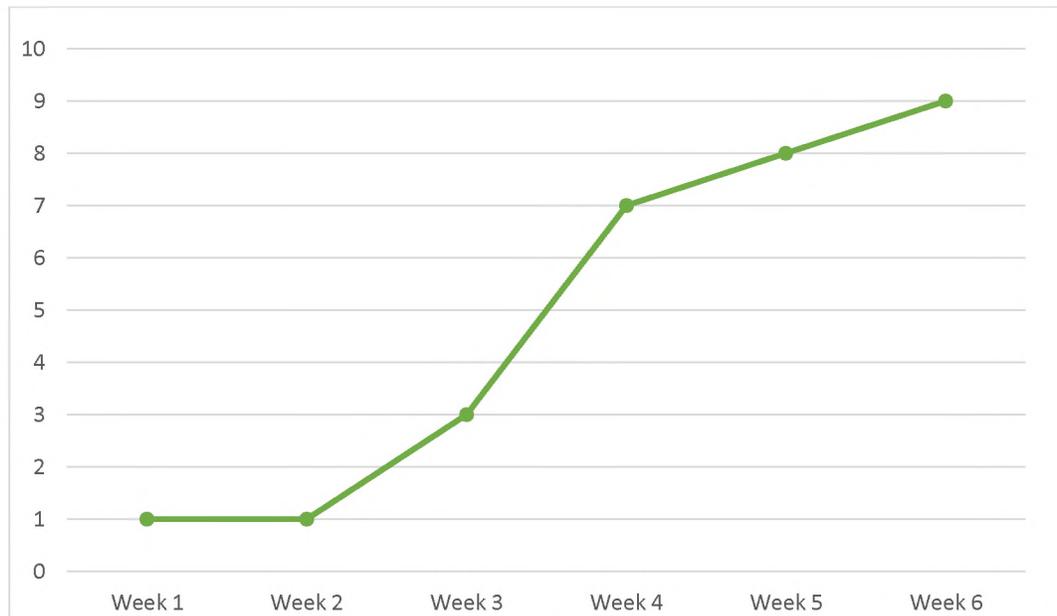


Figure 4. Morning Prayer as viewed as important habit

Some of the most profound narratives regarding the establishment of this habitual practice came from participant reflections on the impact of Morning Prayer on daily tasks and events. At week six, Carl remarked “I believe setting myself apart from my needs and urgent tasks puts distance from the incessant pull of work and racing to meet deadlines and assignments and bills and whatever else beckons. It is sort of making the world stop for a few minutes.” This was echoed by Jackson, who enthusiastically uttered the phrase “Morning Prayer has hacked my morning!” Jackson went on to explain:

The discipline of MP changed my morning routine, which frankly, was getting kind of sad (actually, not kind of sad, but pathetic!). I typically set my alarm for 5:00 am so that I can hit the snooze until 5:30 am. Then the first thing I do is read Twitter and my news feeds on my phone because of FOMO, [fear of missing out] since the last thing that I do before I got to bed is read Twitter and my news feeds... and God alone knows what could have happened in the 7 hours that I was sleeping! I then go make coffee and read Twitter some more.

This week, my routine changed. I set my alarm for 5:15 am and only allowed myself to hit my snooze once. I then got up and allowed myself to read Twitter for the few minutes while my coffee brewed. I then took my coffee into the living room and did MP. That is better way to start the morning.

Even Martha, who reported consistent frustration during many of the weeks, was able to report on week six that she was “thankful for the establishing of the formative practice.” The repetition of this devotional act, even if difficult at first, became an important part of the daily routine of the participants. Carl ended his final questionnaire by stating, “I am looking forward to being able to continue the practice of Morning Prayer.” Additionally, four of the participants independently mentioned to me that they were continuing in the discipline three months after the conclusion of the study.

Morning Prayer was not a dry experience for the participants. From the beginning of the study, participants had emotional responses to the practice of Morning Prayer. As Figure 5 illustrates, words such as “calm,” “happy,” and “peace” were among the most consistent in the journals. The most common emotion expressed in the journals was “enjoyment”; eight of the participants mentioned at some point how they *enjoyed* the experience of Morning Prayer.

Positive Emotional Response

When the data were looked at longitudinally, no significant difference appeared in participants’ mention of enjoyment between early and later weeks of the study. For example, Tina concluded her tenth journal submission by stating, “I have wholeheartedly enjoyed my Morning Prayer and fully intend on continuing with it.” Another wrote in the eighth week about being excited over a sense of

healing that Morning Prayer was providing. This suggests that the benefits of Morning Prayer do not result from a sense of novelty in practicing a new discipline but are drawn from a quality within the rite itself.

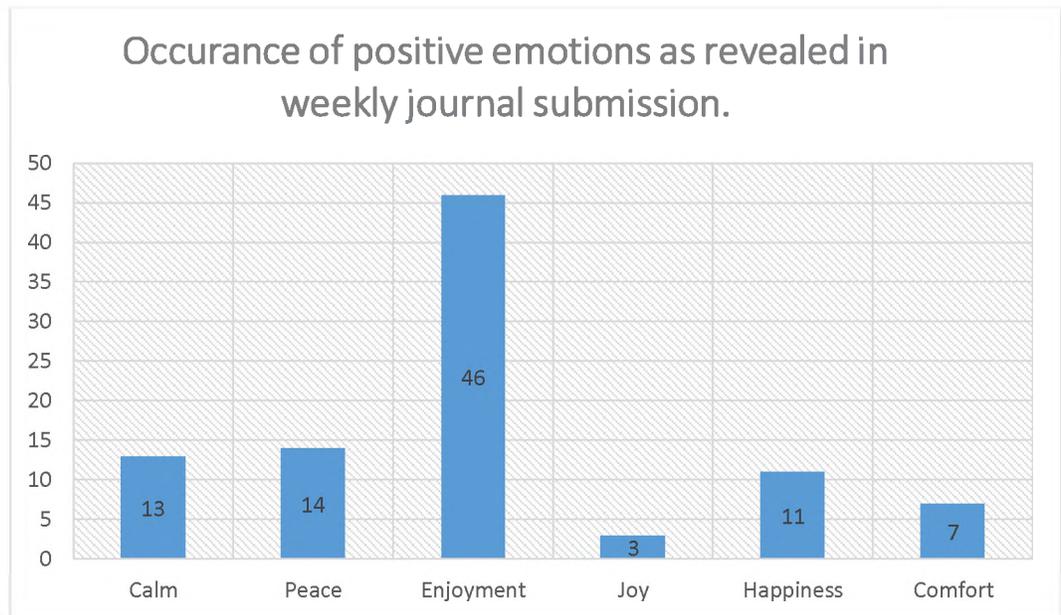


Figure 5. Most common emotions associated with Morning Prayer

Connection with Community

Another strong theme that emerged from the study was a wider awareness of participation in a common spiritual life. This was the theme I was most interested in looking at and was the reason for the entire study. I designed the third journal question to specifically target participants experience with community. The data revealed that participants did, in fact, experience a sense of communal spirituality through involvement with Morning Prayer. However, the data showed that participants expressed this connection with community in various ways, depending on the temperaments of the participants. For example, Lorraine reported on week five “I still feel the calmness of knowing that I am not

alone in my prayers as my church community is praying with me and for me as I am praying for them.” On week nine, Betty wrote:

My sense of community is changing. I thought it was supposed to be the people at Holy Cross. It's not. Yes, the people of Holy Cross are part of my community, but my community is bigger than Holy Cross... with my friends, family (in town and elsewhere), and to some degree, the people I interact with at work.

This sense of community is an important part of the daily office.

Community was not merely seen as part of the content of Morning Prayer. Rather, community was part of the very motivation behind the habit of prayer. That is, the desire to experience a deeper expression of Christian community drove participants to begin, and continue, the discipline of Morning Prayer. Insightfully, Sophia reflected on how an absence of community may have played a part on her previous lack of discipline in a prayer routine. In her first journal entry, she wrote “it just occurred to me that perhaps part of the reason I have had such difficulty being consistent with prayer each day has been because it has been for some time simply a personal action. Apparently, I need the commitment to a community or group to keep to it.” This was echoed by John, who wrote:

As I have been doing the Morning Prayer each day this week, I have found myself thinking about the fact that all of us in the study group are doing the Morning Prayer within probably an hour or so of each other each day. We have been able to share the same prayers and readings each day although we are not physically gathered together at Holy Cross. I hope this communal aspect of the group will help me to make Morning Prayer something I do each morning.

The community of the church was understood to be an aid to these participants' own prayer-life. The participation of others in the study motivated them to continue with the discipline of Morning Prayer and provided a sense of loving connection with the wider church.

The data suggest, however, that while the communal nature of Morning Prayer was understood, it was not always felt. Debbie wrote in week two that she “felt led to pray for individuals and situations in a more passionate way,” yet when asked to comment on her experience of community, she wrote “not sure that I experienced any communal awareness this week.” Similarly, Betty responded in the fourth week that:

At this time, I continue to see this practice as an individual exercise that when done with others across time and space, may lead to a common platform on which to discuss challenges to my faith. My hope is that this seemingly solitary exercise will help transform me and help me see community at the end of the exercise.

In fact, seven of the participants described moments during their experience of Morning Prayer where they felt little sense of community. The fact that Morning Prayer was said at home, and not in the company of others, was often cited as the reason for a lack of community awareness. This lack of communal “feeling” was less frequently reported in the later weeks of the study. The occasional struggle to feel the presence of Christian community within the individual discipline of Morning Prayer, however, does not discount the strong connection between the individual discipline and community formation. Furthermore, the fact that participants did not always feel a strong impression of community through the discipline of Morning Prayer is actually an important factor in the engagement of the discipline, as will be discussed in the analysis of the data.

Deeper Experience of God

The most frequently occurring theme in terms of representative data was people’s experience of God in their life. This is not surprising as this was an

expected benefit of participation in the study (see Appendix F). Statistically, 100% of participants described feelings of divine closeness in all journal submissions, questionnaire responses, and conversations. This result was not surprising given the dedicated time each participant spent in scripture reading and prayer. The data showed that each participant reflected on God's presence in their life in unique ways. In one emotional journal entry, Tina wrote:

There were no days that I did not read my Morning Prayer, but there was a day that was very difficult to get through, but with the help of the Lord I made it through. I cried on one day through my entire reading due to some emotional problems that I was going through. But knowing the Lord was with me, even though I was reading through my tears, I knew then I needed him more than ever. The rest of the week I really needed the Lord and my Morning Prayer reminded me that he was there with me and I was not alone.

Other comments were more general in nature, reflecting an increased awareness of "God's presence" (John) or a feeling of the "Lord's help" (Debbie).

Participants encountered God's presence in ways meaningful for their personal situation. No consistent pattern emerged from the data as to which weeks produced a higher experience of God's presence.

Frustrations

Participants' experience with Morning Prayer was fraught with frustration and challenge. We have already seen how connection to communal spirituality was not always felt. Similarly, despite the overwhelmingly positive effects of Morning Prayer, all participants reported times when they felt the practice produced frustrations within them. These frustrations occurred in two ways.

The most common frustration with Morning Prayer centred on the specific readings assigned for the day. All members present during the two group sessions

remarked at how the assigned readings provided an element of frustration with their experience of Morning Prayer. Of course, each participant had a different experience of which reading was the culprit! Jackson reported feeling personally confronted by the readings:

Being [divorced] makes some of the readings in the New Testament cringe inducing for me. And it seemed like we got all of them this week, and I think that was on purpose by the Lectionary writers - which by the time I got to Wednesday was making me very grumpy . . .the sum total of my readings in the NT this week was that I am an adulterous sack of shit.

In total, eight of the participants pointed to the lectionary texts as a source of some frustration.

Another source of frustration centred on navigating the liturgical text itself. Six participants expressed frustration over the liturgical text. In her first journal submission, Debbie noted, “I found it a challenge to do the parts of Morning Prayer in the right order.” Tina echoed this, writing, “I find it all a bit confusing.” For two of the participants, this frustration was based on moving away from a previously defined prayer practice. In week four, for example, Martha lamented the loss of a previous practice, writing, “I am missing my quiet prayer time, where I read a specific book of the bible over many weeks, stopping whenever I sensed I needed to listen to what the scriptures verse is saying to me.” The particular frustration regarding the use of the liturgical text waned as the weeks progressed, and by the sixth week, there was no further mention of this frustration.

Analysis of Data

The Morning Prayer Study had a positive effect on participants' frequency and experience of prayer, and their experience of communal formation. The questionnaire at the start of the study revealed that many of the participants felt their prayer life had "stalled" or "grown cold." The study reversed this feeling and replaced the stalled prayer life with a joyful and positive routine. This is evident primarily through the participants' expression of the development of habit, coupled with the reporting of positive emotions. These responses are significant, as participants were not specifically asked to comment on these matters. The journal question was open-ended: "Please describe your experience of Morning Prayer over the past week." The fact that a strong majority of participants noted that Morning Prayer had become an important routine for their life testifies to the positive impact of the discipline. Three interpretations can be drawn from the results.

Morning Prayer Redeems Time

Law (2011, chap.14) suggests that the discipline of Morning Prayer is an act of "redeeming the time." Despite the demands of the day, the interruptions that naturally occur, or the hour in which Morning Prayer is said, the act of attending to prayer becomes a "protest against the busyness of a world enthralled by work and money and the relentless pursuit of the time clock" (McKnight 2006, chap.8). The routine of Morning Prayer draws the community away from the structure and demands of task-oriented existence, and into a life lived on God's

schedule. In some respects, this is a return to an ancient understanding of the day. The habit of Morning Prayer creates an alternate way of living.

While three participants made no mention of viewing Morning Prayer as an important habit, it should be recognised that the journal questions did not specifically ask for this information. The fact that nine of the twelve voluntarily commented on the development of the habit by week six is significant. This is consistent with research showing that habit formation occurs between 18 and 254 days, with an average of 66 days (Lally, Van Jaarsveld, Potts, and Wardle 2010). We cannot assume that the development of a formative habit did not occur in the other participants simply because they did not mention it in journal submissions.

Ultimately, the practice of Morning Prayer changed how the participants engaged with the day before them. Participants used a variety of language to describe how they experienced this change. Carl spoke of being in a new “swim lane”, whereas Tina described herself as “living God’s life.” Jackson finished his final questionnaire by writing “Morning Prayer has given me a new way to navigate [this] adventure. A way to continue into this new reality by focusing my eyes, my ears, my voice, and my breath on what is true – cosmically true.” By the close of the study, many of the participant noted how the discipline of Morning Prayer became the vehicle through which they were ushered into the richer experience of God’s presence. Ultimately, this is the purpose of liturgy, as explained by Rolheiser (2013, 6):

What clear rituals provide is prayer that depends precisely upon something beyond our own energy. The rituals carry us; our tiredness, our inattentiveness, our indifference, and even our occasional distaste. They keep us praying even when we are too tired to muster up our own energy.

Redeeming the time suggests that the discipline of Morning Prayer has a formative power upon how the events of the day are handled and interpreted. Instead of reacting to activity from the place of hectic busyness, the participants entered into the day's demands in a more spiritual, kingdom-oriented manner. As each day became defined by prayer, one inevitably stepped away from the temptation to define life in terms of production, schedules, or any other expectations rooted in a faulty kingdom. For example, in the final questionnaire, John reflected on the formative power of Morning Prayer, writing:

I have been in what feels like a shredder of deadlines, missed expectations, unhappy people, poor job performance and all the anxiety, dis-ease and precariousness that accompany such a milieu. And yet here I am. God has allowed me to be here this morning after all of that...the real gift is that despite the outcome, my acceptance is still there.”

Such a sentiment was echoed by many of the participants. The discipline of Morning Prayer embedded the participants in an alternate manner of living, giving them the ability to view life differently than before.

Morning Prayer Forms Community

While the discipline of Morning Prayer became the vehicle for participants to experience a new dimension of their spiritual lives, it is important to note that this new dimension was a communal spiritual life. That is, redeeming the time away from the demands and tasks of the day embedded the individual in a common spiritual life, shared amidst the members of Christ's body. For example, Dan described how “taking time to do Morning Prayer during the week gave me a connection to the other members of the Holy Cross congregation even though I was not there for... three Sundays.” This is consistent with the communal nature

of the liturgy. As Rolheiser (2013, 27) suggests: “Someone might be praying the Office of the Church alone at home in an armchair, or a priest might be celebrating the Eucharist alone at a kitchen table, and this is still public, liturgical prayer.” Morning Prayer naturally calls the participant to engage in a corporate spirituality.

The increase in communal spirituality is connected to the Morning Prayer’s power toward time-redemption. The individual engaged life differently precisely because the participant engaged in the demands of life as a member of a wider community. On week 7, Lorraine wrote, “Having Morning Prayer in my life and knowing that I truly am part of something, being part of the church community, knowing that I am always welcome, never judged and never alone, has brought so much joy to my heart.” The mystical connection with the community of faith, experienced within Morning Prayer, was carried forward into the tasks and demands of the day.

This mystical connection to the wider Christian community was seen in three different ways. Firstly, participation in Morning Prayer caused participants to spend added time reflecting on their place in the wider community. This was a function of the third journal question, wherein participants were asked to comment on their experience of community. For example, after being unable to attend the mid-point group session, Tina described a sense of connection with the activity of the community. She wrote: “I wasn’t able to make it to our meeting the past week.... But at the same time, I somehow knew or felt that everyone was praying for me and even though I couldn’t be there physically, I was somehow

still there.” Secondly, through reflection on the nature of Christian community, participants recognised and responded to the call to pray for others. This may be drawn from the intercessions within the rite itself which includes a petition to pray for those in need. Journal submissions show this to be a frequent topic of reflection.

This connection to the wider Christian community was most commonly expressed in reference to the intercessions, as participants felt drawn to intercession. For example, Jane reported how she felt “led to pray for individuals and issues in a more passionate attitude.” Throughout the data, intercessions ranged from praying for those within the study itself, praying for the church community, and praying for individuals throughout the world. This shows that the strongest expression of communal spirituality in the daily office occurs in the act of intercession.

Finally, the discipline of Morning Prayer caused participants to recognise how their personal voice was part of the wider concert of ecclesial prayer. That is, participants did not simply spend more time praying for another; rather, participants were led to see how their individual prayers were part of the church’s own activity of prayer. One prayed as a member of Christ’s body, and not solely as an isolated person. Jackson wrote:

thinking of the tens of millions of people that have said it through the centuries in multitudes of languages, has made the prayer experience more real, more connected, and humbling. I especially think about that when I say the Lord’s Prayer. I think about the 2000 years in which all Christians have said this prayer, and how many times those words must have reached God’s ears - trillions? Tens of trillions? That thoughts adds focus when I say that prayer at the end of MP.

The increased frequency of prayer inherent in the liturgical routine lent itself to a deeper acknowledgement of corporate prayer. The practice of Morning Prayer, even when said alone in one's house, amounts to a participation in the prayerful activity of the church. This communal prayer is expressed through the plural language used within the rite. "The replacement of 'my' with 'our' and 'me' with 'us' suggests a subtle but important difference in the relationship between individual and corporate speech" (Rolheiser 2013, 29). This reality was not lost on Martha, who specifically noted this as important to her experience of community within Morning Prayer. "Feeling the connection [with others in Morning Prayer], I found myself praying for them. I am getting more comfortable in using the 'we' and 'us' instead of 'I' and 'me.'" The discipline of Morning Prayer pushed this participant to explore her connection to the wider community and testify to the positive effect the discipline of Morning Prayer had on a communal spiritual formation.

Morning Prayer Challenges Complacency

The frustrations felt within participants' experience of Morning Prayer is not a negative occurrence. That is, the fact that participants experienced a sense of frustration with the scriptures, the liturgical text, or with the lack of communal "feeling" is an important challenge implicit in the discipline of fixed-hour prayer. In fact, this experience of frustration is one of the by-products of engaging in a spiritual habit or discipline. Morning Prayer challenges the individual to move past a myopic, self-pleasing understanding of prayer and join the ecclesial

activity. Frustration occurs as the liturgy challenges the prayerful community to move past a prayer that is safe. Rolheiser (2013, 3) has a helpful word:

We nurse a naïve fantasy both about what constitutes prayer and how we might sustain ourselves in it. What often lies at the center of this misguided notion is the belief that prayer is always meant to be interesting, warm, bringing spiritual insight, and giving the sense that we are actually praying.

It is the very purpose of the Morning Prayer to challenge the individual to push past the desire to simply fill devotional times with messages and readings of one's liking. The individual attending to Morning Prayer cannot merely rest upon favourite passages or hobby-horse intercessions. For the individual saying Morning Prayer in one's own home, the discipline challenges them to place themselves before the God who confronts and challenges. In this way it is the very purpose of Morning Prayer to exert a certain amount of frustration.

This challenge is also attributive to the lack of consistent "feeling" of community. As much as Morning Prayer is an engagement with communal spirituality, this connection with the wider community does not always ensure a concrete recognition. Community is not merely something that is felt; rather it is a reality in which the individual is immersed. To be a part of community is to choose community, even when one cannot feel the effects of common life in the moment. Thus, affirming that the individual engages in an ecclesial activity through the discipline of Morning Prayer is not the same as affirming that the individual will consistently feel the presence of the community. Community is a mystical reality that exists despite its apparent absence. The frustration of not "feeling" community, therefore, calls the individual to recognise their place in community regardless of how they feel in the moment.

These challenges inherent in communal prayer is in line with the Anglican Church's very understanding of the daily office, as elucidated by Richard Hooker, an authoritative voice in the history of Anglicanism. According to Targoff (2001, 53), Hooker advocated common prayer "as a combatant against the distraction and devotional lethargy that emerge from the difficulty of praying privately or individually without liturgical guides." To define daily devotions by one's individual temperament is to limit devotion to the mere whims of the individual. It is the structure of daily prayer which frees the individual to meet the living God. Thus, while the overly refined structure of Anglican Morning Prayer may, at times, prove to be frustrating to individuals, this structure serves to lead the participant into deeper realities of communal life with God. To be frustrated with Morning Prayer is to be formed by it.

Implications of the Study

The Morning Prayer study concluded that participating in Morning Prayer establishes a formative habit of prayer, increases the individual's experience of God's presence and nearness, and increases one's immersion in community spiritual formation. The discipline of Morning Prayer does not merely involve the process of saying prayers in the morning; rather the daily office immerses the individual within an ecclesial activity. As Targoff (2011, 34) explains, within the discipline of Morning Prayer, "the home [is] imagined as an additional site of common prayer." For this reason, participation in Morning Prayer is best understood as participating in "common prayer." While Morning Prayer was performed individually, and in some sense privately, this did not take away from

corporate formation occurring through the discipline. Through the shared practice of common liturgy, the individuals of the study began to see how their individual lives were a participation in a wider, communal, spiritual life.

As the discipline of Morning Prayer proved to be a positive influence on the spiritual life of a small group of individual Anglicans, a wider implementation of this practice could prove beneficial to Anglican congregations today. The development and implementation of a Morning Prayer curriculum or program, for example, would allow others to experience a similar increase in their own prayer life and experience of God. Importantly, such a curriculum or program need not be 10 weeks in length; rather, a shorter curriculum of teaching, experimentation, and reporting, could provide others the opportunity to experience the benefits of the daily office. Such a program should be understood to be a corporate program, as the presence and support of others doing Morning Prayer proved to be beneficial to participants. Furthermore, given that by the fifth week of the study, seven participants noted how Morning Prayer had become a regular and important discipline in their lives, a five-week program would be optimal. Such a study could be beneficial as a Lenten Discipline, as part of a new-member orientation class, or used in tandem with baptismal/confirmation preparation.

As the corporate nature of the discipline was an important element of the study, the implementation of a program seeking to encourage others to engage in this formative discipline should also embrace this corporate element. The format of the Morning Prayer study naturally lent itself to reflections upon community, both in journal and questionnaires, but also in the group sharing. Given this, a

short or seasonal curriculum of Morning Prayer should be built around a shared activity beyond the engagement in the liturgy. That is, implementation should include participation in a group setting, thus ensuring recognition that Morning Prayer is a discipline engaged in “together.”

It should also be noted that a degree of flexibility should be understood to be implicit within the practice of Morning Prayer. Much of the frustration experienced in the study was due to the strict adherence to the liturgy and lectionary readings as designed by the study. This frustration was most pronounced for individuals who had a previous affinity to one liturgical book (BCP vs. BAS) or had a previously established habit of scripture reading. While it was important for the research project that each participant engage in Morning Prayer through the same liturgy (i.e., the BAS), this is not as important when attempting to introduce this formative practice in a non-research related parish setting.

Importantly, the Anglican understanding of Morning Prayer necessarily allows for a certain amount of flexibility and variability. Variability within Morning Prayer is not a sign of a movement away from the discipline as expressed corporately, but rather a manifestation of one’s own voice in prayer.

Law (2011, chap.14) writes:

It seems right for every one to begin with a form of prayer; and if, in the midst of his devotions, he finds his heart ready to break forth into new and higher strains of devotion, he should leave his form for a while, and follow those fervours of his heart, till it again wants the assistance of his usual petitions. This seems to be the true liberty of private devotion; it should be under the direction of some form, but not so tied down to it.

The flexibility to leave the set form of prayer and follow the inspiration of the Spirit is implicit in the very act of presenting one's self to God in daily devotion. Thus, any program seeking to promote the discipline of Morning Prayer should include this flexibility. However, one of the important elements of common prayer is the common language that is used within the liturgy itself. Thus, while there is flexibility within which liturgical rite is being used, the discipline of Morning Prayer within the Anglican Church should retain the use of a liturgical rite prescribed in one of the many Anglican liturgical texts. It is to the rite that we return, and upon which the prayers of the community are based. The common language and structure of the prayer is an important element in Morning Prayer as 'common', community prayer.

CHAPTER 6

THE INNER CHRISTLIKENESS OF THE COMMUNITY

Shared liturgies, like Morning Prayer, provide the *means* through which formation occurs within the community of faith. That being said, corporate disciplines do not constitute the *aim* of formation. That is, the community of faith is not transformed in Christlikeness simply because it recognises a corporate identity or engages in communal activity. “Creating community,” writes Vanier (1989, 284), “is something different from just meeting with one another, as individuals. It is creating a body and a sense of belonging, a place of communion.” The purpose of disciplines and habits is to open the community of faith to the transforming work of the Spirit. By way of corporate disciplines, the Holy Spirit transforms the community into a deeper image of Jesus Christ. This is what “Christlikeness” means.

The transformed community enacts an alternative reality, a reality in which Jesus Christ is both the focus and the content of shared existence. Mulholland (2000, 102) writes, “Spiritual Formation is the shaping of our *being* in the image of Christ, the shaping of our ‘word’ by the Word of God.” The community’s participation in Christ’s kingdom reality is embodied in the core of its identity. Disciplines engaged in without the intention to interact with Christ’s presence and activity fail to form the community. Paul describes this aim to inner

Christlikeness when he states he is “again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is *formed* in you” (Galatians 4:19; emphasis added). Formation means more than mere participation in corporate disciplines. The Holy Spirit acts upon the singular heart of the faith body, transforming the community into an ever-increasing expression of Christ’s own presence in the world.

As I have been arguing, this anointing of the Holy Spirit is directly linked to the community’s embodiment of its baptismal identity. The apostles continually pointed to baptism as the required response to the saving message of God. Following Peter’s Spirit-empowered sermon, Luke records:

Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:37–38)

Peter outlines how responding to the saving news of the Gospel through the act of baptism brings about the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Baptism, then, is to be understood as being “initiated into a baptismal life” (deSilva 2008, 23). As this baptismal life is dependant upon the anointing of the Holy Spirit, one cannot understand the baptized community apart from being the Spirit-filled community.

It is precisely this anointing by the Holy Spirit that causes the Christlike transformation. This is most clearly seen in the manner of social relationships enjoyed within the community of faith. Social barriers crumble in the kingdom of God; hostilities and divisions normally seen within the secular society have no place in the community of the redeemed. Christ, alive in the community, destroys “the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14). This was indeed the radical witness for the early church community. The inclusion of gentiles, slaves,

and women within the functional life of the community shook the very fabric of civic understanding. The community of faith became a picture of the counter-cultural kingdom in which the church resides. Paul testifies to this reality in the familiar description of the faith community as “neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male nor female” (Galatians 3:28). The lack of such divisions proclaims the new reality experienced in the community. Thus, the statement “you all are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28), was an expression of the Christlike image into which the community of faith was transformed. The church evidenced the very eschatological future in which they actively participated.

Bonhoeffer (1954, 26) points to this inner transformation that stands at the heart of community:

The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his word become the one and only thing that is vital between us. We have one another only through Christ, but through Christ we do have one another, wholly and for eternity.

The love of God forms the inner reality of the community and becomes that which glues the community together. The supremacy of Christ in the formation of the community naturally supersedes any socially fabricated difference. Meeting others in community involves meeting them “as the person that he [or she] already is in Christ’s eyes” (Bonhoeffer 1954, 36). Community Christlikeness involves the willingness to recognise the presence of Jesus within each member of the community, and thus be united to them.

Christlikeness is a radical reorientation of perception, as well as habit. As members of one body, community members view themselves, and each other,

differently, or as Paul put it “not from a human point of view” (2 Corinthians 5:16). It is not just that the community of faith is trying to be humble, loving, or peace-filled, it is the internal make-up of the community that has been transformed to be an expression of Christ’s own character. The community, acting as the body of Christ, creates a strong willingness to “bear with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2). The love of Christ is extended to the other as an authentic outworking of communal life.

Radically, however, the reverse is also true; the love of the other is seen as the very expression of one’s love for Christ. Within the community, one embodies love to the other as if they were expressing love toward Jesus Christ. Jesus’ exhortation that “whatever you did to the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did to me” (Matthew 25:40) becomes uniquely expressed in this manner. Community becomes a place of self-giving love, an echo of the agape love central to the Trinitarian nature of God, and the love through which the community is transformed. This inward transformation can be seen in two specific ways: the embracing of brokenness, and the embracing of forgiveness.

Embracing Brokenness

The baptized community is not a community without failure or shortcomings. Far from it. In fact, despite the community’s internal formation toward peaceability, the community remains one steeped in brokenness. While it is true that Christ offers transformation to the community of faith, no community will ever rid itself of its need for redemption. Even a community immersed in Trinitarian reality, and embodying a baptismal identity, will be a community

reflecting the fallenness of the world. Wilhoit (2008, 58) observes:

“Understanding our pervasive brokenness is at the heart of true community formation. Unless brokenness is a prominent orientation, we will not catch the truth that ‘the church is not a museum for saints, but a hospital for sinners.’” The baptized community acknowledges its fundamental need for redemption. No community ever arrives at a point where it is no longer in need of further healing. In fact, a community’s presumptuous assertion that it has moved past all brokenness only highlights how far it is from Christlikeness.

The brokenness of the community heralds back to the continual act of renouncing our idols (Wilhoit 2008, 73). Within Anglican liturgy, after renewing its own baptismal covenant, the community is asked, ‘Will you persevere in resisting evil, and *whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?*’ (ACC 1985, 159; my emphasis). Even amid its reassertion of its baptismal identity, the community is asked to recognise its perpetual need for healing and forgiveness. This recognition of the community’s brokenness, however, is not simply a recognition of the faults implicit in humanity. Nor is it some dour act of self-condemnation. Community brokenness is an orientation in which the community exists. It speaks to the fall of all creation, and as such, it is something the community shares together.

The united brokenness of the community displays the true nature of the body of Christ. Vanier (1989, 263) writes:

The most precious gift in community is rooted in weakness. It is when we are frail and poor that we need others, that we call them to love and use all their gifts. At the heart of community are always the people who are insignificant, weak and poor. Those who are ‘useless’, either physically or

mentally, those who are ill or dying, enter into the mystery of sacrifice. At the heart of everything beautiful in a community, there is always a sacrificial lamb, united to the Lamb of God.

The brokenness of the community does not merely speak to the brokenness of sin, but of that which is redeemed through the love of Christ. “We are broken, but we are loved” (Vanier 1989, 27). Brokenness speaks to all that is accepted and redeemed in the love of Jesus. The community expresses Christ’s love to the hurting and lost, not as a solely missiological call to the world, but a manner of embracing the brokenness within itself. Embracing this brokenness becomes tantamount to embracing the redemption of Christ, offered through his own act of becoming “broken” for the life of the world.

However, recognition of our brokenness is not easy. As a priest, I have often felt the need to project an air of self-sufficiency. Thus, I do not accept help easily. Somewhere along the way I adopted the attitude that to voice my own need was to take advantage of another. I would muscle my way through difficult times, and never speak about the help I needed. Following my teary celebration of the eucharist on Maundy Thursday, the news of Alicia’s diagnosis spread quickly throughout the church. As this happened, more and more parishioners came to me expressing their desire to help in any way possible. Everything within me wanted to politely dismiss their offers. I chose not to do this. To assert my own independence would be to proclaim that the faith community was defined by self-sufficiency and individualism.

Thus, I decided to radically trust the nature of the community in which I was immersed. Rather than listening to my instinct, I chose to believe that when people offered help or assistance, they meant it. It was a stretch at first. I

remember that first time I responded to someone's inquiry of "what can we do?" with the words, "We need dinners." Later the answer became "Could you come and mow my lawn?" It was uncomfortable for me to disclose our need for help. Yet community, true community, forces you outside of yourself. It is precisely as we are stretched beyond our own comforts that we experience the grace and power of God mediated through the community of faith.

The year my family spent in need, walking with Alicia through bouts of vomiting and chemo-related pain, was a time when we were uplifted by the parish of Holy Cross. It was a time when we tangibly experienced their prayers and love. Members of the community were with Alicia when her head was shaved; they sat with her in the chemo-chair; they looked after our son when Alicia went to the emergency room; they put up with, and would not let me apologize for my sense of scatteredness. Retired priests in the parish volunteered to preach, take services, and relieve as much of my schedule as they possibly could. It was a time when our family felt blessed to be part of such a caring and life-giving community.

The journey through Alicia's cancer flowed directly into my mother's own cancer diagnosis, treatment, and subsequent death. Even there, although my community had no relationship with my mother, they responded to my brokenness with care and love. They gave cards and casseroles; they extended to me a brief leave from the church; they attended my mother's funeral and added their grief to mine. They truly embodied the truth that "if one part [of the body] suffers, every part suffers with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26). Throughout it all, the church community in which I am immersed allowed me to be as broken as I needed to be.

My brokenness was met by love, and it was a time when the church ministered to me abundantly more than I ministered to them.

It is brokenness that makes the fellowship within the community of faith so transformative. The Christlike community reveals itself as it holds the raw brokenness of one of its members – thus holding its own brokenness. Vanier (1992, 10) writes: “Community is a wonderful place, it is life-giving; but it is also a place of pain.” The Christlike community pushes past the thin veneer of fellowship based on shared happiness and joyous experiences and embraces the uncomfortable brokenness of human life. “We can only truly experience the presence of God, meet Jesus, receive the good news, in and through our own poverty, because the kingdom of God belongs to the poor, the poor in spirit, the poor who are crying out for love” (Vanier 1992, 20). It is when the gathered community can embrace the poverty within itself that Christlikeness is formed within it.

Embracing Forgiveness

To embrace brokenness is to embrace the community as a body tainted by sin, hurt, and waywardness. It is thus necessary that, out of this acknowledgement of its own brokenness, the community embodies a posture of forgiveness. “Forgiveness takes brokenness seriously and affirms that guilt is real but also affirms that guilt is not the last word” (Benner and Harvey 1996, 33). Forgiveness is not merely an ideal held up within the doctrines or liturgies of the community, it is another reality the community lives out, a reality which is counter-cultural today. In a culture of merit and deserve, the pronouncement of forgiveness speaks

a powerful blow. Jesus laboured to express this to the disciples through the Parable of Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21–25). This was a response to Peter’s pressing question regarding the nature of forgiveness, a question highly applicable today. Is there a limit to forgiveness? When can I, or the community, justifiably *not* forgive? There is, however, a deeper element of Peter’s question. Peter’s question is not merely a question of action, but a question of reality. Is forgiveness an action offered in finite amounts, or is it part of the spiritual reality in which the community is immersed?

Jesus’ use of extreme hyperbole within the parable emphasises the latter. Christ’s forgiveness, received and shared without limit, forms the community. The community is not only constituted by its acknowledgement of its own forgiveness, but through the expression of forgiveness. Wilhoit (2008, 200) writes: “As we forgive and extend mercy, we relate as Jesus has invited us to do, and the gospel is evident both to ourselves and to all within our circle of influence.” The root of the community’s embracing of forgiveness is the very expression of Christ’s forgiveness upon the community. To be Christlike is to forgive.

As a priest, one of the highlights of my role is the call to remind my congregation of Christ’s gracious gift of forgiveness. One event stands out in this regard. Barney is a new member of the Church. He started to attend with his family and was baptized shortly thereafter. Upon joining the church Barney was open about his difficult past. We had spoken many times about his new faith, so his call to come for a visit was not out of the ordinary. As Barney sat in my office,

he disclosed a painful memory he had been struggling with for years. He described an instance of passing a homeless man while driving home one winter evening. Barney described how he and the homeless man had met each other's gaze, yet Barney continued to drive past without stopping. As he looked back through the rear-view mirror, Barney saw the man fall backwards into the snow. The next day, Barney saw a news report regarding a homeless man who died due to the bitter winter chill. It was the man Barney had passed.

As Barney shared his story, I internally felt that God had brought Barney to this place in order to lead him to a new place of healing. This event had happened several years ago, and yet it remained a weight that Barney carried. I wondered if it hampered the growth of his new-found faith. Barney asked if he could receive forgiveness. I could feel the weight of the Spirit guiding Barney in this process.

I told Barney that the church had a service called the Rite of Reconciliation of the Penitent, and if he wanted to, I would lead him through the service. Barney agreed and we moved into the church, and both knelt at the altar rail. I donned my stole, a symbol that I was not merely an individual, but a representative of the church community. I gave Barney a prayer book, pointed him to a specific page, and I told him that after he had confessed all he wanted, he was to read a certain prayer aloud. I reminded Barney of God's steadfast love, and invited Barney to name anything he wanted to confess. Barney mentioned the "sin of driving away" – and then sat in silence. It appeared as if the words were cut off from him. I sat in silent prayer, asking the Spirit to continue to guide him – and

for the words of Christ's love to echo loudly within him. Barney read the confessional prayer, to which I responded with the words of absolution.

Barney related to me afterwards that during the service he had an incredible encounter with Jesus. He described feeling the hands of Jesus reaching down within him, removing all his words, and how upon the words of absolution he felt a sense of freedom come over him. This brought him warmth and comfort, especially when his mind took him back to the event with the homeless man. Removing the words from him was akin to removing the shame and guilt that surrounded the memory of this past event. No additional words were formed as there was no more to confess regarding this situation; Barney was free from any feeling of shame or negligence.

When Barney first spoke of the matter which brought him to see me, I initially felt that it was beyond the scope of my ability. Not only did I feel inadequate, but I felt scared to go further with Barney. What else could I get into if this is where things start? As an individual, I felt completely out of my depth, but as a member of the Church, as a representative of all the saints on earth and in heaven, I knew I had before me words and practices that could speak profoundly to Barney. More than that, the wisdom of the liturgical rites was a blessing to me as I could rest upon their words.

Although this event involved only two individuals, our exchange of confession and absolution highlights the transformative power of community in its embracing of forgiveness. What Barney needed, and what drove him to see me, was not merely assurance that *I* forgave him. Rather, Barney longed to hear that

he existed in a state of forgiveness before God and before the church. My role as his priest was to hear his confession as part of the church to which we both belonged. Bonhoeffer reminds us that we meet the entire church in the person to whom our confession is made (Bonhoeffer 1954, 113). It was in this capacity that I spoke the words of absolution. In fact, the absolution given to Barney was precisely a corporate forgiveness. After Barney finished reading his confessional prayer, I responded:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to the Father, and who conferred power on *his Church to forgive sins*, absolve you through my ministry by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and restore you in the perfect peace of the Church. Amen. (ACC 1985, 168; emphasis added)

Although I spoke the words, the absolution is given by Christ through the ministry of Christ's church. Therefore, these words were a declaration by the community of faith. The unloosing of sin given to the church by virtue of its essence as the body of Christ enables the penitent individual to experience the freedom of forgiveness, and the "peace of the Church." In fact, this service was so significant for Barney's spiritual life that, when their 5-year-old daughter Kate was struggling with feelings of unforgiveness, they brought her to me for a similar (yet age-appropriate) rite.

Forgiveness of sin, therefore, is a primary element in the baptismal reality of the church community. DeSilva notes: "We cannot be right with God when we are at odds with one another. . . . What God has forgiven, we cannot now hold against one another" (deSilva 2008, 110). Baptism calls for a lived-out forgiveness. The prayer of Jesus is a primary example of this. We pray for the forgiveness of sins "as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us"

(Matthew 6:12). There is a link between the community's receiving of forgiveness from God, which is freely offered, and its expression of forgiveness to others. To deny this embodiment of forgiveness is to deny a fundamental part of the community's own baptismal identity. It is to doubt the very nature of its own identity as a community immersed in the Spirit of God. To deny forgiveness is to deny baptism, for "the sacrament of forgiveness is baptism, not because it operates a judicial removal of guilt, but because it is *baptism into Jesus Christ, who is the Forgiveness*" (Schmemmann 1963, 78). The baptized community, immersed in the reality of the Trinity, is immersed in the presence of Jesus and therefore immersed in the reality of forgiveness. Thus, the call to the church is to "forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13). A refusal of forgiveness amounts to a community asserting that it does not deserve to be forgiven itself, for how can a community state that it deserves forgiveness, but no one else does? This was the sin of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18.

The Christlike community can therefore be understood as one in which brokenness and forgiveness are held together. The community is not a perfect body with no need for forgiveness. The community is a body of the broken and the sinful. Yet such brokenness does not discredit the community, for the community is also a body of the forgiven and the redeemed. Furthermore, this holding together of brokenness and forgiveness is subsequently lived out through the ministry of the church. The brokenness and forgiveness within the community becomes a fundamental part of the outward witness of the community, as seen through the call to justice and evangelism.

CHAPTER 7

THE OUTWARD CHRISTLIKENESS OF THE COMMUNITY

There is a danger in believing that a community's transformation toward inward Christlikeness entails the entirety of formation. Even for the faith community, when Christlikeness is depicted merely in terms of an inward reality, formation can easily become the amassing of a long list of self-focused spiritual disciplines. Mulholland (2016, 49) suggests that such a view leads to "some kind of pathological formation that is privatised and individualised, a spiritualization of self-actualization." Living out such a self-focused Christlikeness is a far cry from the biblical model of community. Acts 2 records that "everyone was filled with awe at the many signs and wonders performed by the apostles" (2:43). The newly baptized community lived out its immersion in Trinitarian reality in a public manner. Thus, "the Lord added to their numbers daily those who were being saved" (2:47). Formation in Christlikeness must entail the call to bear witness to Christ in the world. The Christlike community follows Jesus' recapitulation of the "greatest commandment," a solitary commandment that has two parts: love God and love the other. Therefore, the gathered community is also the missional community.

Spiritual formation must involve mission. The community's baptismal identity pushes the community beyond privatised formation, into a formation "for

the sake of others” (Mulholland 2016, 48). The Holy Spirit empowers the community to step beyond the comfortable confines of its own borders, to become “[Jesus’] witnesses. . . to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Willard (2006, 81) writes: “Our churches will be centers of spiritual formation only as they understand Christlikeness and communicate it to others, through teaching and example, in a convincing and supportive fashion.” In other words, the community of faith will only fully be a baptized community when they engage in Christ’s commission to “immerse [others] in Trinitarian reality” (Willard 2002, chap. 13).

Outward mission, more than being an action engaged in, is itself a way of embodying the fundamental nature of community. A baptized community cannot exist without outward mission. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski and Meyers argue this very point in their article “The Baptismal Ecclesiology of Holy Women and Men.” Articulating a baptismal anthropology, they argue that outward witness must exist for a community to fully embody its baptismal identity. Outward mission, they write:

dovetails well with a baptismal ecclesiology that understands all the baptized as commissioned to perform Christ’s ministry. By virtue of the grace of baptism, all the people of God manifest Christ’s work in the world. All the baptized are commissioned as agents of God’s mission. Those commemorated might be exemplary in their particularly noteworthy service in God’s mission, but on an anthropological level they are no different from any other baptized Christian. (Joslyn-Siemiatkoski and Meyers 2016, 33)

This is precisely what we see through the entire book of Acts, starting immediately from the spiritual empowerment of the community in chapter 2. Luke’s description of the baptized community includes the description of the Lord “adding to their numbers daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Rah

(2009, chap.4) rightly concludes that this growth in Christian community is a “product of the demonstration of the gospel in the self-sacrificial living of the church.” The community of faith grew in response to the lived-out witness of the baptized community. Thus, “Acts 2:41 and 47 serve as framing verses for what occurs between Acts 2:42 and 2:46” (Rah 2009, chap.4). Rah is pointing out that baptism, community life, mission, and growth are intimately connected. The embodiment of communal habits, resulting from the community’s immersion in the Trinitarian reality, naturally had a missional quality.

The early church’s missional embodiment was a recognition of the call to join in God’s ongoing mission in the world. Immersion in Trinitarian reality is also an immersion in Trinitarian mission. To be baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection is to be immersed in Christ’s ongoing work in the world. Howard reminds us that “the term mission was used originally in Christian theology to speak of God’s sending the Son and the Spirit. . . This *missio dei* (Latin, ‘mission of God’) is the foundation of all Christian Missions today” (Howard 2018, 198). The church’s mission in the world is a participation in the missional activity of the Spirit of God. Thus, the baptized community embodies outward mission, not as a prescribed list of activities or functions, but as a response to God’s invitation to join the ongoing work of reconciliation.

Formation is not just how the community views itself, but how it lives out baptismal identity in the world. The community embodies baptismal life as a testimony to the surrounding culture. Baptismal identity undoubtedly brings a change in how the community exists within the world. The actions that form

communal life are equally testimonies to the alternate kingdom the community embraces. While one can never provide an exhaustive list of how the community embodies its missional identity, a call to justice and evangelism are two important ways the Church engages in the outward mission of God.

The Call to Justice

Justice for the least vulnerable of society is fundamental to Christian witness in the world. In fact, in the Morning Prayer Study, Jane reflected in one journal submission how “there can be no community without justice.” To be the people of God in community is to love those God loves. Scripture is filled with example upon example of God’s specific passion for the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the alien. Furthermore, the prophetic witness in scripture often points to the failure to care for the “the quartet of the downtrodden” (Wolterstorff 2011, 398) as that which delegitimizes the community’s faith. Scripturally, the community of faith is judged on how they embody justice, not on their amassing of spiritual disciplines. Isaiah 58:5–7 provides a detailed look:

Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?
Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—

when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Despite the faithfulness to the sacrificial system (spiritual disciplines?), failure to care for the poor highlighted Israel's apostasy. God calls Israel to serve the poor and downtrodden. Justice, and not perfect religious execution, was to be the sign of Israel's faithfulness to God.

Returning to Luke's record of the baptized community, this care for the poor and destitute is one of the profound shifts that occurs in the early Christian community. As Luke records "All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need" (Acts 2:44–45). The community of faith, immersed in the presence of the Holy Spirit and transformed toward Christlikeness, takes up the very ministry of Jesus. As Jesus "came not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28), so too the community is found embodying such service toward the other. This is not to suggest that the baptized community embodies this flawlessly. Luke also records the same community overlooking certain widows in the daily distribution (Acts 6:1). Yet, as in all matters of embodiment, the broken witness of the community does not disregard its formation or its call to mission.

The spiritual formation of community is outwardly expressed in the community's participation in Jesus' work. Boa (2001, 45) notes that transformation toward Christlikeness must lead to Christlike behavior, or as he puts it, "our identification with Christ leads to and is the basis for our *imitation* of Christ." The life of the community embraces justice as a means of following the social advocacy of Jesus. The Gospels continually record Jesus "challenging

unjust behaviour, reordering political power, and advocating for both the poor and the privileged” (Posterski 2013, 33). The community of faith, united to Jesus through the Holy Spirit, is tasked to continue this work. In fact, Jesus himself highlights justice as the natural expression of one’s ongoing relationship with him. In his discussion of the separation of the sheep and the goats, it is the failure to care for the hungry, the thirsty, the alien, the naked, or the prisoner, that warrants judgement (Matthew 25:31–40).

Wolterstorff’s (2011) work on justice is incredibly helpful at this juncture. He argues, “The church on earth is to be seen as his body, and in that body his Spirit is present. The conclusion seems unavoidable, that we are to carry on, with such means as are given to us, Jesus’ work of proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom and producing samples of its shalom” (Wolterstorff 2011, 106). This call to justice is deeper than how the community chooses to treat “the other.” Jesus identifies himself with the poor and destitute. To those who disregard the call to justice, Jesus states: “For I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me” (Matthew 25:32–34). Injustice is therefore a harm toward Jesus himself. Wolterstorff (2011, 127) continues, “To treat unjustly one of these human earthlings in whom God delights is to bring sorrow to God. To wound God’s beloved is to wound God.” This further supports the prophets’ insistence that the failure to embody justice is a delegitimization of a community’s faith. The call for justice is a radical reorientation in which the

community chooses to see the presence of Jesus in the least fortunate. Justice legitimizes, not only the faith of the community, but also its embodied witness. Wolterstorff (2011, 46) argues, “The authenticity of a community’s liturgy is conditioned by whether or not it practices and struggles for justice.” To recognise the identity of Jesus in the poor and the downtrodden moves the community to the full embracing of its missional call.

The community of faith is spiritually formed by immersing itself in a baptismal ecclesiology, through the embodiment of shared liturgy. Such shared liturgies speak not only to *what* the community does, but also to *why* the community engages in certain devotional living. The pursuit of justice therefore speaks to the community’s understanding of its own identity and call. The Anglican tradition makes clear the connection between the community’s call toward justice and baptismal identity. The baptismal liturgy contains the question, asked to the entire community: “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” The response of the community is: “I will with God’s help” (ACC 1985, 159). In the rite of baptism, the community pledges itself to the mission of the Kingdom by striving towards shalom and justice. The call to justice provides the framework for living out the gospel reality in the world.

The Call to Evangelism

The call to justice is understood as a call for the church to be active outside of its own walls, for the sake of those who may never grace the narthex. Evangelistic crusades, meetings, and programs are, however, inherently linked

with an increase of life *within* the community. Sadly, the church's own history recounts how often the zeal to evangelise has been viewed as contrary to the work of justice, or has even, at times, opened the doors for horrific acts of injustice. This does not have to be the case. Wolterstorff (2011) points to a fundamental link between a community's embodied life, its liturgy, and its outward witness in the wider world. Outward transformation is not tantamount to pushing the community outside its own liturgical life, thereby suggesting that "ideally the church would never be gathered for worship but always dispersed for work" (Wolterstorff 2011, 31). This would be to return to an individualistic understanding of community, one founded upon engagement/disengagement. A more holistic understanding of community, however, embraces liturgy as "an instrument of the grace that guides and empowers us for our work as covenant partners with God in the coming of God's kingdom" (Wolterstorff 2011, 23). Wolterstorff (2011, 31) ponders whether it is "possible that the liturgy *authenticates* our actions in the world?" Just as the liturgical life of the community points to the call to outward mission, so too the outward mission of the church must point to, and support, the community's ongoing liturgical life.

Smith (2017, 122) speaks to this very notion in the third installment of his Cultural Liturgies project, noting that "the *ekklesia* is sent from the sanctuary to remind society of whose and who they are." Regarding this evangelistic emphasis on the church's mission, he provides a provocative note in which he ponders whether "challenging unbelief and evangelizing society become key components of the church's *political* witness" (Smith 2017, 121, note 57). In other words,

calling society out of its own immersion in a faulty narrative, and into the true reality of the ultimacy of Christ, may just be the highest act of justice the church can offer.

This just act of welcoming others into the reality of Christ's kingdom on earth is to be a spiritual attitude which flows through all corporate actions. Vanier points to the outward welcoming of a community as evidence to the spiritual transformation that has occurred at the heart of the community. "To welcome is not just something that happens as people cross the threshold. It is an attitude, it is the constant openness of the heart; it is saying to people every morning and at every moment, 'come in', it is giving them space; it is listening to them attentively" (Vanier 1989, 267). The welcoming of others is the Christlikeness of the community expressed outward.

Therefore, evangelism is to become a fundamental part of the community's expression of faith. The community is called to welcome others into the community of faith, and therefore the baptismal reality. Yet welcome must lead to invitation. As church consultant (and devout Anglican), Michael Harvey (2015, 15) questions "how welcoming can we be if we are not inviting?" As Jesus came "to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10), so too the community actively engages the world around them in an outward expression of trinitarian love. The church engages in mission and evangelism as natural outworking of inner Christlikeness. Welcome and invitation, then, are not merely tools to bolster church attendance numbers, they are expressions of the community's transformation toward Christlikeness.

Too often, evangelism is understood as “sharing the good news” or “preaching the gospel.” This assumes that the invitation being offered is an invitation into propositional truth. One is invited to believe certain doctrines. Smith argues passionately against a model of faith which assumes that people are “brains on a stick” in which “we imagine human beings as giant bobblehead dolls; with humungous heads and itty-bitty unimportant bodies” (Smith 2016, 3). In bobblehead spirituality embodiment and transformational living is deemed unnecessary. Instead, Smith offers a vision of Christian faith as embodying the kingdom via habits and desire. This echoes Rah’s (2009) observance regarding the growth of the community, discussed above. The growth of the church occurs through the evangelistic embodiment of a shared life, and not solely a result of superior preaching and propositional agreement.

In this way, evangelism, like all matters of communal faith-embodiment, is formative precisely because it is a discipline embodied by the community. Block (2008, chap.11) has a helpful word: “Invitation is not only a step in bringing people together, it is also a fundamental way of being in community.” Evangelism is the church being the church. Just as the community of faith cannot be rightly understood without engagement in disciplines such as the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of the bread, and prayer, so too the community of faith cannot occur without an engagement in the discipline of evangelism. As such, justice and evangelism, like prayer, fellowship, and eucharistic celebration, are to be an active and ongoing part of the community’s continuous transformation toward Christlikeness.

This pairing of evangelism and justice has expressed itself recently in the parish of Holy Cross. The parish has always had a strong identity, rooted in their understanding of themselves as the body of Christ. The parish is warm and friendly, with a strong sense of hospitality. We enjoy our coffee times, our potlucks, our gatherings. Yet for years these things faced inward. While we were a blessed community inwardly, there was little engagement with our neighbours. Part of this was due to the need for a building project. For years the parish had attempted to solve its own accessibility problems. The need for renovation and construction was all consuming and took up much of the time and energy of parish leadership. When that project was eventually completed in 2015, it was as if the parish was released to think creatively about the new stage of life the community was entering.

The first stage of this was for the parish to begin thinking about evangelism. Many sermons were preached on the need to “always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within you” (1 Peter 3:15). There were training events to teach leaders some easy steps in faith-sharing. An entire year was dedicated to the theology, the rationale, and the practice of evangelism. It wasn’t the quickest transition. After all, Anglicans aren’t known for our evangelistic zeal. However, eventually there were signs of a shift in the community. People began to tell me stories of bold invitations. One parishioner took it upon herself to put an add for a “Church Friend” on Kijiji, and despite my reservations of its effectiveness, it worked. She has had several conversations regarding the importance of her faith, and how the community at Holy Cross has been a

blessing to her. Another parishioner reached out to a woman on her block whose husband recently died. Through casual conversations and visits, she took the step to invite the widow to attend a parish function.

Such stories are a wonderful testament to how evangelism became a necessary part of Holy Cross's formation. What I did not expect, however, was how outward mission became inextricably tied to this evangelistic zeal. The parish has always had a desire to support mission, yet this was often addressed through cheque campaigns. Every couple of months a mission organization would be named, and those who felt compelled to support the organization or agency would write a cheque. In many ways, the mission focus of the parish was very individualistic. If you liked the mission, you could support it, if not, you would wait for the next one. Eventually, one of the council members felt the parish could do more. Instead of simply writing cheques, the parish was asked to donate tangible items to an agency in support of women and children fleeing domestic violence. The parish was given a list of needed items and told this drive would go on for three months. A large refrigerator box was set up in the entrance of the church to receive the donated items. The response to this mission drive was overwhelming. In the three months of the drive, the church donated five *overflowing* boxes to the agency. The parish caught the vision of outward support and gave generously.

Following the original mission drive, the church called for another one. This time the council chose a local food bank and asked parishioners to bring one non-perishable item each time they came to church. Again, the response has been

overwhelming. Instead of one can of soup, parishioners started bringing entire cases of Kraft Dinner, flats of canned vegetables, boxes of cereal, and much more. The children of the parish even took it upon themselves to bring their own item for the “Food box.” At the conclusion of the drive, roughly 250 bags of groceries had been donated to the local food bank and a definite sense of vitality and excitement was felt within the parish.

These mission-drives have been a wonderful place of ministry and advocacy, yet beyond that, it has been an outworking of the very formation of the community. The parish’s embodiment in the apostles’ teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers has formed it into a body of people that wish to engage in evangelistic mission. Today, the mission drives are an important expression to the very identity of Holy Cross as community of Christ’s followers. This is not unlike the early church, wherein “until about the ninth century, the faithful brought gifts to church to be distributed to the poor, and from these gifts were taken the bread and wine that were put on the altar for the Eucharist; the offering to God and the offering to the poor form a single act of offering, attributing the sacrificial value to both offerings” (Boseli 2014, chap.4). The missional life of the community, and its own embodiment in baptismal reality are fundamentally linked. One informs the other. At the parish of Holy Cross, the sacramental and liturgical identity led to its missional practice as the natural outworking of the community’s formation toward Christlikeness.

This pairing of inward and outward reality of the community is illustrated uniquely in the office of Morning Prayer. Both the BAS and the BCP begin the

liturgy with an act of confession through which the community becomes immersed in an alternative kingdom. This act of renunciation and affirmation also highlights the community as a broken and redeemed body. In praying the office of Morning Prayer, one must not only recognise one's own brokenness but also one's place within a community of those needing healing and redemption. This reflection, however, ultimately leads to an embracement of forgiveness, and the subsequent call to embody such forgiveness in the world. Furthermore, the evangelistic and missional call is taken up by the intercessions through which the community is called to pray for "the Church, the Queen and all in authority, the world, the local community, those in need, and the departed" (ACC 1985, 53). Finally, the liturgy ends with a dismissal serving to send the community into the world for mission and ministry.

The movement toward an outward expression of Christlikeness is a necessary part of a community's spiritual formation. Without such an outward expression, the community's spiritual life becomes separated from its call to be the body of Christ in the world. To this end, Figure 3 (on page 27) displays the components of a community's inward transformation and outward transformation as that which is observable by others outside the community of faith. The inward reality of the community is not simply for its own edification but serves as the grounding for its own missional and evangelistic witness.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Spiritual formation is commonly viewed individualistically, with the goal of formation understood as having the image of God birthed in the individual soul. Appeals to Galatians 4:19 are cited as primary evidence. It is argued that the aim of formation is not some grand vision of heavenly life in the by and by, nor is it a mere call to Jesus-based morality, but the ongoing process of personal Christlike transformation. Formation is to have Christ “formed” in the individual. Through participation in various spiritual disciplines, the individual becomes more deeply connected to Jesus. When formation is understood in this way participation in community becomes one discipline aiding in individual formation. Furthermore, an individualistic understanding of formation creates an individualistic understanding of the church.

This is clearly seen in the following cartoon on the next page. On one hand, this cartoon articulates the mystical reality of the church community. As seen through the Morning Prayer study, one praying the office alone at home can, at the same time, be acting as a member of the wider faith community. This is based on engagement with shared liturgy, as provided by the daily office. However, this is not what the cartoon represents. There is no shared action within Walker’s (2015) depiction of the church. In fact, what is most striking in the

cartoon is the almost deliberate lack of community. Isolated individuals populate the landscape. Rather than any depiction of a shared life or spirituality, the scene captures isolated people engaged in solitary action. This cartoon could have been drawn differently. Walker could have chosen to draw a church spire in the background, or a group of people sitting together. Yet no such depiction exists. Humorously, although two individuals sit on the bus they are distinctly not sitting together. The same is true for the man on the bench and the woman walking past. The message of the cartoon is clear: the church is an individualized possession.

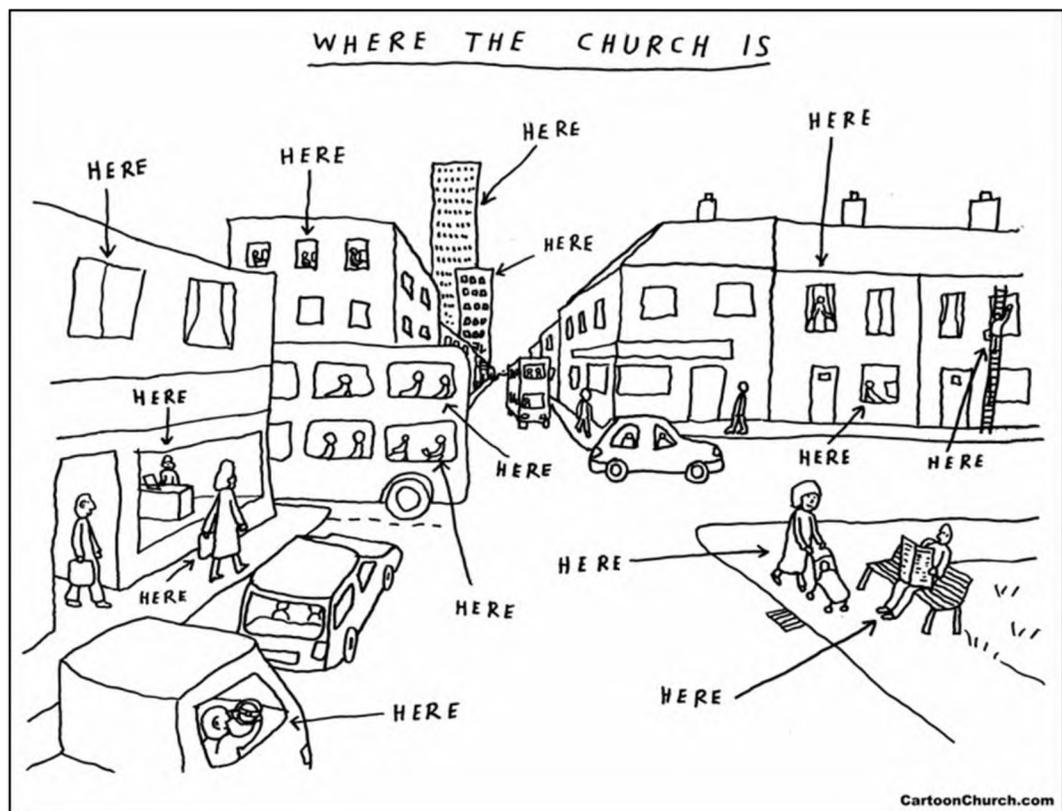


Figure 6. "Where the Church Is." Cartoon by Dave Walker. Reproduced by permission from Walker (2015).

It is my conviction that such a focus on individual formation misunderstands both what constitutes formation, and the importance of

community in the process of formation itself. While I agree that the individual Christian needs to be formed in Christlikeness, the primacy of individual formation is not what we see in scripture. Paul's formational anthem in Galatians, that he is in "the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you," is expressed not to an individual, but to a community. Paul writes to the Galatian church. It is to the community of the "called out ones" that Paul holds up the call to Christlikeness. The communal focus of formation can be pressed further, insofar as Jesus' high priestly prayer contains the same call. Jesus prays that "*they* be one, as we [the God-head] are one" (John 17:22). Christ's prayer was for the formation of a body of people, not a spiritual experience for an individual believer named Matthew, Tom, or Jane. Christlikeness for the individual is rooted in one's participation in a communal spiritual life; it is not an individual accomplishment to be prized.

I find the notion that Christlikeness is a communal reality intriguing, and one that should have profound implications on the life and ministry of the local church. Often, the Christlike community is seen to be dependent upon the presence of Christlike people. In such argumentation, the Christian community is understood only as a collection of Christ-filled persons with no reference to a reality beyond the individual experiences. The rationale appears sound: if the individual members of a community are spiritually formed, then so too the church will be. The individual is the antecedent and the Christlike community a mere by-product.

The Christian community does not act this way. Community calls for *another* dynamic. The Christlike community must appeal to a reality beyond the individual. The community is to be caught up in an alternative reality, one that not only transforms the community but also defines its very identity. In this portfolio, I have argued that it is the community's immersion in a baptismal ecclesiology that marks this alternative reality, echoing Wood (1999, 34):

We are baptized into both Christ and the Church. What happens in baptism is not the bestowal of reified grace, but the insertion of a person into a network of relationships which in theological terms we describe as a 'communion'. That very state of being-in-communion with Father, Son, and Spirit is what constitutes grace and salvation.

The community is called to become immersed in and to embody the spiritual reality of baptism.

Individual formation is not discarded when formation in community is emphasized. In fact, individual formation and identity flourish as part of one's immersion in communal formation. The community of faith does not simply absorb the individual into itself. There is a reciprocity between the individual and the community (Bonhoeffer 2009, 83). The individual flourishes within community while not limiting community as simply a backdrop for individual formation. This is what I have uncovered in my own life. In setting my focus upon what constitutes a Christlike community, I have uncovered practices and habits which enable me to participate in that communal formation. My own individual formation is not disconnected from others. In fact, understanding that my own formation is part of the formation of the Christian community, lends itself to an embracing of my own individual identity. It is through immersion in the Christlike community that I found, most fully, who I am created to be.

Immersion occurs through the shared renouncing of alternative kingdoms, worship, and habits, paired with the affirmation of its baptismal identity under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This immersion is then embodied through shared practices, specifically the practices of the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and prayer. These practices become the way the community acts in concert as God's people. Furthermore, it is through such practices that the transforming power of the Spirit is seen through the community's inward Christlikeness and outward mission.

Prior to my doctoral studies, I would never have considered reading texts about liturgy, ecclesiology, or baptismal theology, yet these are now the texts to which I turn. Oddly, it has been in studying formation in a non-Anglican program that I have uncovered how deep my Anglican roots go, and how passionate I am about Christlike formation within the Anglican Church of Canada. The Anglican church today faces many challenges, challenges to its unity, its mission, and its own identity. I believe that recognising the dynamic of corporate formation, inherent in the roots of Anglicanism, can provide a path forward. For example, it is as the church recognises its own brokenness that it can express the love of Christ amid disagreement and controversy; it is when the church recognises the call to forgiveness that it becomes willing to claim that forgiveness for another; it is when the church recognises that it is immersed in a Trinitarian reality that it begins to live out Christ's call for justice and evangelism. I am convinced that if the Anglican church can recover its own identity as a baptized community, we

will be able to weather this storm and live our call to inward Christlikeness and outward mission.

I recognise that this seems like a tall order. Furthermore, I recognise that there is no perfect model of Spiritual Formation, of the individual, or of the community of faith. Formation is a Spirit-led process and the community of faith must remain in a stature of humility and prayer. Still, within my own context, I cannot deny that the development of this model has completely shaped my entire understanding of Christian life, formation, and ministry. When this model was developed in the second year of doctoral studies, I recall feeling that I had only scratched the surface. The model presented here, while highlighting the nuances of my understanding of formation, can be developed further. I am excited to spend my foreseeable future investigating, researching, and reading about the various formational elements described here. While it is my desire that my formational model take centre stage in this portfolio, I am by no means finished.

Not only has the model pointed me in a theological, ecclesiological and formational direction, it has opened new doors of ministry. In response to the presentation of my model to my diocesan bishop, I was asked to do a presentation at the diocesan council and speak to the importance of community spiritual formation within the Anglican context. Similarly, I have led part of the annual clergy retreat, been asked to provide teaching in formation to the new clergy of the diocese, consulted parishes in matters of community formation, served as an assessor of potential clergy in the ecclesiastical province of Rupert's Land, presented my research on Morning Prayer to a ministry-training program, and

have been appointed to positions of leadership amongst the clergy in my own area. Perhaps the biggest outworking of my work on community formation was my nomination for possible election as diocesan bishop in a neighbouring diocese. My name was put forward by my own bishop as a candidate for episcopal office. When asked why he put forward my name, he spoke to my work in community formation.

Currently, and quite happily I might add, I remain as rector of The Anglican Parish of Holy Cross. As I complete my doctorate there are various areas where I can implement my learning. One colleague of mine, upon hearing of my work, has asked me to work with his own parish in the area of formation. His parish situation is one in which there is disagreement and discord among various bodies, and he has asked me to help form the parish into a unified body sharing one common identity and mission. In developing my model of community formation, I did not attempt to create a curriculum, but I am excited to experience how I might workshop community spiritual formation in the context of another parish.

As I mentioned in the introduction, I felt prayerfully led to study the Spiritual Formation of the Community, and thus every paper, assignment, and project contained this communal focus. Having arrived at the other side, I feel I have a wealth of resources and knowledge in this regard. Having been led to study formation in community, I now feel led to give back to the community much of what I have learned. What this entails, I am not sure. Like so many DMin students before me, I would love to publish and teach. Yet when I think about what the

future holds for me, there is always another reality that I recognise. More than anything, I am called to be an Anglican priest, serving my local Anglican parish.

Our culture today focuses so much on the desire for wide impact. Degrees must propel the person up the pay-scale or the corporate ladder; programs must have wide-reaching effect on institutions and structural frameworks. Yet, formation in Christlikeness, through immersion in baptismal ecclesiology, concerns itself with the formation of the local church. My own call to the priesthood is the call to help the local community of faith recover the beauty of its own identity as a baptized people. It is here where the Spirit of God works sometimes in the most profound of ways. It is in the local church where we experience the miraculous, and where formation in Christlikeness can be fully recognised. I hope that my post-doctoral future is one that leads me further into the loving care of the local church.

A baptized community embraces all the elements of baptism identity, embodiment, and mission. All must be acted upon as the Spirit leads. There must be a radical shift in how the church understands its nature and mission. It is not enough to repeat familiar adages such as “the church is the body of Christ”; we must reclaim the understanding that the body of Christ is formed as the community gathers together to participate in a united reality. It is in this regard that the liturgy of the Anglican Church speaks a profound word. The Church’s baptismal liturgy reminds the community of its corporate immersion, embodiment and transformation. The liturgy of the Church holds all three together. Thus, a

community that actively engages in all three elements, under the guiding hand of God, rightly engages in spiritual formation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DISCIPLINES OF COMMUNAL SPIRITUAL FORMATION

This portfolio has laboured to provide the theological groundwork for understanding the spiritual formation of the community. In this way, a detailed look at a baptismal movement through immersion, embodiment, and transformation has been described. A community must embody actions and disciplines if it wants to engage in baptismal reality. Unless baptismal identity is embodied within community life and witness, the community will remain spiritually de-formed.

Table 1 is a breakdown of various components of the above model, pairing it with list of activities and disciplines through which a community engages in baptismal immersion. The list is not meant to be exhaustive. Also, a discipline may also be listed under multiple model components. Disciplines are fluid and can occur in different ways for different aims. The community that continues to embody such disciplines, fluidly and creatively, can be seen to be rightly engaging in its own Spirit-led formation.

Table 1. Disciplines of a baptized community

Component	Stage	Disciplines
Renunciation	Immersion	Fasting, Confession, Solitude, Silence, Simplicity, Frugality.
Affirmation	Immersion	Biblical Meditation, Worship, Adoration, Testimonials
The Apostles' Teaching	Embodiment	Bible Study, Lectio Divina, Preaching, Contemplation
Fellowship	Embodiment	Service, Giving, Hospitality, Small Groups, Witnessing.
The Breaking of the Bread	Embodiment	Eucharist, Meditation on the Cross, Worship, Confession
The Prayers	Embodiment	Daily Office, Intercession, Meditation, Lectio Divina
Embracing Brokenness	Transformation: Inner Christlikeness	Confession, Service, Simplicity, Healing Prayer
Embracing Forgiveness	Transformation: Inner Christlikeness	Absolution, Eucharist, Silence, Hospitality, Prayer
The Call to Justice	Transformation: Outward Mission	Service, Witnessing, Social Advocacy, Prayer, Lament,
The Call to Evangelism	Transformation: Outward Mission	Witnessing, Hospitality, Preaching, Service, Advocacy

APPENDIX B

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: CONTEXT

The Anglican Parish of Holy Cross has an interesting history. As a parish in the diocese of Calgary, Holy Cross was created in 1981 when the Parish of St. Michael and All Angels merged with The Parish of St. Cyprian. In celebration of the merger, and in recognition that a new parish was created, the parishioners at the time changed the name of the congregation to The Anglican Parish of Holy Cross. This merger brought together two congregations of differing liturgical styles. The Parish of St. Michael and All Angels had a traditional liturgical style, principally employing the *Book of Common Prayer* within the church's liturgy. St. Cyprian's, on the other hand, primarily used the *Book of Alternative services*, and worshipped with a more contemporary liturgical form. The merger of the two parishes brought a unique desire to value and incorporate both traditions into the liturgical life of the new parish. Due to the faithful work of the rectors before me, the merger has been a resounding success. With the passage of time, and the death of many of the parishioners, most of the current congregation has no parish identity prior to the establishment of Holy Cross.

Currently, an average Sunday attendance at Holy Cross is 98 people over 2 services. The congregation is largely professional, or those who have retired from professional employment. Economically, the parish would be found strongly in the upper-middle class. Many of the parishioners live within the community, although there are some parishioners who travel from outside of Calgary to attend Holy Cross. There is a small but enthusiastic Sunday School, Servers Guild, and

Youth Group in the parish. Three years ago, the parish completed a renovation project, which saw the building of an addition to the western side of the church. New offices were created, and the narthex expanded. As well, a much-needed elevator was installed. The completion of the building project was an important event in the life of the parish, for this heralded the completion of the merger of the two parishes.

An important context for The Morning Prayer Study is the wider Anglican communion. Statistically, Anglicanism worldwide has undergone a decline of roughly 53% since 1961 (Blake 2006). As numbers decline, it is important to retain the distinctive expression of Anglican corporate spirituality, and in some cases, reintroduce practices that have become forgotten. For this reason, while the Morning Prayer Study is aimed at reintroducing the daily office at the congregational level, it may have wider implications for denominational or national Anglicanism.

APPENDIX C

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Now that summer is ending, it is time to get back to the busyness of regular life. For me, this means that I need to gather my energy for the final phase of my Doctoral degree. This final phase is a research project based on my previous two years of study. There is a notice about this later in the newsletter (and the bulletin) – but I thought I would take a few moments here and describe the research project in a bit more detail. I am looking for 8-10 volunteers so please read the description and prayerfully consider helping me in this endeavor.

What is the study? The study is on how the discipline of Morning Prayer directly contributes to the formation of a communal spirituality.

Time Commitment: The study will run for 10 weeks beginning on October 1st and concluding on December 7th. It is expected that a participant will spend between 1-2 hours *per week* in the study. I have designed the study to be as low-key and unobtrusive as possible. Thus, the time commitment should be negligible.

What would the participant do? The study has three main components to it.

Daily Activity: Participants are to say Morning Prayer out of the Book of Alternative Services *each weekday* morning. While there is not a set time one is to follow, it is important that this routine of prayer be established as one of the first matters of the day. *Morning Prayer is to be said at home*. The start of the study will include a training session to teach participants how to recite the Morning

Prayer office. (This will include helpful hints like “Where do I put my bookmark?!”)

Weekly Activity: Each week, participants are to write a journal entry regarding his/her experience with Morning Prayer. Journal entries may be submitted via email, or be handwritten – whatever is your own comfort. A list of standard questions will be given to aid in your journal writing. It is expected that writing the weekly journal will take no more than 10 minutes.

Group Activity: There will be two group-gatherings throughout the study. The first group gathering will be mid-way through the study. This will be held on Sunday November 4th after the 10:00 service. A questionnaire will be provided, and a general conversation will ensue about experiences in Morning Prayer. An opportunity to ask questions will also be part of this gathering as well. This format will be repeated at the end of the study, occurring on December 9th.

How can I help? As I mentioned, I would very much like between 8-10 volunteers for the study. This number would be statistically significant, as it would represent roughly 10% of our Sunday congregation. This number would allow me to extrapolate the results of the study, in order to comment on the congregational or diocesan importance of Morning Prayer.

Please consider signing up for the study. Not only would it help me in my doctoral degree, but also I firmly believe that you will experience a transformative spiritual practice. Please do not hesitate to ask questions, or to speak to me if you would like more information.

APPENDIX D

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: PHASES AND TIMETABLE

Date	Activity
September 1	Planning Phase: Call for Volunteers for participation.
September 20	Possibly requesting volunteers to ensure full parish representation.
September 30	Introduction/Orientation to the Morning Prayer Study. Letters of Informed consent to be given. First Questionnaire.
October 1	Beginning of the Morning Prayer Study. Morning Prayer will be practiced every week day throughout the study.
October 6	First Journal Entry due
October 13	Second Journal Entry due
October 20	Third Journal Entry due
October 27	Fourth Journal Entry due
November 3	Fifth Journal Entry due
November 4	Group Gathering. Second Questionnaire given. General discussion and data collected through field notes.
November 10	Sixth Journal Entry due
November 17	Seventh Journal entry due
November 24	Eighth Journal Entry due
December 1	Ninth Journal Entry due
December 8	Tenth Journal Entry
December 9	Group Gathering. Third Questionnaire given. General discussion and data collection through field notes.

APPENDIX E

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study looking at the effects of Morning Prayer on the development of communal spirituality within the Anglican church of Canada. The demands of the study are not that onerous, and it is expected you should be able to fit them into your daily routine quite easily. Still, now that you have agreed to participate in the study, you maybe asking! “What am I to do?”

Time Commitment:

The study will run for 10 weeks beginning on October 1st and concluding on December 7th. It is expected that one will spend between 1-2 hours per week in the study. Upon signing the letter of informed consent, the study will officially being. Instruction in how to pray Morning Prayer will be given, along with a questionnaire regarding your current experiences of daily prayer.

Daily Activity:

Participants are to say Morning Prayer out of the Book of Alternative Services *each weekday* morning. While there is not a set time one is to follow, it is important that this routine of prayer be established as one of the first matters of the day. Morning Prayer is to be said at home. That is, it is not required for you to come to the church each morning. It is recommended, however, that you say Morning Prayer in the same location each morning. A list of the lections of the day is provided.

Weekly Activity

Each week, participants are to write a journal entry regarding their experience with Morning Prayer. These entries are to be sent to Rev. Kyle and will inform much of the 'data' being collected throughout the study. A set of questions will be provided to aid in your reporting. You may make these journal entries either via email, or handwritten. If you choose to email Reverend Kyle your report, please email him at normankyle@mytyndale.ca.

For your journal entries, please comment on these factors:

- Was there a day/days where you were not able to attend to Morning Prayer? If so why?
- Please describe your experience of Morning Prayer over the past week.
- Important to Morning Prayer is the communal aspect of the office. Through Morning Prayer you join in an activity of the church. Please reflect on how you have experienced this communal reality through your practice of Morning Prayer.

Group Activity:

There will be two group-gatherings throughout the study. The first group-gathering will be mid-way through the study. This will be held on Sunday November 4th after the 10:00 service. A questionnaire will be provided, and a general conversation will ensue about experiences in Morning Prayer. An opportunity to ask questions will also be part of this gathering as well. This format will be repeated at the end of the study, occurring on December 9th.

APPENDIX F

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

You are being invited to participate in a research study looking at the effects of Morning Prayer on the development of communal spirituality within the Anglican church of Canada. The question being specifically asked is: Does participation in the liturgy of Morning Prayer increase one's sense of involvement and connection with the community of faith?" Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time, and for any reason you may choose.

This research will require about 1-2 hours of your time each week. During this time, you will engage in the office of Morning Prayer (from the Book of Alternative Services), as well as provide the researcher a weekly journal entry detailing your experience of Morning Prayer that week. Questions will be given to you to aid this reporting. Additionally, two group-gatherings will be held; one mid-way through the study, and one to close study.

There are many benefits associated with participation in the study. It is expected that individuals in the study will find themselves nurtured in their spiritual lives. Intimacy with God, answers in prayer, and a more integrated spiritual life are expected outcomes. Additionally, a stronger relationship amid the fellow-participants in the study is also expected to occur. Through shared experiences in prayer, those in the study will naturally build deeper relationships amongst each other. Existing friendships will deepen, and new friendships will

emerge. It is also believed that each participant will feel a deeper connection to the 'spiritual life' of the church community.

Another potential benefit of the study, after completion, is a re-awakening of the importance of the daily office within the church. As the individuals in the study relate their experiences of God through participation in the study, this may encourage others in the parish, or in the diocese, to take up this formative practice as well.

While this study is classified as 'low-risk', there are risks associated with any study. A participant may struggle with a perceived lack of 'spiritual experiences.' Difficulty in establishing the daily practice may create feelings of guilt or shame; or may cause the individual to think that he/she is 'failing' at Morning Prayer. While the study does not include a lot of inter-participant sharing, it is possible for a participant to feel judged by others in the group based on their experiences (or lack thereof) of prayer. These issues are heightened due to the researchers own relationship with the members of the study. As the Rector of the church, the participants in the study may feel pressured to produce a meaningful experience in their practice of Morning Prayer. Similarly, due to the pastoral relationship, participants may feel they have the obligation to provide the results they perceive the researcher is looking for, and thus falsify or exaggerate their reporting.,

You can help minimize these risks by ensuring that all responses (received via questionnaire, journal submission, and conversation) be an honest and true

representation of your experience. Additionally, it is asked that you do not compare or judge your own experience to that of another's.

For my part, all journal submissions will be kept confidential. Email submissions will be held on a password protected computer, and hand-written submissions will be kept in a locked safe. If the final report will quote a participant's journal, a pseudonym will be provided and any information which may be used to identify the individual(s) will be excluded. All journal submissions will be destroyed after 1 year.

The results from this study will be presented as part of Reverend Kyle's final doctoral project. It is also possible that the results may be presented as academic journal submissions, or as group presentations. At all times, your privacy will be protected. If you wish to receive a copy of the results from this study, you may contact Reverend Kyle

Signing below acknowledges;

- I have been informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that my participation is in no way coerced.
- I have been informed that I am allowed to withdraw from the study at any time.
- The benefits and risks associated to participation have been clearly explained to me.
- The demands of the study have been explained.
- At no time will my right to privacy, or any other personal and/or legal rights, be violated through participation in the study.
- I have had the opportunity to express concerns and/or ask questions related to my participation in the study.
- I understand, and accept, the necessity of confidentiality during the times of group-sharing.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

Thank you for your participation in the study.

APPENDIX G

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: BEGINNING QUESTIONNAIRE

Please describe your experience of prayer over the past several weeks.

Please describe how you would like your Prayer life to develop through participation in the Morning Prayer Study.

Over the past several weeks, has there been a moment where you have been aware of God's presence? If so, please describe one of those circumstances.

Besides church on Sunday mornings, how do you participate in the community of faith?

APPENDIX H

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: MIDDLE/END QUESTIONNAIRE

What has been valuable for you about the discipline of Morning Prayer?

What have you found difficult about the discipline of Morning Prayer?

Over the past several weeks, has there been a moment where you have been aware of God's presence? If so, please describe one of those circumstances.

How have you participated in the community of faith?

APPENDIX I

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Morning Prayer Study was a low-risk form of Action Research. Yet even low-risk research entails ethical considerations. These ethical considerations relate to the specific benefits and costs associated with participation in the study.

Benefits: There are many benefits associated with participating in the Morning Prayer study. It is expected that individuals in the study will find themselves nurtured in their spiritual life. Intimacy with God, answers in prayer, and a more integrated spiritual life are expected outcomes. Additionally, a stronger relationship with fellow-participants in the study is also expected to occur. People in the study, through shared experiences, will naturally build deeper relationships amongst each other. Existing friendships will deepen, and new friendships will emerge. A potential benefit of the study, after completion, is a re-awakening of the importance of the daily office within the church. As the individuals in the study relate their experiences of God through participation in the study, this may encourage others in the parish, or in the diocese, to take up this formative practice as well.

Costs: Despite the many benefits of the study, there are costs associated with participation. A participant may struggle with a perceived lack of ‘spiritual experiences.’ Difficulty in establishing the daily practice may create feelings of guilt or shame; or may cause the individual to think that he/she is ‘failing’ at Morning Prayer. While the study does not include a lot of inter-participant sharing, it is possible for a participant to feel judged by others in the group based

on their experiences (or lack thereof) of prayer. These issues are heightened due to my pastoral relationship with the members of the study. As the Rector of the church, the participants in the study may feel pressured to produce a meaningful experience in their practice of Morning Prayer. Similarly, due to this pastoral relationship, participants may feel obligated to falsify or exaggerate their reporting.

Another risk of the study lies in the recruitment of participants. While a general call for volunteers will occur, it may be necessary to approach certain individuals to obtain an appropriate sample. A potential danger of this a targeted recruitment is that this may lead some to feel coerced into participation.

Lessening the Risk: Given such ethical considerations several procedures will be put in place to minimize potential risk. Regarding inviting participants to the study, such invitations were made via letter, and not face-to-face. This was to lessen the perceived pressure that one may feel to accept the invitation. The letter also expressly stated that one was able to turn down the invitation or opt out of the study at any time.

Regarding the other costs associated with the study, risk management occurred in various ways. Firstly, all participants took part in an orientation session. This orientation detailed the procedures and practices of the study, as well as the costs/benefits associated with participation. Additionally, I described manage the liturgy of Morning Prayer. The aim was to ensure that all participants had equal knowledge of the liturgical practice. A letter of informed consent was provided at this orientation session and expressed that one may cease participation

in the study at any time. This informed consent also indicated the necessity of confidentiality in group sharing. In reporting, no identifying material would be used, allowing each participant to express his/her experience fully and honestly. The consent form was signed and returned before the beginning of the study.

As for any emotional risks associated with my position as rector at Holy Cross, the trusted relationship I have build with the parishioners allows me to respond to the spiritual needs of the parishioners in a variety of ways. It is this very relationship, that increase the benefits to the participants as well as de-crease the risks. The risks associated to group sharing is no greater than is experienced by parishioners during regular ministry. Group sharing in the context of Bible studies, prayer groups, and book studies is a familiar practice within the parish and holds no greater risk than participation in regular ministry activities in the church.

APPENDIX J

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: APPROVAL AND SUPERVISION

This project will abide by standard research practices and guidelines as set out by the Research and Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary (REB) and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement for Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*. The Morning Prayer Study was approved by the Research Ethics Board of Tyndale University and Seminary on September 21, 2018.

As an ordained priest in the Anglican Church of Canada, the research was consistent with the ethical framework governing all clergy, as outlined in the ordinal. While no specific approval requirements are necessary within the Anglican polity, as the priest of the parish, the research will be conducted in the same care and thoughtfulness as my own ministry. A retired Bishop was chosen as a chaplain for the study. As study chaplain, the Bishop is to be available to address any pastoral concern that may arise during a parishioner's involvement with the study. The Bishop will also observe the running of the study, thus ensuring that all participants are receiving appropriate pastoral and spiritual care by the researcher. Each participant in the study signed the necessary waivers to provide informed consent to the study and the use of the findings.

APPENDIX K

THE MORNING PRAYER STUDY: CODES

Coding of the data took the form of “colour coding.” As journal submissions were e-mailed to me, this was the easiest way to deal with the data presented. Questionnaires and Field notes were transcribed to and colour coded as well. Codes were not chosen prior to the study but emerged from the data itself. For example, I began with one colour for statements indicating emotional responses to Morning Prayer, but subsequently moved to two colours – one for positive emotions and one for the negative emotions of frustration. These codes subsequently became the 5 themes as explained in Chapter 4.

Blue – Engagement with Community

Red – Positive Emotional utterance

Black - Frustration

Green – Experience of God.

Purple – Daily Impact

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