

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**The Impact of Virtual Technology on Discipleship Training in a Small Group Context**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to  
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Austin Mansfield

Lynchburg, Virginia

July 2022

Copyright © 2022 by Austin Mansfield  
All Rights Reserved

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

**Thesis Project Report Approval Sheet**

---

Dr. Claudia E. Dempsey  
Associate Professor/  
Chair of Online Operations

---

Dr. Michael K. Eiras  
Assistant Professor/  
Instructional Mentor

## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

Austin Mansfield

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, April 15, 2021

Mentor: Dr. Claudia Dempsey

Many contemporary churches face the difficulty of implementing the Great Commission's mandate for making disciples (Matt 28:19-20). Occasional church attendance and a lack of participation in fellowship and ministries beyond the Sunday worship service reflect this difficulty. Discipleship has become even more challenging in the current climate of social distancing that has resulted from COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Being separated physically from others exacerbates a growing predisposition to spiritual isolation, which in turn hinders development of discipleship; physical interaction has always been the main model for making disciples. The Great Commission's description of discipleship (making disciples through going, baptizing, and teaching) is an observable, physical aspect of spiritual formation. Hence, the use of digital technology for virtual relationships for the purpose of making disciples is a new approach. This research project will propose a plan to enhance discipleship in the context of a small Anglican church in Yuma, Arizona. An integrated strategy will be used during this six-week video conferencing exercise to facilitate virtual fellowship, provide discipleship training, discuss spiritual formation processes, cultivate a posture of routine prayer, and encourage meditative Scripture reading. A Spiritual Fitness Test will be completed by the thirteen participants at the start and conclusion of the project to measure receptivity and growth. The project addresses a common discipleship problem with the added wrinkle of a global pandemic's influence on the process. Although the project is based in one Anglican church in Yuma, Arizona, the results are expected to have wide application as modified to local needs and geography.

The results demonstrated clear increases in spiritual formation in all categories and included requested for continued daily morning and evening prayer sessions. Those sessions have been continuing for more than a year following the project's completion.

### Key Words:

Discipleship, spiritual, formation, virtual, discipline, video, and group.

## Contents

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>Ministry Context</b>	2
Anglican Church	3
Christ the Redeemer	5
Yuma Demographics	6
<b>Problem Presented</b>	8
<b>Purpose Statement</b>	11
<b>Basic Assumptions</b>	12
<b>Definitions</b>	14
<b>Limitations</b>	19
<b>Delimitations</b>	20
<b>Thesis Statement</b>	20

### CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

<b>Literature Review</b>	22
The Biblical Family as a Model for Group Growth	22
The Early Church as a Model for Group Growth	24
Groups Throughout History	25
Groups in the Contemporary Church	26
Spiritual Formation Through Groups	27
Significance and Process of Spiritual Formation	29
The Importance of Discipleship	30
Determining Spiritual Formation	33
Community and Culture Issues	34
Digital Discipleship	37
<b>Theological Foundations</b>	40
Making Disciples	40
The Trinity as a Model for Community	43
Discipleship Groups as Home Churches	44
Small Group Models of Jesus	46
<b>Theoretical Foundations</b>	47
Discipleship Stages	48
Training Methodologies	52

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

<b>Intervention Design</b>	57
Spiritual Fitness Assessment	60
What on Earth Am I Here For? Study Sessions	61
Session One: You Matter to God	63
Session Two: Worship	65
Session Three: Fellowship	67
Session Four: Discipleship	69
Session Five: Ministry	71

Session Six: Evangelism .....	74
Morning and Evening Prayer .....	75
<b>Implementation of Intervention Design .....</b>	<b>76</b>
Session One .....	77
Session Two .....	77
Session Three .....	78
Session Four .....	78
Session Five .....	79
Session Six .....	80
Session Seven .....	80
 <b>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS</b>	
<b>Spiritual Formation Challenges .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Technological Challenges .....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Technological Advantages .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Expected Results .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Initial Findings of Spiritual Assessment .....</b>	<b>84</b>
Key Assessment Responses .....	85
Morning and Evening Prayer .....	92
<b>Post-Project Findings of Spiritual Assessment .....</b>	<b>93</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</b>	
A Broad Need for Discipleship .....	100
The Local Need for Discipleship at CTR .....	101
Logistical Aspects of the Project .....	102
Expectations and Realizations .....	103
Spiritual Fitness Assessment Comparison .....	104
Project Outcomes .....	104
Future Research Recommendations .....	107
Conclusion .....	108
 Appendix A – Spiritual Fitness Assessment .....	109
Appendix B – Daily Morning Prayer .....	112
Appendix C – Daily Evening Prayer .....	125
Appendix D – Consent Form .....	135
Appendix E – ACTS of Prayer .....	136
Appendix F – Foster’s Spiritual Discipline Streams .....	138
Appendix G – Contagious Christian Styles .....	142
Appendix H – Spiritual Fitness Assessment Results .....	144
Appendix I – S.H.A.P.E. ....	163
Appendix J – Copyright Approval for BCP 2019 .....	166
Appendix K – Copyright Approval for Spiritual Fitness Assessment .....	167
Bibliography .....	168
IRB Approval .....	175

## Figures

1.1	Figure 1 .....	85
1.2	Figure 2 .....	86
1.3	Figure 3 .....	87
1.4	Figure 4 .....	87
1.5	Figure 5 .....	88
1.6	Figure 6 .....	89
1.7	Figure 7 .....	89
1.8	Figure 8 .....	90
1.9	Figure 9 .....	91
1.10	Figure 10 .....	91
1.11	Figure 11 .....	93
1.12	Figure 12 .....	93
1.13	Figure 13 .....	94
1.14	Figure 14 .....	95
1.15	Figure 15 .....	95
1.16	Figure 16 .....	96
1.17	Figure 17 .....	97
1.18	Figure 18 .....	97
1.19	Figure 19 .....	98
1.20	Figure 20 .....	99

## Tables

1.1	Table 1 .....	143
1.2	Table 2 .....	143
1.3	Table 3 .....	144
1.4	Table 4 .....	144
1.5	Table 5 .....	145
1.6	Table 6 .....	145
1.7	Table 7 .....	146
1.8	Table 8 .....	146
1.9	Table 9 .....	147
1.10	Table 10 .....	147
1.11	Table 11 .....	148
1.12	Table 12 .....	148
1.13	Table 13 .....	149
1.14	Table 14 .....	149
1.15	Table 15 .....	150
1.16	Table 16 .....	150
1.17	Table 17 .....	151
1.18	Table 18 .....	151
1.19	Table 19 .....	152
1.20	Table 20 .....	152
1.21	Table 21 .....	153
1.22	Table 22 .....	153
1.23	Table 23 .....	154
1.24	Table 24 .....	154
1.25	Table 25 .....	155
1.26	Table 26 .....	155
1.27	Table 27 .....	156
1.28	Table 28 .....	156
1.29	Table 29 .....	157
1.30	Table 30 .....	157
1.31	Table 31 .....	158
1.32	Table 32 .....	158
1.33	Table 33 .....	159
1.34	Table 34 .....	159
1.35	Table 35 .....	160
1.36	Table 36 .....	160
1.37	Table 37 .....	161
1.38	Table 38 .....	161

## Abbreviations

ACNA	<i>Anglican Church in North America</i>
ASA	<i>Average Sunday Attendance</i>
COVID-19	<i>Coronavirus Disease 2019</i>
CTR	<i>Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church, Yuma, Arizona</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
DWA	<i>Diocese of Western Anglicans</i>
LEB	<i>Lexham English Bible</i>
LUSOD	<i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i>
MTD	<i>Moralistic Therapeutic Deism</i>
TEC	<i>The Episcopal Church</i>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

The Great Commission issues a divine directive to make disciples who, in turn, make disciples. In this biblical passage, Jesus says to His followers, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age” (Matt 28:19–20, Lexham English Bible).<sup>1</sup> In order to teach, however, disciples first need to learn. The New Testament, for example, is comprised of the works of apostolic leaders who learned from their experiences and then shared their observations and teachings for others after them to read and cogitate. The New Testament comprises the core of those Early Church teachings and has been available for almost two thousand years.

The Bible is the best-selling book ever written, with more than five billion copies sold or given away.<sup>2</sup> It is also the primary source for teaching others to obey what Jesus commanded, as the Great Commission requires. A recent Barna Group study shows that nine out of ten American households (88 percent) own at least one Bible.<sup>3</sup> Yet, fewer than half of them (48 percent) interact with the Bible in some way (e.g., reading, watching, or listening at least three times a year). Just 14 percent read the Bible daily.<sup>4</sup> Frequent Bible reading helps develop a biblical worldview; discipleship is more difficult without a biblical worldview molded by frequent

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the Lexham English Bible.

<sup>2</sup> “Best-Selling Book,” Guinness World Records, <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction>.

<sup>3</sup> Barna Group, *American Bible Study State of the Bible 2015* (2015): 11-12, accessed November 3, 2020, [https://www.americanbible.org/uploads/content/State\\_of\\_the\\_Bible\\_2015\\_report.pdf](https://www.americanbible.org/uploads/content/State_of_the_Bible_2015_report.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Barna Group, *State of the Bible 2018: Seven Top Findings* (2018), accessed November 3, 2020, <https://www.barna.com/research/state-of-the-bible-2018-seven-top-findings/>.

exposure to God's instructions. The Barna Group also provided a report that examined the percentages of churched, unchurched, and dechurched people in various cities across the nation. With the highest rate of church attendance being fewer than three out of five people, one can safely presume a national need for deeper spiritual formation and discipleship.<sup>5</sup>

Although Yuma, Arizona, is not on any of the Barna lists, there is a troubling consumer-based approach toward worship and fellowship that is similar to what Barna's group identified. This research project will, therefore, attempt to impart a greater level of spiritual maturity in congregants at Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church (CTR) in Yuma, Arizona, to help enable them to fulfill their responsibilities under the Great Commission in their surrounding area by deepening their discipleship training through spiritual formation within a small online discipleship group of participants.

The researcher anticipates that an increase in discipleship in this congregation will provide a repeatable model that can be valuable to other congregations.

### **Ministry Context**

CTR is a traditional Anglican church in Yuma, Arizona. As such, this church body embraces an organizational and structural model in which clergy and laity are distinct hierarchical groups, with a stratified structure in the clergy as well. The canons (church governance rules) of the province of the Anglican Church in North America detail the denomination's doctrine and describe the duties of "laity, clergy, and Bishops."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Barna Group, *Church Attendance Trends Around the Country* (2017), accessed November 3, 2020, <https://www.barna.com/research/church-attendance-trends-around-country>.

<sup>6</sup> Anglican Church of North America, "Title I: Organization and Administration of the Church," *The Canons of the Anglican Church in North America* (2009): 3, accessed October 31, 2020, [http://fwepiscopal.org/resources/ACNA\\_Constitution\\_and\\_Canons\\_June\\_2012.pdf](http://fwepiscopal.org/resources/ACNA_Constitution_and_Canons_June_2012.pdf).

## Anglican Church

Within the clergy, a deacon is a second ordained level below presbyter (priest). Anglicans recognize two sacraments (baptism and Eucharist), and five other sacramental rites (confirmation, reconciliation of a penitent, marriage, anointing of the sick, and ordaining clergy). Some Christian denominations allow all the members to participate in all ministries, ordinances, and sacraments, but Anglicanism maintains a strict separation between what laity and clergy are allowed to do. For example, Bishops are authorized to do all Sacraments and ministries, but priests can only administer some of them, deacons even fewer, and laity none except emergency baptisms. This is the basic context to which ministry at Christ the Redeemer must adhere. The term “empowering the laity” is common within Anglicanism, although the extent of empowerment is unclear and varies among congregations and regions.

The structure of the Anglican liturgy includes participation from both clergy and laity. The presiding clergy says a certain part and the congregation responds. Apart from this interaction, however, the worship service is a passive event for most of the people. The biblical passages are read to them, the sermon is preached to them, and the consecration of the bread and wine is done by someone in front of them.

Despite the implied passivity, the verbal exchange between clergy and laity during the service itself is far greater than in many other traditions. Many of the prayers consist of a call-and-response method ensuring a unique participation that exceeds standard group recitation. Many Anglicans are strengthened spiritually by the liturgical ritual as a reminder of the practice of the Early Church and a closeness with others who have used the same structure for five centuries. Anglican clergy must be seminary-trained and recommended by their congregations through multiple committees discerning the candidate’s calling to ordained ministry. The laity’s

role in discerning one's spiritual calling is a determinant in that person's spiritual role within the church. Not everyone who thinks he is called to be clergy is recognized as having that calling by the rest of his spiritual community. Because of the importance of lay involvement in clergy development, discipleship becomes even more critical in spiritual formation. A congregation that is unable to teach others to obey what Jesus taught lacks the requisite ability to determine the veracity of a calling of those who claim to have that ability. A spiritually strong laity ensures a spiritually strong clergy selection process.

The Anglican Church in North America is the governing body for the province in the United States. Individual churches are grouped into dioceses (CTR is part of the Diocese of Western Anglicans (DWA), which covers most of California and Washington State, as well as Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona), which are led by bishops. The dioceses combine to form a province led by an archbishop. One cannot be an Anglican without being under the authority of a bishop. There are no independent Anglican congregations. ACNA placed a great emphasis on numerical growth, seemingly expecting spiritual growth to coincide. Recently, the focus toward deeper spiritual growth has been expanding, with the archbishop himself providing daily online devotionals for anyone in the province.

Within this dynamic, many Anglican Christians still develop spiritually, but the goal of making disciples who make disciples has lacked intentionality. This researcher is the current pastor (presbyter) of the congregation at CTR and has been serving in that role for eleven years. The need for more intentional spiritual formation there is apparent, especially in the adult male demographic.

## Christ the Redeemer

Christ the Redeemer began in February 2007, as a result of the Episcopal Church's determination to distance itself from biblical authority incrementally. For example, at the 2000 National Convention, the Episcopal Church's (TEC) attempt to authorize the blessing of same-sex unions failed but was a harbinger of what lay ahead. In 2003, TEC approved the nomination of a bishop who had been living in an openly homosexual relationship as a priest for thirteen years.

At that same 2003 general convention, a priest offered a motion to discuss John 14:6 ([Jesus said,] "I am the way, the truth, and the life"), as members of TEC's hierarchy had publicly claimed that Jesus is but one of many ways to Heaven. The delegates refused to allow a vote, so the issue never made it to the floor—even for discussion. For many in TEC, that confirmed that the church leadership had slipped away from biblical truth.

Bishops from other provinces around the world noticed the situation unfolding in TEC, and orthodox congregations began expressing their concerns to those bishops in other regions. At the next national convention in 2006, the TEC created a liturgy (church service) to bless same-sex unions and confirmed a bishop-elect of Northern California who was divorced twice and married three times (many provinces in the Anglican Communion eject bishops after one divorce).<sup>7</sup> Some members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Yuma saw these actions as too far adrift from biblical authority and decided to leave TEC. Since one must be under the authority of a bishop to be an Anglican Church, St. Paul's and hundreds of other Episcopal congregations

---

<sup>7</sup> "The Episcopal Church, USA and Homosexuality," *Religious Tolerance*, accessed November 6, 2020, <http://www.religioustolerance.org/homepis14.htm>.

sought oversight from bishops overseas in Asia and Africa. In February 2007, about seventy-two members of St. Paul's left TEC to form CTR.

Thus, CTR, from its first days, was established on strong biblical belief and a desire for orthodoxy in their leadership and teaching. In 2009, The senior pastor invited this researcher to move to Yuma from San Diego to be the assisting clergy at CTR. Tumultuous circumstances led to his abrupt resignation six months later, and the congregation elected this researcher to be the new senior pastor of Christ Redeemer Church in Yuma, Arizona, July 2010. Although many within the church were unphased by this season of change and transition, others left the church.

The original members who have remained are still wounded and scarred by these events. In addition to breaking away from TEC and losing their senior pastor, the church split that followed the senior pastor's departure left an added sense of abandonment by their spiritual brothers and sisters. Although many of these events happened over ten years ago, these events still play a significant role in the spiritual wellness and responsiveness of the congregation of CTR.

### Yuma Demographics

The socioeconomic demographics of Yuma create challenges for ministry. Yuma is the most southwestern point of Arizona, and the average household income is about \$45,000, with per capita at about \$22,000. The total population is about 210,000 in the summer.<sup>8</sup> Many congregations, therefore, struggle financially. CTR's membership comprises the low end of Yuma's financial spectrum and has approximately ninety members. Twenty-three live out of state during the summer, and when most of the congregation was able to attend services in

---

<sup>8</sup> "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Yuma County, Arizona," United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/yumacountyarizona>.

person (February 2020, before COVID-19 restrictions), CTR had an average Sunday attendance of about seventy. Of the approximately thirty-one adult males in the congregation, about five attend Sunday worship services fewer than three times per year. Fewer than ten adult men participate in any kind of fellowship or accountability group.

For most, the obedience required in discipleship seems to be lacking; for many, there is not much biblical interest and for some, holiness is not really pursued. There is a discrepancy between what they have been taught about Christianity and what they are experiencing. As a result, it seems that for much of CTR, theological beliefs have been prioritized over an obedience to Christ. In other words, at CTR, believing the right things has become more important than doing the right things. While many of the women in the congregation have engaged in various ministries reaching into the community, some have not, and many of the men are below even nominal attendance.

There is a strong spiritual spark within most of the congregation at CTR that can be fanned into a full flame with an intentional focus on their discipleship. Like in a home furnace, there is a pilot light that is lit but lacks the intensity to heat the house. That intensity comes with the intentional focus of more spiritual fuel. The congregation is a caring group, devoting time and money to help feed the homeless who frequent the public park across the street from the church. The congregation is large enough to be financially solvent, despite the challenging economy, yet small enough that everyone knows each other—making Sunday worship like a family reunion. They volunteer in various capacities in the city: serving hot meals and offering prayer during the three days leading up to and including Thanksgiving and Christmas, volunteering to help process donated clothing and school supplies for local children whose families cannot afford them, creating meal trains to help other parishioners convalescing from

illness or with family members in hospice. There is an innate kindness, a palpable love that is frequently commented about by visitors who attend CTR's worship services. If discipleship under the Great Commission entailed just sharing God's grace and peace among themselves, CTR would be doing great. Making disciples requires more, however. The reaching, recruiting, and training others to, in turn, reach out, recruit, and train others involves skill sets that go beyond going to church and being kind, loving people. This research project is intended to increase desire in disciples at CTR to delve deeper into their calling and service to Jesus as their Lord, not just accepting Him as their Savior.

### **Problem Presented**

For most Anglicans, the hymn-singing and occasional prayer responses are the extent of their participation in the service. After receiving communion, the service concludes, and the congregation leaves to spend the week in a secular environment until the following Sunday morning.

Although some CTR congregants participate in other ministries such as the Prayers and Squares prayer-quilt ministry, which creates quilts while praying for the intended recipients, many do not engage in any deeply spiritual endeavors or activities. The Yuma climate complicates ministry activities because about a quarter of the CTR congregation heads to cooler climates during the summer months, making small group gatherings more challenging than they might otherwise be. The mandated COVID-19 restrictions have added even more challenges for getting any size group of people together, resulting in a need for churches to use more creative means to reach their congregations. CTR has been streaming services online and meeting together for Bible studies and meetings through videoconference software. The availability and now common use of this software has enabled some members of CTR who would otherwise be

out of touch in the summer to stay involved in fellowship with CTR members all over the continent. This technology will be used in this research project as a means of facilitating small group discipleship formation during the prohibition of in-person gatherings.

About 20 percent of the congregation attends the Sunday worship services less than once a month (with some appearing on Christmas or Easter only), or do not participate in any ministries, Bible studies, or fellowship activities. Consequently, there appears to be a need for intentionality in spiritual development at CTR. By external observation, their spiritual formation seems to be stalled in the discipleship process. The small group models currently in place focus more on fellowship than discipleship. These congregants believe in Jesus as Savior, but do not seem to recognize Him as Lord or obediently seek to make other disciples. By providing a close-knit, small group deliberately focusing on discipleship, CTR's leadership hopes to improve the spiritual formation of the adult male demographic. The intent of this ministry project, therefore, is to encourage spiritual development in a group of parishioners in CTR through a weekly gathering for prayer, instruction, and spiritual growth.

Fulfilling Jesus' command in the Great Commission to make disciples involves more than merely internalizing the Gospel. The idea of an intellectual assertion that Jesus is Savior without the requisite behavior change showing that Jesus is Lord represents a dead, rather than living, faith. Paul's letters detail the behavioral changes that demonstrate a spiritual transformation, and Jesus frequently refers to fruit as an indicator of discipleship. Doing God's will is the basic behavior recognized in disciples. However, being comfortable, for many members at CTR, supersedes being fruitful.

The cultural influence of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism in contemporary Christian worldview has helped foster complacency within the congregation. This perspective, examined

by Christian Smith and Melinda Denton in *Soul Searching*, is described in more depth later in this paper and has been increasing in popularity among people of faith since the mid-twentieth century. Its main focus for its adherents is living a good and happy life as a likeable person, feeling good about oneself without suffering or a need for grace, and believing in a God who exists, created the world, defined a general moral order, while staying out of people's personal affairs—especially the kind that people prefer to keep hidden.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, the lessening of group loyalty has made attending worship services occasionally the extent of participation in what used to engender belonging. Being in a group used to be the same as being part of it—the group's health reflected the efforts of its members. The structure of Anglican worship services is referred to as *liturgy*, from the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning, “work of the people.” The contemporary practice, however, has shifted to the work of a few that is viewed by the rest. The aspect of working together intentionally for the betterment of the group has lessened over decades as Western culture has become more individualistic. An individualist perspective creates additional challenges for missional activity and growth.

Richards and James discuss the differences in group and individual perspectives, writing, “Individualist societies tend to think of community as being the sum of the individuals...In collectivist societies, however, the individual is the sum of the community.”<sup>10</sup> The contemporary Christian perspective is that the Church is composed of Christians formed individually and gathering together for worship, as opposed to the biblical view that Christians are formed by the one Body of Christ and are identifiable by their common characteristics such as peace, love, joy,

---

<sup>9</sup> Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 163-4.

<sup>10</sup> E. Randolph Richards and Richard James, *Misreading Scripture with Individualist Eyes: Patronage, Honor, and Shame in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 22.

gentleness, etc.<sup>11</sup> The problem is that most of the congregants at CTR do not have a missional perspective and thus are not reaching full maturity as disciples.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose for this DMIN action research thesis is to establish a small group to improve the spiritual direction and formation of disciples who are part of Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church in Yuma, Arizona. The lack of spiritual maturity among this population is problematic because it hinders obedience to Christ's (and CTR's) mission statement of "Making disciples who make disciples" (Matt 28:18-20). For this reason, this small group study will seek to promote opportunities for greater spiritual formation and maturity, with the eventual goal of replication. Spiritual formation is a necessary part of discipleship, as disciples by design are formed through the power of the Holy Spirit, indicated by Jesus' promise to send an advocate to guide disciples. The biblical imperative of discipling others in accordance with the Great Commission assumes that there are already disciples present, not just attendees. By a deliberate focus on spiritual development among the least spiritually developed members of CTR, the leadership at CTR believes an awakening of others in the congregation will follow, as the attitude of service changes from obligation to opportunity.

This project will use the *Spiritual Fitness Assessment* from Dale Fletcher's *Faith and Health Connection* to determine the initial and project completion levels of spiritual formation of the participants. Fletcher's ministry uses his assessment to help guide people in mental, physical, and spiritual behaviors to develop a biblical lifestyle perspective. The researcher in this project will use the data collected in the assessment to analyze the spiritual growth of the participants, as the mental and psychological implications are beyond the project's scope.

---

<sup>11</sup> Richards, *Misreading Scripture*, 22.

### Basic Assumptions

A popular cultural assertion in Western Christianity seems to be that an intellectual assent to the death and resurrection of Jesus is all that is needed for salvation, and the Christian life. The latter part of the Great Commission, in which teaching new disciples to obey everything Jesus has commanded (Matt 28:19-20), seems to be disregarded. Simply accepting Jesus as one's Savior, and embracing baptism, without any inclination or determination to modify one's behavior in accordance with His call to obedience, has become a common behavioral model of post-modern Western Christianity. James Fowler refers to this level of belief as the second of six stages of faith: Mythic-Literal.<sup>12</sup> Although this stage is typical of young children, often adolescents and adults plateau there.<sup>13</sup> If Christians become stuck in one of the stages of development, they are not fully maturing spiritually and become attendees, present occasionally but not fully devoted. If Christians are called to make disciples and instead make occasional attendees, they are not fulfilling the directive Jesus gave.

Also, the Early Church and New Testament model of the church as a family demonstrates the intense bond expected within the church and the dynamic of multiple immediate family members (small groups) being part of a larger extended family (congregation) and ultimately the full Body of Christ. The hierarchical traditional model upon which Anglican Churches are structured allows for some limited flexibility in incorporating laity in church leadership. Establishing increased small group activity with discipleship intentionality would benefit CTR as

---

<sup>12</sup> Terri Daniel, *Loss and Trauma as a Path to Spiritual Awareness: Applying Fowler's Stages of Faith Development to the Grief Journey* (Oregon: Oregon Hospice, 2016), 1, accessed November 12, 2020, <https://oregonhospice.org/media/PPEDanielStagesofFaith.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

a whole and each congregant individually, reinvigorating the church family aspect of discipleship.

This plan, however, assumes that the traditional church model at CTR is flexible enough to enable a stronger laity. Since the hierarchical structure of the traditional church engenders an active clergy and passive laity, a restructuring may not bring the active participation anticipated by the congregation. This project also assumes that the current COVID-19 restrictions will still be in force, necessitating a Zoom meeting platform rather than in-person fellowship. Many small group activities and programs center around a shared meal and fellowship; digital environments lack that level of social interaction and may be less popular as a result.

The most basic assumption of this project is that people want spiritual formation. There is a strong possibility that people who are complacent enjoy that limited level of involvement and do not want to venture into deeper levels of discipleship training. Because the congregation consistently receives the message that all relationships involve more effort than merely being there, one can assume that a significant portion of the congregation is likely to accept the challenge of drawing into deeper relationship with God by drawing into deeper relationship with each other.

For that reason, this doctoral project will seek to offer an eight-week small-group discipleship initiative to foster greater spiritual maturity among the congregants of CTR. This research project will begin with an initial spiritual fitness assessment (Appendix A) to measure the spiritual formation levels of the participants. This same instrument will be used at the end of the study to discern and measure changes in the spiritual formation responses and levels of the participants. The curriculum for the group meetings will include video segments of Rick Warren's *What on Earth Am I Here For?* and discussion regarding development as disciples of

Jesus Christ. The DVD curriculum is based on Warren's best-selling book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*.

As people respond differently to various teaching styles, such as visual, aural, or tactile, an assumption for this project is that the multiple methods incorporated into the meeting will spark increased interest in reaching beyond the participants' previous comfort zones into new evangelistic endeavors in the surrounding community.

### Definitions

Certain terms can be subjectively understood in usage, giving varied definitions dependent on the author's intent. Sometimes the standard definition of a term misaligns with the way it is used in academia or the field. To avoid confusion regarding certain terms appearing in this thesis, definitions are provided for the following: disciple/discipleship, leader/servant leadership, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, and spiritual discipline/formation.

#### Disciple/Discipleship

Discipleship as depicted in the Old Testament primarily involved learning what the Torah required and obeying it. The Hebrew words *vasar* (to instruct) and *lamad* (to teach) align with the concept of discipleship and denote a behavioral change as a result. The New Testament words *mathetes* (disciple) and the related *manthano* (to learn) links discipleship to instruction and learning. Disciples, however, go beyond a mere transfer of knowledge to a transformation of the disciple to be like his teacher. It represents a complete lifestyle change.<sup>14</sup>

Jesus expects every Christian to participate in spreading the Good News of Jesus and the life-changing grace He offers. As Evans and Coder point out, "The idea that the work of soul

---

<sup>14</sup> Chris Byrley, "Discipleship," ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

winning, or evangelism, is to be carried out by specialists like pastors and missionaries is not taught in Scripture. Every child of God bears some responsibility (2 Cor 5:18–20).”<sup>15</sup>

Discipleship is a dedication to the spiritual formation which transforms the human spirit to enable them to be disciples. Discipleship and spiritual formation are a symbiotic relationship that enhance each other. Neither exists without the other, nor can one advance in only one aspect. It is a paired set given by grace through faith.

Cyprian of Carthage wrote, “How can a man say that he believes in Christ, who does not do what Christ commanded him to do? Or whence shall he attain to the reward of faith, who will not keep the faith of the commandment?”<sup>16</sup> Discipleship is required of all Christians; one could say it is the defining characteristic. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “All those who follow Jesus’ call to discipleship are made by that call to be the salt of the earth in their whole existence.”<sup>17</sup>

### Leader/ Servant Leadership

Bruce explains that Jesus’ disciples were energized by their devotion to Jesus and His kingdom, and that that devotion enabled them to endure any sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> Jesus showed His disciples how to lead with a humble attitude of service. Servant leadership was instituted by Jesus. Jesus’ disciples often argued about their own selfish concerns—rivalry instead of

---

<sup>15</sup> William Evans and S. Maxwell Coder, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, Enl. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 290.

<sup>16</sup> Elliot Ritzema, *300 Quotations for Preachers from the Early Church*, Pastorum Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “On the ‘Extraordinary’ of Christian Life,” in *Discipleship*, ed. Victoria J. Barnett, trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss, Reader’s Edition, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 80.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve; Or, Passages out of the Gospels, Exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus under Discipline for the Apostleship* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1889), 16.

mission.<sup>19</sup> They argued about who would be considered the greatest disciple (Luke 22:24) and who should get seats of honor in Heaven (Mark 10:37). Finally, at the Last Supper, they seemed to understand after Jesus washed their feet (John 13). Servant leadership is “demonstrated by a heart for the powerless, unprotected, and exploitable.”<sup>20</sup> The Old Testament used the words *ehed* (servant) and *abad* (to serve) to describe the ideas of work or service. In the New Testament, *diakonos* and *doulos* depict servanthood or slavery. *Diakonos* frequently refers to service to God and others, such as for Stephen and the six other deacons first established in the early church (Acts 6) to ensure the Gentile Christian widows and orphans were receiving food and other necessities. This attitude of servanthood was expected of disciples by Jesus when He discussed leadership with them. Jesus told them after describing the way Gentiles lead, “It will not be like this among you! But whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant (*diakonos*), and whoever wants to be most prominent among you must be your slave (*doulos*)” (Matt 20:26–27).<sup>21</sup>

### Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is a contemporary theological view common in Western Christians and especially youth. It has a moralistic approach, by which being a good, moral person is the key to a happy life.<sup>22</sup> What is meant by “moral” is being the kind of person people like. It is also about offering therapeutic benefits to its adherents, making them feel better about

---

<sup>19</sup> Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 222.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Eric Lewellen, “Servant,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> Smith, *Soul Searching*, 163.

themselves. In MTD there is no need for repentance from sin, consistently praying as a means of spiritual formation, building character through suffering, or basking in God's love and grace. It also fosters belief in a particular kind of God: one who exists, created the world, and defines a general moral order, but not one who is particularly personally involved in one's affairs, especially affairs in which one would prefer not to have God involved.<sup>23</sup>

This de facto creed is particularly evident among mainline Protestant and Catholic youth, but is also visible among black and conservative Protestants, Jewish teens, other religious types of teenagers, and even many non-religious teenagers in the United States. It is a parasitic faith that attaches to the person's original religion. Although no one uses the term "Moralistic Therapeutic Deist" to describe themselves, it is definitive of their worldview.<sup>24</sup>

#### Spiritual Discipline/Formation

Spiritual disciplines have been emphasized recently in contemporary evangelicalism as part of spiritual formation that opens one's mind and body to the actions of the Holy Spirit. Much of the modern focus on spiritual formation has grown from the works of Richard Foster and Dallas Willard.<sup>25</sup> The term spiritual formation comes from Paul's writings to the Galatians: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal 4:19). The word translated as "formed" is *morphe* (to shape). When combined with prepositions in Greek, we get "conformed" and "transformed." Therefore, spiritual formation

---

<sup>23</sup> Smith, *Soul Searching*, 163.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>25</sup> Mark Galli, "In the Beginning, Grace: Evangelicals Desperately Need Spiritual and Moral Renewal—On That Everyone Agrees. But What Do We Do about It?," *Christianity Today* vol. 53, no. 10 (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today International, 2009), 26.

refers to transformation of disciples to sanctification. “Disciple” appears frequently in the Gospels and “spiritual formation” is used in the New Testament letters.<sup>26</sup>

Spiritual formation is inexorably linked to discipleship, as all disciples of Jesus are born again spiritually to new life that continues to form as one draws closer to Christ. Both aspects provide a biblical perspective for Christian growth with the goal of transformation into the image of Christ through Scriptural and theological grounding.<sup>27</sup> Spiritual formation is not a self-help procedure; it is a means through which one draws closer to God, inevitably becoming transformed by the Holy Spirit in the process. John Chrysostom frequently compared spiritual formation to athletic preparation and activities, especially to wrestling school and gymnasium.<sup>28</sup> Psychologically, spiritual formation also is linked to human formation, but through formative thinking rather than informational thinking, according to Adrian Van Kaamp.<sup>29</sup> Informational thinking is based on data collected, usually separate from any experiential aspects, and aims for solutions to a problem. Technological and mechanical advances are results of informative thinking. Formative thinking discerns meaning from experiences and causes changes related directly to one’s development.<sup>30</sup> Spiritual formation is also a community activity aided by the local church. Practical application of information, grounded in faith, is fostered by spiritual

---

<sup>26</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Bill Hull, *Discipleship*.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher A. Hall, *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2002), 201.

<sup>29</sup> E. S. Gibbs, “Van Kaam, Adrian L,” ed. David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill, *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 1247.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

nourishment coming from being part of the Body of Christ.<sup>31</sup> Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson describe the importance of small groups for spiritual formation as they note, “Small groups are conducive to life change and spiritual formation. As people share their life experiences and journey of faith together, they can spur one another on to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.”<sup>32</sup> Spiritual discipline is opposed by natural human desire, such as during fasting, which affects other appetites besides food. As Tertullian described, people are prone to gluttony of both food and lust, hence the spiritual discipline of fasting helps Christians control both. People are “as prone to manifold feeding as to manifold marrying—so that it deservedly accuses the *spiritual* discipline, which according to its ability opposes it...”<sup>33</sup>

Spiritual formation is therefore a process of transformation of the Christian spirit, aided by the use of spiritual disciplines to open one’s mind and soul to the actions of the Holy Spirit.

### **Limitations**

This research project will be limited to the congregation of CTR Anglican church in Yuma, Arizona. The socioeconomic level is primarily lower-middle class blue-collar worker or retired. The size of the congregation limits the pool of volunteers as well. Additionally, the varied work schedules and travel itineraries impact the ability to establish meeting times that will be amenable to the participants’ family and job responsibilities. The congregation’s comfort and

---

<sup>31</sup> Kara Miller, “Keeping the Faith in Seminary,” *Christianity Today*, vol. 60, no. 8 (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 2016), 94.

<sup>32</sup> Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can, Too* (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2007), 146-160.

<sup>33</sup> Tertullian, “On Fasting in Opposition to the Psychics,” in *Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian, Part Fourth; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen, Parts First and Second*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. S. Thelwall, vol. 4, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 102.

aptitude with computers and communication software limit their ability to participate if the meetings are through Zoom and not in person.

The common perspective of many parishioners at CTR is Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, which suggests that God intends for people to be happy, and that He responds to prayerful requests (because it will make them happy), but otherwise stays out of their lives.<sup>34</sup> The spiritual stagnation of some members may reduce levels of interest and participation. Some members may believe they are doing fine as is and do not need any further formation. Additionally, the physical separation of social distancing, masks, and restrictions on public gatherings due to COVID-19 limit social interaction but is also the impetus for this research project.

### **Delimitations**

This research project will be open to congregants between thirty and eighty years of age and will incorporate video training about reaching out into communities as well as discussions questions and answers based on an accompanying study guide. The meetings will be by Zoom only, if COVID-19 restrictions are still in force at the time the project begins. The meetings will be weekly to accommodate the various work and family schedules of the participants. The initial and final spiritual wellness assessments will be online questionnaires. The meetings will be based on that theological imperative to make disciples, and that making disciples entails a deeper spiritual formation than occasional Sunday morning attendance at worship services.

### **Thesis Statement**

The leadership at Christ the Redeemer has agreed to assist in this thesis project with the hopes that a deeper commitment to personal discipleship will result in a healthier church and improved relationships with the community and God. Moving participants beyond a superficial

---

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Soul Searching*, 163.

faith in which they have a cognitive assertion that Jesus is their Savior but not a strong desire to serve Him as their Lord, obeying all He has commanded is the ultimate goal of the proposed small group discipleship. The thesis asserts that virtual small group discipleship sessions with adult parishioners at Christ the Redeemer will result in greater measures of spiritual maturity among this audience.

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Literature Review

Small groups have been used as a format for spiritual formation since biblical times, and many authors have investigated the concept through various formats ranging from church as a family to Wesley's class meetings. The following perspectives show different authors' perspectives in disciple-making in a group dynamic.

#### The Biblical Family as a Model for Group Growth

The New Testament shows fellowship as an important element in the development of disciples. The bond that develops is akin to a family relationship rather than mere acquaintance. Paul's frequent use of the term "brothers" when addressing other Christians in his letters supports the "Christians as family" concept. Yet contemporary use of the term "church family" bears little similarity to the family in biblical times. Paul's use of "brother" in his letters was a reminder to his listeners and readers of their obligation to one another. The family in the New Testament world took priority over everything else. Group loyalty was paramount, and the most important group in a person's life was the blood family.<sup>35</sup> Disciples were formed through a caring community involved in mentoring and guiding new members. Small groups provide a means of developing disciples in that model.

Hellerman describes the central value in ancient families as the obligation of loyalty to one's blood brothers and sisters.<sup>36</sup> Disloyalty to one's sibling was a much more treacherous act than disloyalty to one's spouse.<sup>37</sup> Comiskey adds extended family as a loyalty consideration as

---

<sup>35</sup> Joseph H. Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 34-52.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

well, specifically multi-generational (up to four generations) with several families related by marriage or blood living in houses connected to each other architecturally as part of the same household or *oikos*.<sup>38</sup> According to the Anglican tradition, the baptizing aspect of the Great Commission shows an initiatory process for adoption as a child of God. Adoption is a family term used frequently by Jesus to describe the status of His followers in His kingdom. Making disciples has the dual benefit of spiritual formation for the individual and increased numbers of heavenly siblings.

The nation of Israel itself was “organized according to families, clans, and tribes.”<sup>39</sup> Comiskey considers this indicative of the importance Jesus places on this new spiritual family of believers.<sup>40</sup> A significant difficulty in accomplishing the familial aspect of discipleship is the forced isolationism of COVID-19 restrictions and the superficial communities created through social media. Using a virtual medium such as Zoom videoconferencing to deepen the spiritual bonds between disciples is a new phenomenon resulting from the coinciding of technical advancement and pandemic isolation.

Despite the dysfunction in the Gentile Christians’ family model, Jesus chose family as His metaphor describing the highest level of loyalty and commitment, representing personal sacrifice for the benefit of each other in that solid relationship. Important decisions were made within a family in that culture, so church as family would require sacrifice and decision-making for the group’s benefit.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Joel Comiskey, *Biblical Foundations for the Cell-Based Church* (Moreno Valley, CA: CCS Publishing, 2012), 32.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

### The Early Church as a Model for Group Growth

As the Early Church was forming, community became integral to church wellness and growth. Believers often were shunned by their families, acquaintances, and communities. As persecution grew more intense, early Christians were forced to operate underground to avoid detection, often literally in the catacombs which housed the dead. The converts depended on each other for their basic needs and survival, bringing them together in closer relationship than they had been with even their physical families.<sup>42</sup> Prospective members were invited by someone who was already part of the group and after intensive training in the beliefs and accepted behaviors in this new community, they were brought into the fold through a formal ritual that established a boundary around the community: baptism.<sup>43</sup>

Hellerman details the group dynamic of the New Testament and Early Church in contrast to the contemporary prioritization by Christians: 1) God, 2) family, 3) church, and 4) others. In the New Testament world, the group took priority over the individual, with a person's most important group being the family, in which the closest bond was between siblings.<sup>44</sup> In the Gospels, Jesus forms His followers into a surrogate family, using references such as, "Heavenly father," and family language such as "brother" to describe others who are following Jesus. The intense group identity of the New Testament church shows that early Christians considered

---

<sup>42</sup> Rodney Buchanan, "History of Pre-Reformation Small Groups," Article used by Dr. Rod Dempsey at Liberty University Class DSMN 830, (2020), 2.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas O'Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; Baker Academic, 2010), 46.

<sup>44</sup> Hellerman, *When the Church*, 34-52.

commitment to God and commitment to God's family as synonymous.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the prioritized list for early disciples would be more like: 1) God's family, 2) one's own family, and 3) others.<sup>46</sup>

### Groups Throughout History

Martin Luther emphasized the importance of returning to patterns and forms of biblical community.<sup>47</sup> He recommended that people who wanted to be deeper Christians should meet together "in houses for prayer, reading, celebrating the sacraments, discipline, and ministry to the poor."<sup>48</sup> John Wesley brought holiness to the forefront of Christian belief and behavior through a similar but more intensive series of groups that began meeting in people's houses, stores, and even attics before being able to buy their own buildings designed with small rooms for their Methodist meetings.<sup>49</sup>

Jacob Spener notes that devotion to the Holy Spirit was not a primary focus in the Roman Catholic Sacramental tradition, possibly due to an over-emphasis on the inward aspect of intense internal illumination of the Spirit at the expense of the Early Church's focus on community.<sup>50</sup> This ironic result seemed to stem from the misconception that the Early Church preferred personal over communal worship, overlooking the development of monastic communities rather

---

<sup>45</sup> Hellerman, *When the Church*, 34-52.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Bunton, *300 Years of Small Groups—The European Church from Luther to Wesley*, Christian Education Journal, series 3, vol. 11, no. 1 (2014), 90, accessed July 18, 2020, [https://learn.liberty.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-40817961-dt-content-rid-494193756\\_1/xid-494193756\\_1](https://learn.liberty.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-40817961-dt-content-rid-494193756_1/xid-494193756_1).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>50</sup> Dennis McCallum, "Phillip Jacob Spener's Contribution to Protestant Ecclesiology," *Xenos Christian Fellowship*, 17, accessed November 12, 2020, <https://www.xenos.org/essays/phillip-jacob-speners-contribution-protestant-ecclesiology>.

than individual monasteries.<sup>51</sup> The Reformation, Spener adds, inadvertently brought Christians further away from spiritual formation as the “ideal of the individual alone with his God” supplanted the practice of bonding within and through community.<sup>52</sup>

### Groups in the Contemporary Church

Contemporary loyalty toward groups is less pronounced in America, according to Sefik, who maintains that American small groups show a relatively lower level of discipleship and spiritual formation than their South Korean and Singaporean counterparts possibly because of “the American tendency to be more individualistic, have looser family ties, and less respect for authority.”<sup>53</sup> Despite that negative cultural aspect of Western society, with groups seeming to be clusters of individuals instead of a singular collectivist entity, the multiplication of small groups in the United States seems to be the most important principle for church development.<sup>54</sup>

Phillips describes a relational model with seven dimensions of belief: “Content, sources, practice, salience, function, place, and time.”<sup>55</sup> Through use of that model, with its integration of emotional and relational group experiences, Phillips proposes that non-religious people are drawn into a Christian social structure.<sup>56</sup>

Contemporary groups, according to a 2008 Barna Group study, show a significant position in the participants’ lives, even if the discipleship level is shallow. When asked about the

---

<sup>51</sup> McCallum, “Protestant Ecclesiology,” 17.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Sefik, “Effective Small Group Discipleship Ministry in the Local Church” (DMIN diss., Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, 2016), 4.

<sup>54</sup> Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 33.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Phillips, *The Bible, Social Media and Digital Culture* (London: Rutledge, 2019), 2.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

most important relationship in their lives, just nineteen percent said God. But when asked about the most important group in their lives, more than fifty percent said their church. This seems to indicate that, although contemporary American Christians have developed interpersonal comfort among other Christians in their church, they have forgotten the basic reason for being part of one.<sup>57</sup>

### Spiritual Formation Through Groups

Christian spirituality is different from general spirituality in that its focus is on Jesus Christ as its force. Paul describes those without Christ as being dead: "...although you were dead in your trespasses and sins... and we being dead in trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved)" (Ephesians 2:1, 5). He says the same in Col 2:13. So, Christians are people who were spiritually dead because of their sins (they were physically still alive), until they were brought back to life through Jesus Christ. Therefore, spirituality that does not involve Jesus (the Holy Spirit) is worthless, and only Christian spirituality provides spiritual life.<sup>58</sup>

Walton describes the value of small groups to foster spiritual formation. The groups provide a deeper understanding of God, develop personal relationships, establish accountability for behavior and community outreach and mold individual values according to the values of the group and larger church.<sup>59</sup> Discipleship requires intentionality. The idea of spiritual formation implies someone being formed and someone else doing the forming, and that it does not happen without deliberate effort. Intentional discipleship is a lifelong journey empowered by the Holy

---

<sup>57</sup> Peters, 380.

<sup>58</sup> John Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 61.

<sup>59</sup> Roger Walton, "Disciples Together: The Small Group as a Vehicle for Discipleship Formation," *Journal of Adult Theological Education*, 8:2 (2011): 103, accessed September 11, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1558/JATE.v8i2.99>.

Spirit, enabling Christians to grow to love and do the things God loves. Discipleship is more than just avoiding vices; it is the embodiment of Jesus' life and teachings. Paul describes the result of rejecting carnal desires and embracing spiritual ones in Gal 5:19-23. Powell writes, "Holiness is God's gift through Christ, but it is also a continual pursuit that is ultimately made possible because of the Spirit's work in us."<sup>60</sup>

The pursuit of that holiness through the contemplative spirituality of monastic life is exemplified by the orders established by Francis of Assisi and Benedict of Nursa who taught that "the journey outward includes the journey inward."<sup>61</sup> They show that discipleship involves a deep quest for God to transform one's character to become an imitation of Jesus. Bill Hull further states that true conversion means discipleship, and that discipleship means discipline.<sup>62</sup>

Roger Walton seems to agree with that perspective and advocates small groups as a next stage by which the new Christians experience Christian community, learning more about Jesus and discipleship through conversations and Scripture reading, eventually moving through disciple formation to active mission.<sup>63</sup> That active mission forms as a congregation or group grows spiritually. As the group engages its surrounding world, the generosity of group members grows and their identity as disciples solidifies.<sup>64</sup> Mak describes that formation as working from

---

<sup>60</sup> Mark E. Powell, *Discipleship in Community: A Theological Vision for the Future*, (Abilene, Texas: Abilene Christian University Press, 2020), Ch. 5, ProQuest, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/reader.action?docID=6223106>.

<sup>61</sup> Hull, *Discipleship*, 74-113.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Walton, *Disciples Together*, 104-105.

<sup>64</sup> Malan Nel, "Discipleship: The priority of the 'Kingdom and his Righteousness,'" *HTS Theological Studies* 73 (4), (2017), 8, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4583>.

the inside outward, behaving as though one was with Jesus, learning from Him, living one's life as Jesus would live it.<sup>65</sup>

### The Significance and Process of Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is an ongoing process, not just a singular “come to Jesus” moment. It requires more than just an intellectual assertion of Jesus’ divinity. Jim Putman describes the process as similar to a new mother taking care of her baby: “a disciple maker who helps a spiritually dead person come to faith in Jesus needs to help that spiritual infant grow up.”<sup>66</sup>

Without spiritual formation, Christianity becomes a marketplace for consumer Christians, who, as Dallas Willard describes, use God’s grace for forgiveness and the church’s services for special occasions, without giving their lives, thoughts, or hearts to God and His kingdom.<sup>67</sup> Willard states, “Such Christians are not inwardly transformed and not committed to it.”<sup>68</sup>

Spiritual disciplines are tools that guide disciples through their formation. They are activities done volitionally to enable Christians to do things they cannot do on their own power.<sup>69</sup> In that process, the Christian inner self takes on the characteristics of Jesus.<sup>70</sup> Willard notes that the usual methods recommended by churches, such as Bible study, prayer, and church

---

<sup>65</sup> Simon Mak, “Forming a Kingdom-Minded Missional Community of Discipleship Small Groups” (DMIN focus ppr., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2016), 38.

<sup>66</sup> Jim Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 52-53.

<sup>67</sup> Trevin Wax, *Eschatological Discipleship: Leading Christians to Understand Their Historical and Cultural Context* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018), 173.

<sup>68</sup> Dallas Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, (NY: HarperCollins, 1998), 342.

<sup>69</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Rediscovering Jesus' Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (NY: HarperCollins, 2006), 52.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

attendance, have little effect on soul transformation.<sup>71</sup> Hull asserts that spiritual formation is the process of transforming and sanctifying disciples.<sup>72</sup> Peters agrees that the focus on externals has not led to mature faith among American Christians. Counterintuitively, despite the relative frequency of activities believed to increase spirituality, Americans have become less engaged in matters of faith, leading to the surging secularization of American culture.<sup>73</sup> Walton, however, asserts that churches press people to join groups because Bible study, caring for others and being cared for, evangelizing and serving others results in an increased commitment to their faith and a better knowledge of God.<sup>74</sup>

A deeper inward search for relationship with God while reaching out to influence the world appears to be a uniform perspective on spiritual formation. The external actions of the Christian church experience in themselves do not accomplish formation, only consistent contact through submission of oneself to God's will, instead of one's own, results in the changed heart indicative of discipleship.

### The Importance of Discipleship

Discipleship can be likened to theological apprenticeship. Welders, plumbers, carpenters, teachers, bricklayers, surgeons, etc., learn the basic requirements for their vocations and then are trained by others who are more experienced to help them reach the point where they can do the job on their own and then start training others. The process is the same in discipleship. In the

---

<sup>71</sup> Willard, *The Great Omission*, 153.

<sup>72</sup> Hull, *Discipleship*, 24-51.

<sup>73</sup> Rebecca Peters, "We Get Who We Are: Cultural Adult Faith Produces Cultural Adolescent Faith," *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (Fall, 2009): 380-381, accessed October 2, 2020, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F205466548%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

<sup>74</sup> Walton, "Disciples Together," 104-105.

Great Commission, Jesus imparts the cyclical nature of the process by commanding His disciples to make disciples, teaching them to obey all He has commanded them. That obedience includes the command to make disciples. This is an ongoing and reproductive aspect of Christian formation. Moses discipled Joshua, who eventually succeeded him. Elijah discipled Elisha with the same result, continuing the ministry for which he was gifted and trained. Jesus discipled His followers with the expectation that they would continue His ministry in the world, generation after generation, as indicated in His prayer for future disciples in John 17.

Mike Breen describes this training model using the geometric image of a square. Each of four levels of instruction is represented by a side of the square. In the first stage, the disciple watches while the leader does the work. In the second stage, the disciple helps the leader do the work. In the third stage, the leader helps the disciple do the work. And in the fourth stage, the leader watches the disciple do the work.<sup>75</sup> Jim Putman uses the same model in his description of making disciples.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, he stresses that the process of “discipleship requires intentionality and relationship—by which each person is invested in specifically.”<sup>77</sup>

Bill Hull focuses on the spiritually transformative aspect that enables the disciple to heed God’s call. He contends that “The practice of spiritual disciplines develops habits of the heart that make a disciple more capable of answering the call of God.”<sup>78</sup> The resulting spiritual

---

<sup>75</sup> Mike Breen and Walt Kallestad, *The Passionate Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2005), 128.

<sup>76</sup> Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 59.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>78</sup> Hull, *Discipleship*, 188-209.

implications include the transformation of one's mind, character, relationships, habits, service, and influence.<sup>79</sup>

The model that focuses on intentionality more than most others, however, seems to be John Wesley's. His system used mutual accountability to guide development of disciples and was divided into three groups: societies, classes, and bands. The societies were large groups that taught key doctrines in a lecture format with no response or feedback opportunities. The class meetings, however, were smaller groups (ten-twelve people) who met weekly to guide one another along their spiritual journeys. The group members had diverse levels of spirituality, social status, and age. Men and women were in groups together, and both were in leadership positions. Leaders shared their failures, temptations, sins, and struggles, which emboldened the other members to share their own. The leaders were fellow pilgrims helping the others progress on their Christian paths. They supported each other spiritually and held each other accountable.

The meetings had a remarkable effect on the people of eighteenth-century England. Bands were groups whose members were of similar age, sex, and marital status, and focused on attitudes and feelings—soul-searching—which Wesley called “close conversation.”<sup>80</sup> The intentionality and relationship focus that Putman regards as key to discipleship was evident in Wesley's model, and eventually withered away, being no longer a part of the Methodist church doctrine or experience. G. K. Chesterton's comment describes the perspective of the contemporary church: “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried.”<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Hull, *Discipleship*, 114-153.

<sup>80</sup> Mark A. Maddix, “John Wesley's Small Groups: Models of Christian Community,” *Holiness Today* (2009), accessed May 10, 2021, <https://www.holinesstoday.org/john-wesley-small-groups-christian-community>.

<sup>81</sup> Gilbert Chesterton, “Gilbert K. Chesterton Quotes,” BrainyQuote (Xplore), accessed August 9, 2022, [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/gilbert\\_k\\_chesterton\\_102389](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/gilbert_k_chesterton_102389).

### Determining Spiritual Formation

Hull describes six areas of transformation in people as they become more like Jesus: mind, character, relationships, habits, service, and influence.<sup>82</sup> He mentions the use of spiritual disciplines as a means by which one develops the habits that lead to one's increased receptivity of spiritual formation, writing, "Spiritual disciplines develop habits of the heart that make a disciple more capable of answering the call of God."<sup>83</sup> Determining formation requires assessing a starting level against which to measure change. The researcher chose to use *Dale Fletcher's Spiritual Fitness Assessment* for this purpose due to its focus on the effect of spiritual disciplines and development on the individual rather than the identification of particular spiritual gifts received. Fletcher views spiritual formation as the means by which people become whole, which he describes as, "the state of being perfectly well in body, soul (mind, will, and emotions), and spirit."<sup>84</sup> He posits this as God's original design for humanity before the fall. The assessment has three sections: beliefs and attitudes, relationship with God, and faith practice. The first section focuses on one's perspective about God's existence, His level of participation in His creation, and the effect spirituality can have on one's well-being. The second section identifies one's trust in, and obedience to, God, using the principles and commandments of the Bible as the standard. The third section rates one's levels of anger, grudges, and forgiveness, and measures the frequency of fellowship and social interaction within one's church and community. By gauging the participants' assessment at the start the project, their responses to the same assessment at the

---

<sup>82</sup> Hull, *Discipleship*, 114-153.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-187.

<sup>84</sup> Dale Fletcher, *Wholeness—A Biblical and Christian Perspective*, accessed May 25, 2022, [https://www.faithandhealthconnection.org/the\\_connection/spirit-soul-and-body/wholeness-biblical-and-christian-perspective/](https://www.faithandhealthconnection.org/the_connection/spirit-soul-and-body/wholeness-biblical-and-christian-perspective/).

end of the project is expected by the researcher to show an improvement in spiritual formation resulting from the eight weeks of virtual fellowship and discipling.

### Community and Culture Issues

The lack of intentional spiritual formation and missional focus within the Western Church has led to a superficial, consumer model of Christianity. This has not been a sudden revolution/movement, rather a gradual evolution/development in the Christian community over decades. In 1950, the YMCA National Council commissioned a study of the nation's youth's religious beliefs.<sup>85</sup> The study revealed that few of the participants studied the Bible regularly, about half went to church each week, and over a quarter either did not go to church at all or just once or twice a year. Additionally, the older the participant was, and the more educated, the less likely he was to pray. Of the respondents who did pray, 45 percent did it to relieve stress or because it made them feel better. Many of them had early religious instruction, but as young adults had not made their religion part of their daily lives.<sup>86</sup> These are now the grandparents of today's youth.

The Japanese concept of *kaizen* is a model for "good change" or improvement but can be applied as a reference for negative behavioral growth as well. The system is based on incremental change.<sup>87</sup> Positive change requires intentional incremental steps, while negative effects often occur without intentionality, benign neglect is sufficient. The beliefs and practices of the youth in the 1950s has developed incrementally into the current beliefs and practices.

---

<sup>85</sup> Peters, "We Get Who We Are," 379.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Sarah Harvey, *Kaizen: The Japanese Secret to Lasting Change* (New York, NY: The Experiment, 2020),

Two generations of complacency and superficiality in Christian spiritual formation has morphed the Christian worldview into a common perspective dubbed Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.<sup>88</sup> The pervasiveness of this perspective is addressed by Tim Keller. According to Keller, “80 percent of Americans agree with the statement, ‘an individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any church or synagogue.’ ... (T)he most fundamental belief in America is that moral truth is relative to individual consciousness. Our culture, therefore, has no problem with a God of love who supports us no matter how we live.”<sup>89</sup>

Keller’s description of MTD focuses on three key issues:

- 1) Moralistic: Belief that anyone who is good to others will go to Heaven—God’s grace and forgiveness are not necessary. Keller relates this view to that of the Pharisees, who were legalists focused on strict observance of religious requirements.<sup>90</sup>
- 2) Therapeutic: Belief that life’s goal is to be happy. People determine what is good and right for themselves and live accordingly. This lowers the Pharisee’s high bar to ground level.<sup>91</sup> This perspective is referenced frequently in the Bible (especially Judges) as being wrong and displeasing to God: “...each one did what was right in his own eyes” (Judg 17:6, 19:17, 21:25).
- 3) Deistic: Belief that God created humanity but does not get involved unless he is needed to resolve problems.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Peters, “We Get Who We Are,” 378.

<sup>89</sup> Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2008), 70.

<sup>90</sup> Timothy Keller, “Pharisees With Low Standards,” (2009), accessed May 11, 2021, <https://timothykeller.com/blog/2009/2/27/pharisees-with-low-standards>.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Through their interviews, Smith and Denton determined that this perspective is the result of regarding the individual self as the standard and source of moral authority, with personal self-fulfillment being the purpose of life. Truth and right behavior are not determined by an objective standard, but rather by subjective, personal experience.<sup>93</sup>

Smith and Denton established a five-part descriptive model for MTD:

- 1) A creator made the world and watches over human life on Earth.
- 2) This God wants people to be good and fair to each other as taught by most religions.
- 3) The main purpose of life is to be happy and feel good about oneself.
- 4) God's involvement in one's life is to solve problems and stay out of everything else.
- 5) Good people go to Heaven when they die.<sup>94</sup>

Jones posits that God wants more for humanity than happiness and good behavior. Well-adjusted people are not His goal; He wants total transformation. He is redeeming creation from the penalty of sin through Jesus Christ, and only through Him.<sup>95</sup> Changing the attitudes of Western Christians influenced by MTD requires intentional and relational discipleship. The historic and biblical model of engaging with other people as they develop spiritually in the Body of Christ and leading them through the discipleship process is the best hope for Christians to become more Christlike. Mak describes Christian discipleship as growing as a Christian in every area of life. "Since disciple is a common reference for Christian, discipleship and discipling

---

<sup>93</sup> Smith, *Soul Searching*, 173.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>95</sup> Jones, Karen. "What is Moralistic Therapeutic Deism?" Kids Ministry 101 (2014), Accessed May 1, 2021, <https://kidsministry.lifeway.com/2014/12/18/what-is-moralistic-therapeutic-deism/>.

imply the process of becoming like Jesus Christ. Discipleship and discipling mean living a fully human life in this world in union with Jesus Christ and growing in conformity to his image.”<sup>96</sup>

Horton similarly notes that 82 percent of Americans (including most evangelicals) believe that “God helps those who help themselves” is a Bible verse. Most believe that everyone prays to the same God, no matter what name they use for Him, and that if people are generally good, or do enough good things, they will earn entry in Heaven when they die.<sup>97</sup> Horton states, “... (T)he fact that makes sin so utterly sinful is that it is ultimately against God. It is that vertical relationship with God (law and gospel) that will not allow us to reduce confession to the horizontal plane of our neighbors (moralism) or our inner self (therapy).”<sup>98</sup>

This view helps explain some of the difficulty in contemporary discipleship training, according to Mak, as much of the emphasis is on knowledge rather than holistic transformation.<sup>99</sup> As Chan describes it, “Consequently, we did very little to help the disciples to apply Jesus’ teachings in character formation and daily life.”<sup>100</sup>

### Digital Discipleship

Virtual communication platforms add a new dimension of interpersonal connection, with both advantages and disadvantages. As Meadows details, technology lets users extend their relationships beyond the limits of physical presence, with the trade-off that their lives can

---

<sup>96</sup> Mak, “Missional Community,” 46-47.

<sup>97</sup> Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 20, Kindle.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>99</sup> Mak, “Missional Community,” 22.

<sup>100</sup> Edmund Chan, *Mentoring Paradigms: Reflections on Mentoring, Leadership, and Discipleship*, (Oklahoma City: Lifestyle Impact Ministries, 2008), 114.

compartmentalize into different realms by which the freedom and flexibility is offset by the limiting aspect of the interaction, leading to partial relationships. Meadows says, “These tensions ... pose some serious challenges for those who strive to follow the example of an incarnate Savior, as whole-life and mission-shaped disciples.”<sup>101</sup> The added difficulty of technological immigration (increased use of electronic equipment) is notable also.<sup>102</sup> Three levels of disciples live in the digital culture: 1) digital aliens, who tend to be critical of new technology for Christian community and discipleship; 2) digital pioneers, who embrace the use of virtual technology for Christian development; and 3) digital natives, who have always been part of a Christian culture composed of both an “embodied and virtual life.”<sup>103</sup>

Digital familiarity alone, however, does not yield deeper discipleship. The current generation of youth and young adult is the most technologically savvy one ever. It is also one of the most emotional and spiritually disconnected ones.<sup>104</sup> The promise of interconnectivity bringing a free flow of ideas and communication between friends and family has fallen far short of its expected goal. Pope Francis warns that social media is “imprisoning us in a virtual reality and isolating us from the very relationships that challenge us to grow to our full potential in

---

<sup>101</sup> Philip R. Meadows, “Mission and Discipleship in a Digital Culture,” *Mission Studies: Journal of the International Association for Mission Studies* 29, no. 2 (2012): 170, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://web-a-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=aedbbe19-e4a7-48a2-901c-02334039a3cb%40sdc-v-sessmgr01>.

<sup>102</sup> Technological immigration is the introduction of increasing levels of technology into a worldview or society, and the resulting universality of its implementation. Email and websites, for example, were intriguing oddities in the early 1990s, and within a decade became ubiquitous. Now every successful business and most individuals have incorporated them into their daily lives.

<sup>103</sup> Meadows, “Mission and Discipleship,” 171.

<sup>104</sup> Jodi G. Hunt, “The Digital Way: Re-imagining Digital Discipleship in The Age of Social Media,” *Journal of Youth and Theology* 18, no. 2 (2019): 91, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1163/24055093-01802003>.

communion with others.”<sup>105</sup> Discipleship must promote the common good in both the real and virtual worlds. In transitioning from believer to disciple, “it is essential that those who are seeking to become disciples receive mentoring or are accompanied in their pursuit of a deeper relationship and understanding of Christ.”<sup>106</sup>

Nel claims that discipleship has nearly vanished from church discussions<sup>107</sup> but Dreher believes there is still a strong Christian remnant in American churches who have not yet embraced MTD, saying that that remnant must disciple others to establish a cultural (or rather, counter-cultural) entity “that will carry the faith and the faithful forward through the next Dark Age.”<sup>108</sup> His Dark Ages reference is not meant as hyperbole, as Dreher opines that the emphasis of MTD on personal happiness and well-being negates any Christian opposition to same-sex marriage, for example. He notes, “The *summum bonum* of our American civil religion is maximizing the opportunities for individuals to express and satisfy their desires—a belief that orthodox Christianity by nature opposes but that Christian moralistic therapeutic deism embraces and baptizes.”<sup>109</sup>

Small group discipleship, as indicated historically by the efforts of Wesley and Spener, seem to have the highest potential for developing followers of Jesus who are transformed spiritually and model their Savior and Lord instead of their secular culture.

---

<sup>105</sup> Conor Pope, “Pope Francis Warns 80,000 at Croke Park of Social Media Dangers,” *The Irish Times*, (August 25, 2018), accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/pope-francis-warns-80-000-at-croke-park-of-social-media-dangers-1.3608016>.

<sup>106</sup> Hunt, “Digital Way,” 97.

<sup>107</sup> Nel, “Discipleship,” 1.

<sup>108</sup> Rod Dreher, “Christian and Countercultural: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life,” *First Things*, no. 250 (02, 2015): 46, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1647820392%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

### Theological Foundations

The influence of family structure and biblical community in developing disciples is based on Scriptural precedent which led to the formation of small discipleship groups becoming the house churches described in Acts and the New Testament letters. The Wesleyan model of accountability and shared failings and successes of each person's spiritual journey continued the early discipleship dynamic beyond the Sunday worship gathering toward spiritual transformation. Christians developed beyond mere church attendees to devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. Upon this foundation the researcher will develop a curriculum and implement it within a virtual social setting for fellowship and training.

### Making Disciples

Disciple making is not just a good suggestion for church growth, it is a command from God Himself. As noted within the Great Commission, the text reads, "And Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age'" (Matt 28:18–20). The statement "All authority ... given to me" indicates God is the agent doing the giving and has precedent earlier in Matthew's Gospel: "because He was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes" (Matt 7:29). Jesus' command to make disciples, therefore, has the full force of God the Father behind it.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 885–886.

Jerome points out the significance of the sequence of the disciple making process. He notes that Jesus commands the apostles to make disciples of people in all nations, baptizing them in the sacrament of faith, and after baptism and faith, to teach them to obey.<sup>111</sup> Jesus commanded the apostles first to teach all nations and then to baptize them in the sacrament of faith and then, after faith and baptism, to teach them to observe all that He had commanded them. “Lest we think these commandments of little consequence or few in number, He added ‘all that I have commanded you,’ so that those who were to believe and be baptized in the Trinity would observe everything they had been taught.”<sup>112</sup> D. A. Carson explains that because of the authority ascribed to Jesus by the Father, His disciples can venture forth to make more disciples knowing that Christ has sovereign control over everything.<sup>113</sup>

The training of new disciples who will in turn make new disciples is further advocated by Paul in his second pastoral letter to Timothy, “and the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these things to faithful people who will be competent to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). Paul’s use of “faithful” (*pistos*) in this context relates to character as it assumes the people chosen would be believers (unlike the Ephesians who were following myths), and, furthermore, describes people who will be trustworthy and accurate in their teaching. Paul uses the word the same way in his previous letter in the phrase, “the saying is

---

<sup>111</sup> Manlio Simonetti, ed., *Matthew 14-28*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 313.

<sup>112</sup> Simonetti, *Matthew*, 313.

<sup>113</sup> D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 595.

trustworthy...” (1 Tim 1:15), and it is also a summation of the character of overseers and deacons outlined in 1 Timothy 3.<sup>114</sup>

The concept of going forth to other nations to make disciples is also supported by Jesus’ statement from Luke describing what the disciples are expected to do after the Holy Spirit empowers them: “[Jesus said,] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Rick Warren’s *The Purpose-Driven Life* provides a model for making disciples by helping them to recognize that they are created by God for a purpose. Warren describes relationship as critical to spiritual development, saying, “You discover your identity and purpose through a relationship with Jesus Christ.”<sup>115</sup> Warren posits that people can choose their careers, hobbies, spouses, and other parts of life, but God assigns their purpose.<sup>116</sup> He shows five facets of purpose that develop spiritual formation: worship, fellowship, ministry, discipleship, and evangelism. By guiding people through the understanding that they are created to love and serve God, to be part of God’s family in real relationship with each other, to develop as followers of Jesus into being like Him, and to serve God by serving others in the ministries He designed, they are able to fulfill Jesus’ Great Commission to make other disciples through sharing the Good

---

<sup>114</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 506.

<sup>115</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Day 1. Logos.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

News of Jesus Christ. Warren's book has sold more than fifty million copies and has been used extensively by thousands of churches around the world.<sup>117</sup>

Warren incorporates an abbreviated version of another formational resource called S.H.A.P.E., developed by Eric Rees, to help disciples understand God's purpose for their lives through their own personal blend of spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences. Rees designed it to take disciples "through a proven process, guided by the Holy Spirit, to discover who God created (them) uniquely to be..."<sup>118</sup> According to Rees, God created each person for unique "kingdom purpose," which he describes as "your specific contribution to the body of Christ, within your generation, that causes you to totally depend on God and authentically display his love toward others..."<sup>119</sup>

#### The Trinity as a Model for Community

The Holy Trinity enables humanity to love and establishes the need for others to receive that love in order for love to transfer. As many only children have discovered through Christmas and birthday presents, board games that state "For three or more players" do not work with just one person; more people are necessary to play the game. Such is the case with Christianity as well. One cannot be a "Lone Ranger" Christian, as being a Christian entails fellowship.

Comiskey further explains that since God's realm is a mutually interdependent community, humanity made in His image is also created for community."<sup>120</sup> Richard Meyers

---

<sup>117</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Rick Warren," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rick-Warren#ref1023379>.

<sup>118</sup> Erik Rees, *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 20.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>120</sup> Comiskey, *Biblical Foundations*, 46.

adds that God has imbued humans with a “communal gene.”<sup>121</sup> Humans have been deliberately molded by God as social beings to be in relationship with one another. In His creation of humanity, God said, “It is not good that the man is alone” (Gen 2:18). So, God made a suitable helper for him. God also said that He made humans in His own image (Gen 1:27) and commands them to love each other: “You shall love your neighbor like yourself” (Lev 19:18 and Matt 22:39) and “love one another” (John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17). Being made in God’s image incorporates a relational aspect due to God’s nature. John declares multiple times that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16), that people created in His image have received His love (1 John 4:7, 10) and must therefore love God and others (1 John 4:8, 16, 21), and that people who do not love others are not recognized as being in His image (1 John 3:10; 4:8, 20). Love is an action in God’s usage, not just a status or feeling. Hence, love is relational, as that which is given requires a recipient. Humanity was designed by God to be in community with one another, loving, caring, and sharing together.

### Discipleship Groups as Home Churches

Jesus’ disciples formed their frame of reference for their mission through their culture and their experience under Jesus’ tutelage. *Talmudim* (as disciples were called then) strove to learn from their rabbi and also to be like Him. By the time Jesus ascended back into Heaven, His *talmudim* were prepared to move forward in their ministries, modeling their efforts after the master disciple-maker, Jesus.<sup>122</sup> The standard used by Jesus throughout their training was small groups of varying size, so they, too, used the same structure. Jesus created a group of twelve

---

<sup>121</sup> Richard C. Meyers, *One Anothering, Volume 2: Building Spiritual Community in Small Groups* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Books, 2006), 20.

<sup>122</sup> Jeffrey Arnold and Stephanie Black, *The Big Book on Small Groups* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 17-27.

from the much larger group of followers, frequently drawing them aside for closer instruction, such as described in Mark's Gospel, "And He sat down and called the twelve and said to them..." (Mark 9:35). Jesus also used a smaller group of three disciples for certain training. Mark shows this happening at Jesus' transfiguration, which he prefaces by saying, "And after six days, Jesus took along Peter and James and John, and led them to a high mountain by themselves alone" (Mark 9:2).

The early church met in large groups when possible, for corporate worship.<sup>123</sup> As Arnold and Black explain, "The apostles not only taught large groups, but they also went from house to house, visiting small groups in homes as they taught and made disciples (Acts 5:42). There were home prayer meetings like the one held while Peter was in prison (Acts 12:12), and Paul's letters allude to "house churches" (Rom 16:5).<sup>124</sup>

The New Testament, especially the Book of Acts, shows that as the nascent Christian Church expanded from Jerusalem, houses became the primary base of operations for conversions and gatherings. As Comiskey details, the jailer's house at Philippi became an evangelism base after his conversion (Acts 16:16-40). In Thessalonica, Jason's house was used for gatherings (Acts 17:5). Lydia, too, used her home for meetings and also for housing for missionaries after her conversion and baptism (Acts 16:14-15), eventually becoming a forward operating base for Paul's journeys. The synagogue ruler Crispus and his household became followers of Jesus and established another house church as a result.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> "Large" is a very subjective term, as there were no official church buildings for them yet; so a group of fifty in one's home would be huge. Small groups were more frequent, however, especially in the Gentile cities, where crowded and small apartments were the norm.

<sup>124</sup> Arnold, *Big Book*, 17-27. People met together in their homes to break bread together and to use the opportunity to encourage each other to live out their faith in ever greater obedience.

<sup>125</sup> Comiskey, *Foundations*, 89

House churches are small groups and were the norm in the Early Church. Thus, along with the integral family structure of that time and locale, as well as the human need for social relationship imbued in humanity by its creator, Christ introduced a new family, a new life for those who choose to follow Him.<sup>126</sup> He modeled His kingdom, created a community for His followers, initiated a home-based movement with missional outreach intentionality, and led His disciples in building His kingdom.<sup>127</sup>

### Small Group Models of Jesus

The immersion model used by Jesus aligns with the methodology Yahweh provided the Israelites through Moses. In Deuteronomy 6:7, Moses briefly describes an aspect of discipleship in his description of Yahweh's expectation of parents raising their children under God's guidance and presence. He reinforces the importance of instilling a biblical worldview to develop a lifelong devotion to God through the earliest small group in one's life: the family. That passage declares, "And you shall recite them to your children, and you shall talk about them at the time of your living in your house and at the time of your going on the road and at the time of your lying down and at the time of your rising up." This is one of the earliest models of small group discipleship described in the Bible.

That relationship model influenced the way Jesus taught His disciples. As Jim Putman describes it, Jesus talked about God's commands consistently with His disciples as He spent time with them, when they ate, when they went to bed, and when they awoke.<sup>128</sup> Jesus' relationship with His disciples was the means through which He provided all they needed.

---

<sup>126</sup> Comiskey, *Foundations*, 73.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 76-83.

<sup>128</sup> Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 48.

During their training and travels, the disciples watched Jesus in action. Eventually, Jesus sent them out as teams preparing the towns and villages for His arrival. “Summoning the twelve, He gave them power and authority over all the demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1-2). They did what they had seen Jesus do: preach, seek godly people, heal sick people, cast out demons, all the things they had learned by watching the master. By being deployed by Jesus, they learned how to be more like Him.<sup>129</sup>

### **Theoretical Foundations**

The apostle Paul describes followers of Jesus as the body of Christ. He does not say they are *like* the body; he says they *are* the body (Col 1:18). Ray Stedman assigns certain physiological functions to the four groups charged with “equipping the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12). He describes the ministry (given by Jesus) of apostle as the bones and muscles (skeletal support and rigging) of the body of Christ. The function of the early apostles and contemporary church planters is foundational.<sup>130</sup> Evangelists are described as the digestive system, prophets as the nervous system, and pastors/teachers as the circulatory system.<sup>131</sup> This holistic view of the church will aid discipleship training at CTR through recognition of giftedness in certain areas for certain individuals helping the rest of the body without each person having to do every function.

---

<sup>129</sup> Arnold, *Big Book*, 17-27.

<sup>130</sup> Ray C. Stedman, *The Body Life, The Book that Inspired a Return to the Church's Real Meaning and Mission*, (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1995), ch. 7, accessed November 12, 2020, <https://platform.virdocs.com/r/s/0/doc/526304/sp/24231618/mi/84761943?cfi=%2F4%5BBodyLife-10%5D%2F2%2F22%2C%2F1%3A117%2C%2F1%3A117>

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

Another perspective for discipleship training comes from St. Patrick's four-lesson model as described by Winfield Blevins.<sup>132</sup> Patrick was able to evangelize a large population that was not part of a broad hierarchical governance structure, but rather had a model that recognized each local village as having its own governance structure.

This method could be helpful in reaching an unchurched segment of the population in Yuma that is not used to the hierarchical structure of the traditional model. The first lesson in this model is team ministry in which a group prays and brainstorms together, encouraging each other.<sup>133</sup> The second lesson embraces a holistic approach, incorporating both theory and praxis in their daily lives through: private, quiet reflection with God; frequent meetings with a spiritual director, as well as in small groups; and sharing meals, Bible study, and corporate worship. The third lesson empowers a Christian missional community that reaches others—going to where people are instead of hoping other people will come to them. The final lesson encourages demonstrating biblical hospitality by which seekers and other guests are able to visit the community. This lifestyle of missional immersion is based on the concept of living in God's presence and drawing near to Him in all one does. Brother Lawrence consistently imparted that guidance as noted when he said, "That we should establish ourselves in a sense of God's presence, by continually conversing with Him.... There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God."<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Winfield Blevins, *4 Lessons from St. Patrick for Making Disciples the Irish Way*, accessed November 12, 2020, [https://learn.liberty.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-39428391-dt-content-rid-471415237\\_1/courses/DSMN820\\_B01\\_202030/4%20Lessons%20from%20St.%20Patrick%20for%20Making%20Disciples%20the%20Irish%20Way.pdf](https://learn.liberty.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-39428391-dt-content-rid-471415237_1/courses/DSMN820_B01_202030/4%20Lessons%20from%20St.%20Patrick%20for%20Making%20Disciples%20the%20Irish%20Way.pdf).

<sup>133</sup> Blevins, *4 Lessons*.

<sup>134</sup> Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God the Best Rule of a Holy Life*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 2011), 1, 14. Kindle.

## Discipleship Stages

Jim Putman offers a five-stage discipleship process. He depicts the contemporary Christian culture as mostly spectators at a Sunday show who believe that their expected role, if any, is to invite their unbelieving friends and family members to come to church so their pastor can convert them during the worship service. Because this perspective is so pervasive, he posits that most Christians are unable to do more than just go to church on Sunday.<sup>135</sup> The ones who try to share their faith are often so spiritually immature and self-absorbed that they push unbelievers further away by exemplifying the stereotype of showcasing what Christians are against instead of Christ's love.<sup>136</sup> Putman advocates small group structures for development of disciples who eventually grow to make and lead other small groups of disciples. His stages are based on life progression (one can extrapolate a growth process required with Stedman's "body of life" concept).

In the first stage, the prospective disciples are spiritually dead, meaning they have not been born again. Unbelief is the key element of this stage. In the second stage, following new birth, they are spiritual infants. Every Christian begins at this stage and both Paul and the author of Hebrews reference this development level as one requiring basic care and appropriate training (theological milk, rather than meat, just as physical infants ingest). Ignorance is a key element of this stage. In the third stage, they are spiritual children. They understand the basics of their faith, but they often do what they should only for reward or to avoid punishment (to get God to love them more or to avoid going to Hell). In the fourth stage, they are spiritual young adults. They start to show intentionality and draw others to Jesus but are not yet ready to make disciples. In

---

<sup>135</sup> Putman, *Real Life Discipleship*, 22.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 23.

the fifth stage, they become spiritual parents. Putman chose this term over spiritual adults because everyone becomes adult, but not all become parents. The expectation of the fifth stage is the forming of disciples who are reproducing new disciples.<sup>137</sup>

Putman also includes a training perspective used by Jesus that is found in Mike Breen's *Lifeshapes* discipleship program, which uses basic geometric shapes to create reflexive theological responses to everyday situations. The fourth shape he describes is the square, by which he shows a four-part leadership and discipleship training and learning model. Each side of the square represents a step in the process:

- 1) Leader does; disciple watches.
- 2) Leader does; disciple helps.
- 3) Disciple does; leader helps.
- 4) Disciple does; leader watches.

This hands-on apprenticeship model had the additional benefit of exposing the disciples continuously to the holiness of Jesus as well as to His expertise. As Alexander Bruce elaborates, even secular non-believers had to admit that exposure to Jesus made the disciples better people. “...(E)ven those who have no faith in supernatural influence must admit on purely psychological grounds, that men who had received such an exceptional training were likely to acquit themselves wisely, bravely, heroically as public characters.”<sup>138</sup>

The limitations of virtual technology and the short duration limit full implementation of this model. The original biblical model itself took over three years to implement. Hence, the goal of this research project is to determine a trajectory indicating improved spiritual formation. The

---

<sup>137</sup> Putman, *Real Life Discipleship*, 23.

<sup>138</sup> Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 545.

leader will provide the initial training for each session, but the discussions, sharing, and praying for each other will provide the participants with a level of “doing” while the leader watches. The researcher anticipates that participants will be able to move to the next phase of development as they lead their own small groups after being in this one.

The formation trajectory of the disciples under Jesus developed throughout his ministry, although not without challenges along the way. Despite the improvements to their character, multiple times Jesus’ disciples focused on their rivalry instead of their mission.<sup>139</sup> Whether it was a dispute among all of them over who would be considered the greatest (Luke 22:24) or James and John trying to cajole Jesus into promising them seats of honor in Heaven (Mark 10:37), they just did not understand the concept of servant leadership. Even at the Last Supper, they still needed the object lesson Jesus provided by washing their feet (John 13). Greg Ogden summarizes servant leadership as “demonstrated by a heart for the powerless, unprotected, and exploitable.”<sup>140</sup> He delineates six principles for applying servant leadership, noting that those with the most authority have the highest obligation for service, that it develops from relationships, supports and guides, highlights others, models humility, and that leaders earn their authority through their Christlike character.

The Wesleyan model expects that behavior indicates obedience and thus one’s level of spiritual formation. His rule was, “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”<sup>141</sup> John Wesley’s group models were strict yet provided education and training

---

<sup>139</sup> Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 222.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>141</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1896.

in a supportive gathering designed to draw both members and people from social events.<sup>142</sup> Wesley believed that people could change, not by their own efforts, but by God's grace.<sup>143</sup> He also insisted that holiness is manifested in human relationships. In his *Preface to the 1739 Hymnbook*, he wrote, "Directly opposite to this [mysticism] is the Gospel of Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found there. 'Holy solitaires' is a phrase no more consistent with the Gospel than holy adulterers. The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness."<sup>144</sup> Additionally, Wesley considered outreach involving helping the poor to be an important aspect of discipleship. He required that his students provide donations to help the less fortunate.

The discipleship models shown in this section form a hybrid holistic perspective for transitioning a group of church attendees into a Spirit-led family of servant-hearted disciples who will expand Christ's kingdom into their local community. This research project will endeavor to use aspects from each model for instruction, fellowship, outreach, and spiritual formation.

### Training Methodologies

While the goals of discipleship are timeless, the methodologies are not. The internet has brought new benefits and challenges for sharing the Gospel and training disciples. Pam Smith describes it as an area of ministry with no experts—a field in which practitioners need continuously be learning while teaching.<sup>145</sup> The physical restrictions for gathering are now

---

<sup>142</sup> D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Wilmore, KY: Rafiki Books, 1997), 83.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Pam Smith, *Online Mission and Ministry: A Theological and Practical Guide*. London: SPCK, 2015), 7, accessed May 15, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

removed, as software applications such as Zoom, RingCentral, and MS Teams, enable people to meet all over the world through their computers or smartphones. The challenge is in determining how to draw people together in community without them being physically proximate to each other.<sup>146</sup>

Many Christians have been taught that “the medium is not the message,” that the Gospel is the message, and it does not change. Marshall McLuhan, however, postulates that “the medium is the message” and points out “any technology gradually creates a totally new human environment. Environments are not passive wrappings, but active processes.”<sup>147</sup> He illustrates that concept by comparing the oral and written cultures of the ancient Greeks. Before Plato’s time, Greeks had memorized the poets to gain understanding how to navigate the intricacies of life, referred to as “tribal encyclopedia;” the developing detribalized individual perspective required a new format for teaching literate people, based on “the ideas.”<sup>148</sup> The phonetic alphabet brought a means for Plato to classify wisdom and restructure its parts beyond the mere recitation of oral history. The change of medium affected the structure of the content. Online gathering is another phase in the ongoing sequence of technological advancement, which is a beneficial tool for discipleship, but not without hazards.

Shane Hipps explains that Bible translations were a new medium for the church, causing bitter contention that continues even today.<sup>149</sup> The medium of a new language translation enabled

---

<sup>146</sup> Smith, *Online Mission*, 11.

<sup>147</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 2nd intro, Kindle.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Shane Hipps, *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 23-30, Logos.

Christians to read the Bible without mastering Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. John Wycliffe and William Tyndale are two of the more well-known examples of champions for translating the Bible into common languages despite the Church's resistance. Television brought a medium change as well, and also a change in how people process the message being delivered through it. Hipps says, "If the first truth is that our methods necessarily change, the second truth is that whenever our methods change, the message automatically changes along with them. You can't change methods without changing your message—they're inseparable."<sup>150</sup> The media through which information is conveyed are not neutral. They shape perception, creating a different experience for each medium even with the same content. One can read a script, see it performed on stage as a play, or watch it as a movie and, despite the content being the same for all three, the emotional response and intensity will be different for each.

When watching a church service or preacher on television, for example, "the television image itself shapes us. ... (W)e are oblivious to the medium itself. The flickering mosaic of pixilated light washes over us, bypassing our conscious awareness. Instead, we sit hypnotized by the program—the content—which has gripped our attention, unaware of the ways in which the television, regardless of its content, is repatterning the neural pathways in our brain and reducing our capacity for abstract thought. The screen itself is part of the message."<sup>151</sup>

Recognizing that the discipleship process is affected by using virtual technology creates a challenge for the researcher to separate the effects of the content from the effects of the context in which the content occurs. Reinforcing the real relationships beyond the virtual display is an important part of digital discipleship, which Jonathan McKee addresses. Although McKee

---

<sup>150</sup> Hipps, *Flickering Pixels*, 23-30.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

focuses on youth, the perspective has grown to describe many adults since the endemic spread of social media in the past few years. It seems that people “today are more isolated, have fewer close friends, and are drifting away from activities with personal interaction. This is creating a relational void in their lives.”<sup>152</sup> Christians, as well as the general secular public, have endured more than a year of forced isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic protocols, and any relational void in their lives has been exacerbated by it. The intentional gathering of a small discipleship group is a positive step toward reestablishing relational contact that has in many cases been suspended.

Adam Thomas describes digital disciples moving from connection to communion. Connection happens when two or three people gather; it becomes communion when they gather in Jesus’ name: “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20).<sup>153</sup> As Thomas notes, “This is communion—celebrating God’s blessing by connecting with one another to bring the kingdom of God just a little bit closer. Believe it or not, this communion can happen online. Even in the virtual world, each small connection carries within it a seed of holiness, a prompting from the Divine to reach out and gather in. Each is a potential religious experience waiting to happen.”<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> Jonathan McKee, *Connect: Real Relationships in a World of Isolation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 12-20, accessed May 15, 2021. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1948582&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>153</sup> Adam Thomas, *Digital Disciple: Real Christianity in a Virtual World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), ch. 2, accessed May 15, 2021. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=856638&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Superficial spirituality impedes the discipleship process. This difficulty exemplifies the need for intentional spiritual formation strategies. Much like behavioral changes that are developed incrementally over time, spiritual formation requires a patient diligence. Patience, for example, is a characteristic that is honed over multiple interactions with frustrating obstacles. The behavior is practiced and repeated until it occurs without conscious effort. It becomes a habit.<sup>155</sup> It is this intentional focus on developing new behavioral routines and patterns that is essential for formational processes.

According to Brian King, the common belief that anything done for twenty-one days becomes a habit is a myth.<sup>156</sup> Many variables influence the amount of time required, and a key variable is pleasure. Anything that triggers intense feelings of pleasure in the brain is learned quickly, which helps explain why drug use and similar self-destructive behaviors are so prevalent. Reward value is another factor. People already have many habits their brain considers rewarding, which puts them in competition with new positive behaviors they wish to maintain.<sup>157</sup> Routine is also key to establishing habits, and although the twenty-one-day concept is not axiomatic, someone who goes to the gym for twenty-one consecutive days is likely to go there on day twenty-two also.<sup>158</sup> Developing spiritual disciplines is no different psychologically. The likelihood of making a discipline part of one's routine will vary directly with the amount of

---

<sup>155</sup> Brian King, "How Long Does It Take to Form A New Habit?" *Psychology Today*, January 2, 2020, accessed June 26, 2021, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/taking-it-easy/202001/how-long-does-it-take-form-new-habit>.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

change required to incorporate it. Drastic change has less chance of success than incremental change.

### Intervention Design

Gradual change is the popular business strategy called *kaizen* in Japan.<sup>159</sup> Sarah Harvey describes it as very common and productive.<sup>160</sup> Western culture seems to eschew the gradual. She writes, “Western businesses were less successful because they always sought abrupt and dramatic change over incremental change.”<sup>161</sup> Western churches frequently adopt ministry programs anticipating immediate results. The business process Harvey describes can be easily applied to spiritual formation, as the word *kaizen* means “good change” or “improvement.”

The first stage is to analyze current habits. The first commitment should be small and easily achieved. During this phase, one might consider setting timeframes for short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Monitor the new habits and regularly review the progress. Harvey stresses that *kaizen* is a personalized approach to lifelong change, with everyone having their own pace.<sup>162</sup>

*Kaizen* is also the model demonstrated by Jesus. The Gospel writers show Jesus enlisting the aid of the Twelve in feeding the five thousand (Matt 14:13-23; Mark 6:30-46; Luke 9:10-17; and John 6:1-14). When they mention the crowd needing food, Jesus tells the disciples to feed them. At first, they were incredulous as they had just five small loaves of bread and two fish, but when Jesus blessed the items and gave them to the disciples, they distributed the food that miraculously replenished as they handed it out to the people. The small task of distributing what

---

<sup>159</sup> Harvey, *Kaizen*, 13.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

they saw as a small amount of food led to their participation in one of Jesus' more amazing miracles.

As Jesus' ministry unfolds, he increases the responsibility levels incrementally: sending them to cast out demons, heal the sick, and raise the dead in nearby Jewish towns and villages (Matt 10:1-10); then later with seventy-two others "into every town and place where he was about to go" (Luke 10:1); and eventually to "the farthest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). After Pentecost, they brought the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. That capability was developed over time through incremental training by Jesus and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples' initial commitment to follow Jesus was the basic and first step in their journey. The short-, medium-, and long-term goals for the disciples as set by Jesus could be described as learning, doing, and continuing. As they learned from Jesus, He monitored their progress; and when they were sufficiently proficient in their training for the next step, Jesus sent them out, two-by-two, to do what He had trained them to do. At His ascension, Jesus commanded and commissioned them to continue doing what He trained them to do. The changes they developed in their training stayed with them throughout their lives.

This eight-week project is designed to be long enough to introduce some spiritual disciplines and behaviors that this researcher hopes will be received as pleasurable by the participants, and along a trajectory that is not too steep, enhancing the likelihood of them becoming habits that no longer require deliberate conscious effort to remember. The offering of corporate morning and evening prayer is included in the project to help establish an increased prayerfulness without being so intrusive in their daily routines that they would stop doing it after the project. By the end of this research project the participants will have been guided to a deeper

understanding of their purpose in serving God in this world and introduced to a daily spiritual routine through virtual gatherings via Zoom software that will impact their spiritual formation positively.

As a means of increasing discipleship among congregants at CTR, this research project will use a multi-pronged virtual approach toward discipleship groups. The weekly discipleship sessions will incorporate opening prayer and fellowship discussion, followed by a video presentation of Rick Warren's *What on Earth Am I Here For?* and closing discussion questions regarding the video segment. Participants will also be encouraged to incorporate the short daily devotionals that are part of the program, which will be provided to them at the start of the project. A detailed design for imparting positive change in the spiritual formation of the volunteers in this project, and the method for implementing it, follows.

The Moralistic Therapeutic Deism described earlier accentuates an inward focus by which God's purpose is imagined as responding to humanity's needs and wants. The spiritually formative goal of this project includes a reframing of the participants' perspective to realize that humanity's purpose is to respond to God's will using the gifts and guidance He provides. Spiritual formation and discipleship are linked relationally, as each enhances the other. The project design is geared to enhance obedience to Jesus' commands as He tells His disciples in the Great Commission through instruction and introduction of spiritual disciplines formatted to improve their relationship with God, and thereby also increase the quantity of spiritual moments in communion with Christ. This researcher will draw ten-fifteen volunteers who consider themselves part of CTR, with varied levels of attendance and participation in congregational activities and ministries. They will be contacted by letter and email, with follow-up phone calls as necessary. Each volunteer will be provided a spiritual fitness test to assess their current state

of spiritual formation. The assessment is part of Dale Fletcher's *Faith and Health Connection* spiritual exercise program.<sup>163</sup> The thirty-eight-question assessment tool is structured according to a seven-choice Likert scale (Appendix A). This survey will establish a baseline with which to compare their reassessment at the conclusion of the project.

### Spiritual Fitness Assessment

The Spiritual Fitness Assessment consists of thirty-nine questions separated into three categories: beliefs and attitudes, relationship with God, and practicing one's faith. The responses incorporated a seven-stage Likert scale, which also had three variations. The first set of response options (for statements 1-29) were:

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Moderately Disagree
- 3 Slightly Disagree
- 4 Unsure
- 5 Slightly Agree
- 6 Moderately Agree
- 7 Strongly Agree

The assessment shifts to statements and responses that are measured by time rather than level of agreement. The second set of response options (for statements 30-35) are:

- 1 Never
- 2 About Once a Year
- 3 Several Times a Year
- 4 About Once a Month
- 5 2-3 Times a Month
- 6 About Once a Week
- 7 More Than Once a Week

The frequency measured for the next three statements changes from months and weeks to weeks and days. The third set of response options (for statements 36-38) were:

---

<sup>163</sup> Fletcher, *Spiritual Exercises*.

- 1 Never
- 2 Less Than Once a Month
- 3 2-3 Times a Month
- 4 About Once a Week
- 5 Several Times a Week
- 6 Once a Day
- 7 More Than Once a Day

Following the initial assessment, participants will be invited to participate in a series of small group sessions. These sessions will consist of the participants meeting each week by Zoom videoconferencing technology for fellowship, prayer, and missional development using a six-part video series by Rick Warren called *What on Earth Am I Here For?* This series is designed to guide its participants to fulfilling their God-given purpose through deeper relationship with their church family, small groups, and the world around them. There is a study guide for use during the half-hour video lectures and a forty-day devotional that is part of the course.<sup>164</sup>

#### *What on Earth Am I Here For?* Study Sessions

Each session begins with fifteen minutes of guided discussion in which the researcher welcomes participants, sets expectations for the session, creates a welcoming environment, and outlines the goals/purpose of the session, followed by a video presentation of about thirty minutes. Following the video, the researcher will introduce supporting material for that week's topic as a brief instruction lasting thirty minutes. The final fifteen minutes will be devoted to discussion and prayer. Participants will be expected to attend all weekly video sessions, although an excused absence will be allowed. Participants may withdraw from the project and will be allowed to keep all the project materials issued to them. The church office is centrally located in Yuma, just a few miles from anywhere in the city, and the materials will be available there for

---

<sup>164</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For? – Study Guide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

the participants living in the area. Any participants living out of the area will receive the materials by email and postal service as applicable.

The first step in the project process will be to contact the members of CTR to invite them to participate. Those who agree to participate will be grouped according to schedule preference (morning or evening, weekday, or weekend). The project is expected to have ten-fifteen participants. Each participant will receive a consent form that will be completed and returned to the researcher before any research begins (see Appendix D for consent form). There will be one small discipleship group due to CTR's congregation size. Those candidates who choose to participate will receive paperback copies of the study guide and a devotional for the video series and agree to be part of the weekly gatherings on Zoom for the small group training from their homes or other comfortable environment of their choosing.

This researcher will also lead morning and evening prayer sessions via Zoom for those who would prefer to pray with others, although virtually. The anticipated times for morning and evening prayer daily services are 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., respectively, and last about twenty minutes, depending on the length of the Bible passages assigned for the day. Participants will be expected to agree to attend each weekly gathering diligently and engage in daily prayer. In order to participate, all participants will need a computer, phone, or tablet with Zoom software downloaded. The researcher will provide assistance if needed for access to and use of the applicable software.

The anticipated start will be during the summer of 2021, finishing eight weeks later. The first week will cover the Likert Spiritual Assessment and the materials used for the rest of the project: study guide, devotional, and morning and evening prayer service texts. The Likert assessments will be used to gauge a starting point both for the overall group and for each person.

The results for their beliefs and attitudes, relationship with God, and faith practices will be tabulated for each of those three groups, as well as the overall score. Those scores will be combined with the mean determined for the group. At the end of the sessions, the participants will take the spiritual fitness test again, and the same quantifying process will be used to determine a new mean, and whether the small discipleship group raised the level of spiritual formation in the participants. The data will be collected as Word documents with results tabulated in Excel spread sheets, with the results shown as both numerical and graph. Weeks two through seven will be devoted to the six topics corresponding to the video sessions. Week eight will be for the Likert Assessment and group evaluation to determine any changes in spiritual formation resulting from the project and to determine any recommended changes for implementing similar projects in the future.

### **Session One: You Matter to God**

#### Session Purpose:

Everyone is deliberately created by God for His purpose. No one is an accident or an oversight. Knowing that God created each person, that each person matters to God, and that He has a plan for each person is essential for moving forward through life. As Warren explains in the video sessions, the Bible shows five purposes for humanity: worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism. God provides various spiritual gifts in different levels for each person to succeed in each of those purposes according to God's plan.

#### Scripture References:

“All Yahweh has made is for his purpose...” (Prov 16:4).

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, because you have created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

“Your eyes saw my embryo, and in your book they all were written—days fashioned for me when there was not one of them” (Ps 139:16).

#### Video Focus:

Warren addresses the opening questions: “Why am I alive? Does my life matter? What is my purpose?” by addressing several incorrect models first, such as the mystical approach, which entails looking within oneself for the answer—an empty search since the answer is found outside oneself in God. He also addresses the common self-help approach, by which one invents one’s own purpose: follow one’s dream, set goals, do not give up. He says this is good advice for success, but one can be successful without ever finding one’s purpose in life. One can be successful, yet still feel empty and meaningless inside.

#### Researcher-led Discussion:

People are not a cosmic coincidence. God created everyone for His purpose. Some people in the Bible are remembered for their exploits, others not so much. King Saul’s son, Jonathan, led a successful counterattack against the Philistines (1 Sam 14) with just his armor bearer and a single sword. The armor bearer’s name is not mentioned, but he was a critical part of Jonathan’s victory. The Canaanite woman at whose faith Jesus marveled as she asked Him to heal her daughter, her name is long forgotten. Many prophets have entire biblical books named after them, others, such as Gad (1 Sam 22:5) get just a single sentence. Every one of them had an important role in the development and spread of God’s message of His love. And each person today has an important role in continuing that spread.

#### Closing Discussion Questions:

What are some of the times in your life when you felt an external influence guiding you?  
Or comforting you?

Or calling you?

Homework:

Partake in Morning and Evening Prayer Service either through Zoom or on your own.

**Session Two: Worship**

Session Purpose:

Worship is the first of the five purposes discussed in this series and is described as humanity's response to God's love. Participants in this session will be shown that expressing their affection and focusing their attention on God is the means of giving back to God. They will be shown that real worship is a lifestyle, not a singular action.

Scripture References:

"Therefore, I exhort you, brothers, through the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:1).

"And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength" (Mark 12:30).

"... present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness" (Rom 6:13b).

Video Focus:

Warren's focus in this video session is the expectation by God of humanity's total devotion to Him—that loving and knowing God is one's primary purpose. The term used to describe those behaviors is worship. Warren stresses that humanity was created to be loved by God and to love Him back. He says, "Fix your thoughts on God and God will fix your thoughts."

### Researcher-led Discussion:

Prayer is our means of communication with God. Too often, however, we: 1) do not pray enough, and 2) transmit without waiting to receive. Many Christians pray only when a need arises that they cannot handle themselves (e.g., to heal a sick friend, help their finances, or ensure their candidate of choice wins an election). But God is not our celestial concierge; He is our Heavenly Father. He gives us things because He loves us, and He wants us to ask Him for them, but He expects more from the conversation.

When the prophet Samuel was a young boy and heard God's voice, he mistook it for the priest, Eli, calling for him. Eli recognized that it was God calling to Samuel and instructed him how to respond. Samuel obeyed, as we read in 1 Samuel 3:10, "Then Yahweh came and stood there and called out as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, because your servant is listening."

When we pray, do we list all our desires and then hang up before hearing God speak to us? Quiet listening is a skill that needs developing; it is not our natural default mode. One of the models used to guide us in prayer in the acronym ACTS, which stands for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

1. Adoration: Praising God for who He is
2. Confession: Confessing our sins to God
3. Thanksgiving: Thanking God for the things He has already done for us
4. Supplication: Asking for God's help

Both before and after our ACTS, we must be still and listen for God's direction and response. It will most likely not be an audible voice like Samuel encountered. It may be a

nudging in our heart or mind to do or not do something. It may be a sense of overwhelming peace.

Closing Discussion Questions:

What are some of the difficulties you encounter in prayer?

What methods for finding the time to pray are working the best for you?

How has prayer changed your perspective or relationship with God?

Homework:

This week, keep track of the times you pray. Mark what, if anything, you asked for and your thoughts while listening for our Lord. Try using Samuel's statement, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

**Session Three: Fellowship**

Session Purpose:

Participants will learn that God wants humanity not just to know and love Him, but also to know and love His family. Fellowship is the relationship of family, and incorporates sharing experiences and support through belonging, serving, and suffering together.

Scripture References:

"Consequently, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19).

"And this *is* the commandment we have from him: that the one who loves God should love his brother also" (1 John 4:21).

"Carry the burdens of one another, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2).

Video Focus:

Warren emphasizes that the church is a family, not a place, and that although everyone is created by God, not everyone is a child of God. One is adopted into God's family through Jesus Christ. Warren points out that the number one reason Jesus tells His disciples to love one another is so the world will see that love and want to become part of God's family also.

Researcher-led Discussion:

Christianity is a social experience, not a solo endeavor. Paul consistently details the importance of fellowship in describing the Body of Christ: one body made of many parts, not a bunch of individual pieces grouped together. There is a big difference between a living organism and a jigsaw puzzle. Jesus himself declared the importance of loving other people by equating it with loving God. When asked which of the commandments in Mosaic Law is the greatest, Jesus said, "... you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:28-31).

But what does it mean to love one's neighbor? Jesus answers the question of "Who is my neighbor?" in the parable of the Good Samaritan. How to love one another, however, is addressed frequently by Paul, especially in his letter to the church in Rome. "Love must be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; be attached to what is good, being devoted to one another in brotherly love, esteeming one another more highly in honor, not lagging in diligence, being enthusiastic in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, enduring in affliction, being devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality" (Rom 12:9-13).

Our individual salvation is important, but we are saved by God to be part of his family. Fellowship is not optional. It reinforces our own commitment while encouraging others along their path as well.

Closing Discussion Questions:

What things can you do to deepen your own fellowship with other Christians?

What difficulties are hindering you from doing them?

How can we overcome those difficulties?

**Session Four: Discipleship**

Session Purpose:

God wants his people to become like Jesus, not just know Him—not to become gods, but to become godly. Participants will learn in this session that God uses events in people’s lives to transform them along their discipleship journey.

Scripture References:

“... because those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he should be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29).

“... rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...” (Eph 4:15 *ESV*).

“Temptation has not come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able but will also make a way out together with the temptation, so that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor 10:13).

Video Focus:

Warren explains that God uses trouble to teach people to trust Him—that every problem has a purpose; He uses temptation to teach them to obey Him—that temptations are created by the

devil to draw people away from God, but God uses even those things to draw people to Him; and God uses trespasses to teach people to forgive.

#### Researcher-led Discussion:

Jesus tells His disciples in the Great Commission to make more disciples (Matt 28:18-20). All disciples are part of the Body of Christ, yet everybody has parts that are different and serve different functions, despite their unity and integration within the body as a whole. Paul writes about this concept to the Church in Corinth:

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,’ not because of this is it not a part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,’ not because of this is it not a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body just as he wanted. And if they all were one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body (1 Cor 12:14–20).

Richard Foster elaborated on that idea in his 1998 book, *Streams of Living Water*.<sup>165</sup> He also founded the infrachurch movement, Renovaré, which is dedicated to church renewal.

Renovaré recently published a synopsis of Foster’s list of the six traditions: Contemplative, Holiness, Charismatic, Social Justice, Evangelical, and Incarnational<sup>166</sup> (Appendix F).

1. (Contemplative) Prayer-Filled Life: Our Heart’s Steady Attention on God
2. (Holiness) Virtuous Life: Responding with Integrity
3. (Charismatic) Spirit-Empowered Life: Fueling our Lives from the Presence and Power of God
4. (Social Justice) Compassionate Life: Extending Compassion in Every Sphere of Life

---

<sup>165</sup> Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1998).

<sup>166</sup> “The Six Streams: A Balanced Vision,” Renovare, accessed April 9, 2021, <https://renovare.org/about/ideas/the-six-streams>.

5. (Evangelical) Word-Centered Life: Living the Life-Giving Message
6. (Incarnational) Sacramental Life: Encountering the Invisible God in the Visible World

Closing Discussion Questions:

Since God uses trouble to teach us to trust, what problem in your life has led to the greatest growth in your character?

Since God uses temptation to teach us to obey, what lesson do you think God is trying to teach you?

Since God uses trespasses to teach us to forgive, what is God currently teaching you about forgiveness?

**Session Five: Ministry**

Session Purpose:

The aim of this session is to guide the participants to a deeper understanding of developing a Christlike attitude in serving God by serving others. Attitude is important for service to others, and an attitude of gratitude embodied Jesus' ministry.

Scripture References:

“Serve Yahweh with joy; come into his presence with exultation” (Ps 100:2).

“For we are his creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we may walk in them” (Eph 2:10).

“I give thanks to the one who strengthens me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he considered me faithful, placing me into ministry...” (1 Tim 1:12).

### Video Focus:

Warren describes serving others like Jesus as being available, grateful, faithful, and generous. He says, “You can give without loving; but you cannot love without giving.” Regarding one’s call to service, Warren says the two most dangerous words one can pray are, “use me,” because “if you are really serious, God will take you up on it.”

### Researcher-led Discussion:

We are all called to serve God. Rick Warren points out that there is no such thing as a non-serving Christian.<sup>167</sup> Paul tells Timothy that it was God “who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace that was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began” (2 Tim 1:9).

The acronym SHAPE describes how God shapes us for service: spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences all work together to form who we are and how we are best suited to benefit the rest of the body.<sup>168</sup>

The first aspect of SHAPE entails discerning one’s spiritual gifts from a list as described in 1 Cor 12, Eph 4, and Rom 12 (e.g., teaching, healing, discernment).<sup>169</sup> The second aspect of “Heart” requires discerning one’s passions as clues to help determine where one should be serving in the church.<sup>170</sup> The third aspect of “Abilities” involves identifying one’s skills and God-given abilities to help determine the ministries for which one is best suited. Warren

---

<sup>167</sup> Warren, *What on Earth*, 43.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 78-79.

provides a list of forty examples and five blank slots for the readers to list others that may apply (e.g., mechanics, cooking, carpentry).<sup>171</sup>

The fourth aspect of “Personality” uses a series of five pairs of oppositional personality traits on a sliding scale to help the participant discern minor or extreme preferences between each, such as introvert/extrovert and thinker/feeler.<sup>172</sup> This is similar to those in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator surveys. The fifth and final aspect of “Experience” includes both good and bad events in one’s life across a broad spectrum of family, educational, vocational, spiritual, and ministry events.<sup>173</sup>

The participants are advised to complete their SHAPE profiles and to provide the results to their pastor for implementation in helping them choose how best to implement their gifts and skills in their prospective ministries.

#### Discussion Questions:

Which spiritual gifts seem to describe you?

What do you have a passion to do? Is there a cause or area of ministry you feel drawn to?

What are some skills or abilities you have that might help your ministry?

Do you feel like you are outgoing or more introverted?

Do you prefer variety or an established routine?

Do you like a structured or unstructured environment?

Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team?

---

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>172</sup> Warren, *What on Earth*, 80-81.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 81-82.

What have you learned through your positive life experiences (family, school, work, etc.) that will help you in whatever it is God is calling you to do?

## **Session Six: Evangelism**

### Session Purpose:

The aim of this session is to help the participants recognize the difference between ministry and mission, and be willing to set out on their individual missions based on their natural gifts and styles, using the spiritual gifts God provides. Christians are made for a mission, according to John 17:18, which says, “Just as you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” One’s ministry is in the church, but one’s mission is in the world.

### Scripture References:

“Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you” (2 Timothy 4:5b NLT).

“I have become all things to all people, in order that by all means I may save some” (1 Cor 9:22).

“But I consider my life as worth nothing to myself, in order to finish my mission and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

### Video Focus:

Warren describes a two-part mission for Christians. The first part is that God expects disciples to bring people to Jesus. He suggests the viewers make a list of five things they like to do, and also list five people who do not know the Lord whom they can invite to do those things with them.

Then do those things together. The second part of the mission is that God expects His disciples to

go to people for Jesus. Warren calls it a PEACE plan: Plant churches, Equip servant leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick, and Educate the next generation.

Researcher-led discussion: In their evangelism training course, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels, Mark Mittleberg, and Lee Strobel describe six personality styles that align with particular evangelism methods that are most comfortable for certain people. These are: Direct, Intellectual, Testimonial, Interpersonal, Invitational, and Serving. Each style feels most natural for people with corresponding personality traits<sup>174</sup> (Appendix G).

#### Discussion Questions:

Which evangelism style seems most suited to your personality? Many people have two or three they are comfortable with (and one or two they can never imagine themselves doing). God gives us all spiritual gifts that enhance our natural abilities to fulfill the purpose He created us for. Think about ways that you may notice in the future to share your story and the grace God has blessed you with to draw others to Him.

#### Morning and Evening Prayer

Additionally, the groups will be guided toward the Anglican habit of daily morning and evening prayer, also known as the Daily Office, using the ACNA *Book of Common Prayer 2019* (Appendices B and C). The text for both services will be distributed online to the participants who do not have their own copy of the prayer book. Additionally, the researcher will provide a hyperlink to an online version that updates the biblical readings automatically, in case some of the participants are unable to join the group at the established times.<sup>175</sup> The weekly meeting will help guide the missional trajectory of the development process, but the daily discipline of prayer

---

<sup>174</sup> Dennis Williams, *Six Effective Evangelistic Styles Reflective Analysis of Personality Traits Impacting the Sharing of our Faith* (2013), accessed April 9, 2021, <https://www.perimeter.org/files/4394/?r=868064192>.

<sup>175</sup> The Daily Office, <https://www.dailyoffice2019.com>.

will inculcate a spiritual growth that will empower their missional efforts. Discussion during the weekly sessions will also incorporate feedback and encouragement regarding the participants' prayer progress.

### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

The researcher for this project promoted this small group opportunity through the CTR parish newsletter and verbally during the Sunday and Wednesday Eucharist services. Average Sunday attendance was forty at the start of the project and the researcher garnered fourteen participants initially, between fifty-five and eighty years old. Five men and nine women began the process, and one woman had to drop out due to illness (chemotherapy).

The researcher sent each participant a consent form and a Spiritual Fitness Assessment (Appendix A) by email with instructions. The participants were instructed to print and sign the consent form, and then either email it to the researcher as a scanned document or leave it for him in the Church Office. They also were instructed to print and complete the Spiritual Fitness Assessment and write a four-digit code of their choosing at the top instead of their names that they would use again after the sessions conclude when they would re-take the assessment. The participants were informed that their scores as a group would be used to show the difference between their spiritual formation levels before and after the project, and that their individual scores would remain anonymous through the use of the four-digit coding system.

The researcher established a recurring weekly meeting using Zoom software, which requires the meeting host to create a personal "meeting ID" and passcode—to prevent unauthorized access by uninvited meeting participants. The researcher established the meeting ID and passcode, and emailed them, along with the URL (uniform resource locator) website link for the Zoom meeting, to the participants each week a day before the next meeting as a reminder.

The same link was also used for the morning and evening prayer services each day (Appendix B). The researcher used an online version that updates the prayers and Scripture readings for each day at <https://www.dailyoffice2019.com>. By using the “Share Screen” option in the Zoom software, the researcher shared the liturgy with each participant automatically. The prayer services were offered daily at 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and the seven weekly sessions were Mondays at 11 a.m.

### Session One

Thirteen of the fourteen original participants were present.

The first session began with prayer by the researcher, followed by guided discussion in which the researcher asked a few ice-breaker questions and had the participants introduce themselves. Although they recognized each other from church, they had not all known one another socially. After the discussion, the research played the first session of “*What on Earth am I Here For?*” using the “Share Screen” function in Zoom.

The sessions ended with prayer led by a participant after the researcher opened the role to volunteers. They were reminded that the Zoom prayer services would begin that evening, and everyone was invited to participate or pray on their own as desired. That first evening session had eight participants and lasted about twenty-five minutes. Additionally, the wives of two of the participants joined their husbands for the daily prayer services.

### Session Two

The second session focused on worship as the discussion topic. Twelve of the original fourteen participants attended. The researcher opened with prayer and led a brief discussion gathering feedback about the previous session and how everyone’s week had gone. The second video segment described worship as a response to God’s love, expressing one’s affection,

focusing one's attention, and using one's abilities. Music is an important part of the typical Anglican worship service, with at least six hymns or songs spread through it.

The researcher also led the group in discussion about prayer, including the ACTS model of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

### Session Three

In the third weekly session, the researcher welcomed everyone and opened the session with prayer. The focus for this session was on fellowship. Ten of the fourteen participants attended. The researcher led the discussion into the relational aspect of Christian discipleship, relaying that fellowship is important because "it keeps the fellow in the ship" as life's storms toss them about. He then began the third video segment. After the video, which brought out the aspects of sharing experiences and support, and described fellowship as belonging, serving, and suffering together, the participants discussed methods of deepening their own fellowship with other Christians, hindrances to doing those things, and ways to overcome those challenges. One of the participants closed the ninety-minute session in prayer.

### Session Four

The focus of session four is discipleship, and the realization that God uses events in people's lives to transform them as they move along in the journey with Him. Ten of the fourteen participants attended. Those who were absent were different from the absentees in previous sessions. The researcher explained that discipleship is part of the journey, not the destination. He then began the fourth video segment, which explained that God uses trouble to teach his people to trust Him, temptation to teach them to obey Him, and trespasses to teach them to forgive.

The researcher guided the discussion toward the six traditions of spiritual discipline described by Richard Foster.<sup>176</sup> The participants described which perspective seemed to fit them best, with some recalling powerful moments when God worked in their lives through one of the disciplines. The participants had powerful responses to the discussion questions:

1. Since God uses trouble to teach us to trust, what problem in your life has led to the greatest growth in your character?
2. Since God uses temptation to teach us to obey, what lesson do you think God is trying to teach you?
3. Since God uses trespasses to teach us to forgive, what is God currently teaching you about forgiveness?

One of the participants closed the session in prayer.

#### Session Five

The fifth session dealt with ministry development of spiritual gifts, abilities, and attitude to develop as disciples willing to serve Jesus. Eleven of the fourteen original participants attended. The researcher opened with prayer and discussion, assessing how the participants were feeling about the project thus far. All responses were positive. He then played the fifth video segment. After the video, in which Warren described that serving like Jesus means being available, grateful, faithful, and generous, the participants had difficulty choosing just one area to develop. The participants also completed the SHAPE<sup>177</sup> worksheet to give to their pastor after the project to help determine into which ministry area God may be calling them. One of the participants closed the session with prayer. Morning and evening prayer services were gaining

---

<sup>176</sup> Foster, *Streams*.

<sup>177</sup> Warren, *What on Earth*, 78-82. SHAPE: Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences.

enthusiasm among the nine consistent participants. Many voiced a desire to continue the services on Zoom after the project's completion.

#### Session Six

The sixth session focused on evangelism and helping the participants recognize their natural gifts and styles to facilitate their individual missions and ministries accordingly. Nine of the original fourteen participants attended, and one of the absentees had to drop out due to health issues. The video segment discussed evangelism, and afterward the researcher incorporated descriptions of the six evangelism styles from Hybels, et al.<sup>178</sup>

All six styles were represented by the participants, with some recognizing a comfort with more than one style. Some felt comfortable in two or three styles.

#### Session Seven

The seventh session was a wrap-up to gain the feedback and perspectives of the participants. All thirteen participants attended. The researcher opened with prayer and the group engaged in free-flowing discussion regarding the areas that most intrigued or affected them. The final session closed with prayer by one of the participants.

---

<sup>178</sup> Williams, *Styles*. Direct, Intellectual, Testimonial, Interpersonal, Invitational, and Serving.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

The focus of this research project was to determine whether using a videoconferencing platform for discipleship training, rather than in-person meetings, would have a noticeable effect on spiritual formation of the participants. This was accomplished by gauging the participants' level of spiritual formation using a spiritual fitness assessment as described in Chapter 3 at the start and completion of the project. The assessment used thirty-nine statements linked to a Likert scale to determine the respondents' beliefs and attitude toward God, their relationship with Him, and how they practice their faith. The weekly sessions included six video presentations by Rick Warren regarding humanity's purpose in this world as creatures made deliberately by God. The researcher anticipated that reinforcing the roles of worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism as part of the Christian journey would enhance the participants' attitudes and relationship with God.

### **Spiritual Formation Challenges**

The participants were volunteers recruited from the congregation of Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church in Yuma, Arizona. The researcher expected that the participants would already have a higher level of spiritual formation than a random sample from the general population since they were already church members attending consistently. Additionally, the type of person most likely to volunteer for a project about improving discipleship training would be someone interested in the topic. Hence, there would be no atheists, agnostics, or seekers anticipated, so the assessment would only measure continued rather than initial development. Some of the participants were newer to Christianity than the others and had not yet developed a deep relationship with Jesus; others had been practicing various spiritual disciplines for years and ranked higher in their initial spiritual assessment.

The inclusion of morning and evening prayer, although a standard spiritual discipline in Anglicanism, was a new practice for many of the participants. The researcher was hopeful that they would be willing to try scheduling the prayers into their daily routine for the duration of the project.

### **Technological Challenges**

The researcher expected that the medium would have some effect on the message, and the hope was that the beneficial effects would outweigh any detrimental ones and yield a discernable amount of spiritual growth in the participants. Live streaming of church worship services on Facebook and recorded training on YouTube have been increasingly common in the past few years, but those are passive by design. The viewer may be able to offer typed comments in the live stream and get responses from the video technician operating the system, and the YouTube viewer would receive feedback only if someone monitored comments after posting the recording.

An interactive, long-distance virtual medium became feasible with the development of GoToMeeting in 2004. The now well-known software, Zoom, is only eleven years old, and is what was used for this research project. The platform's popularity and utility expanded exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic when many people were prohibited from being with other people in an enclosed space. Businesses and social enterprises had to quickly develop new ways to interact without being together physically. Some people had been used to using computers as part of their daily routine, but for others, using this technology entailed a steep learning curve.

All the participants were over fifty-five years old, with varied levels of technological acuity. Some were used to meeting on Zoom for other things, but for others this was their first

exposure to the medium. Contacting the participants before the first session to ensure they were comfortable with using the software ensured they were at ease for the sessions and able to log in smoothly.

### **Technological Advantages**

Some of the participants had to travel for various reasons. If the sessions had been in-person, they would have had to miss them during the time they were out of town. The platform used for this project, however, enabled them to participate from wherever they were. The integration of the DVD into the sessions ensured the participants were seeing the same Bible translations and enabled those who did not have a Bible available to read the pertinent Scripture references.

### **Expected Results**

The researcher's expectation was to see incremental levels of improvement, with the participants gaining a deeper understanding of their spiritual purpose and potential. The project specifically focused on belonging, growing, serving, and worshipping together as key aspects for spiritual development to strengthen their relationship with God and others, since spiritual formation has been described previously as relational as well as personal. Tangible results would include increased participation in ministries and volunteering to assist in various church and community projects. Intangibles would be a deeper personal relationship with Jesus Christ, stronger connection with the Holy Spirit, and a clearer understanding of their purpose as designed by the Father.

### **Initial Findings of Spiritual Fitness Assessment**

To ensure anonymity, the participants used a four-digit code of their choosing to identify their assessments. This ensured the before and after assessments could be linked together without

needing to identify the respondents. To assess baseline levels of spiritual fitness and maturity, all participants were asked to complete this survey one week before the start of the six-session group study. The assessment consists of thirty-nine statements regarding three categories of spiritual development. The first category, *beliefs and attitudes*, has twelve statements regarding topics such as: (a) connection of their spirit, mind, emotions, and body, (b) whether their faith provides strength and comfort, and (c) whether their trust in God gives them hope. The second category, *relationship with God*, has nine statements regarding issues such as knowing God loves them in a personal way, knowing God forgives them, and being obedient to biblical principles and commands. The last part, *faith in practice*, has eighteen statements that cover topics like holding grudges, self-forgiveness, and prayer.

### Key Assessment Responses

The first statement in the assessment declares a holistic ontological structure of the person, connecting one's spirit, mind, body, and emotions. At the start of the project, ten participants agreed strongly with that idea, while one was unsure.

#### Statement 1 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment

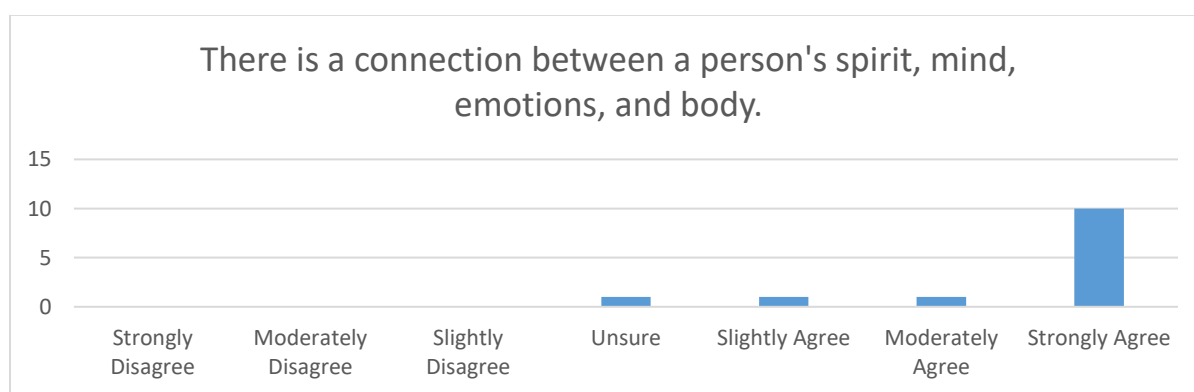


Figure 1

Another statement regarding their attitude and beliefs described the effect their faith has on their life now. The full list of responses is shown in Appendix H. This chapter will focus on a

representative sample of the more noticeable changes in the participants' perspectives. Thus, Statement 6 reads, "My faith gives me a strong sense of meaning and purpose." Three of the participants were unsure or agreed slightly. The researcher hoped that the project would strengthen that sense for them to be able to notice their development spiritually to do whatever God has planned for them.

### Statement 6 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment

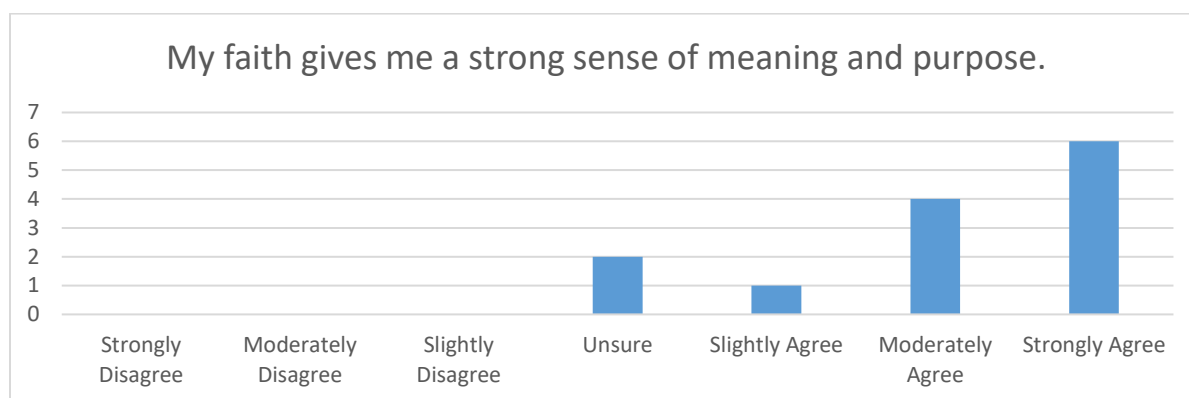


Figure 2

Hope is an integral part of one's spiritual journey and proceeds from faith, as Paul states in his Letter to the Galatians, "For through the Spirit by faith we eagerly await the hope of righteousness" (Gal 5:5). Statement 10 assesses whether the respondent yet senses a strengthened hope as a result of their faith. At the start of the project, three of the participants were either unsure or just agreed slightly that their faith and trust in God gave them hope.

### Statement 10 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment

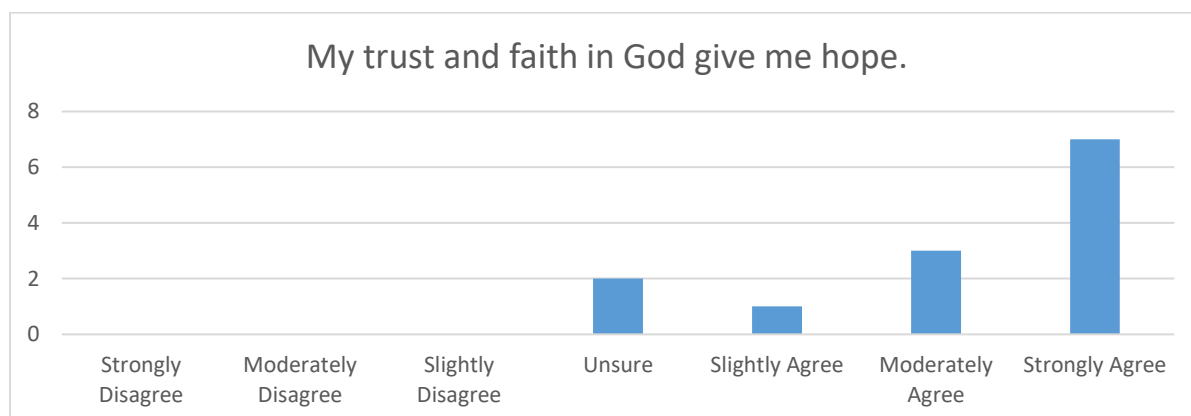


Figure 3

Prayer implicitly contains the expectation that God hears the person praying. The Psalms especially are replete with references to crying out to God. Statement 11 reads, “God hears me when I cry out to Him.” One participant disagreed and three agreed only slightly. This indicated an area of spiritual formation that the researcher hoped to see develop further in which the idea of being created for a purpose would lead to an understanding of the creator having continuing concern for His creation.

### Statement 11 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment

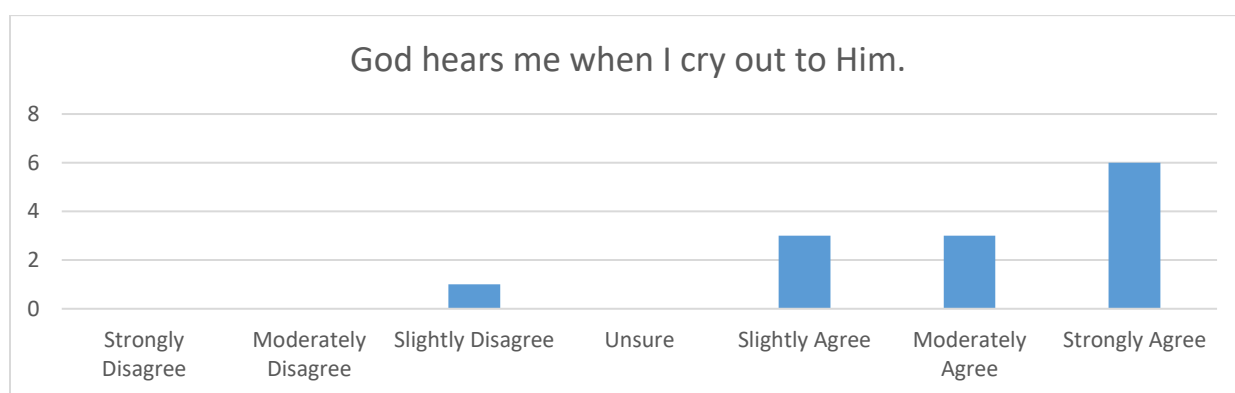


Figure 4

One's beliefs and attitudes about God impact development of one's relationship with Him, thus the next portion of the assessment deals with one's relationship with God. Three of the participants were unsure or agree slightly that their relationship with God gives them a strong sense of purpose and meaning. As the project sessions delve into God's purpose and desire for relationship with humanity, the researcher expects that the participants' sense of purpose and meaning would strengthen.

#### **Statement 14 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment**

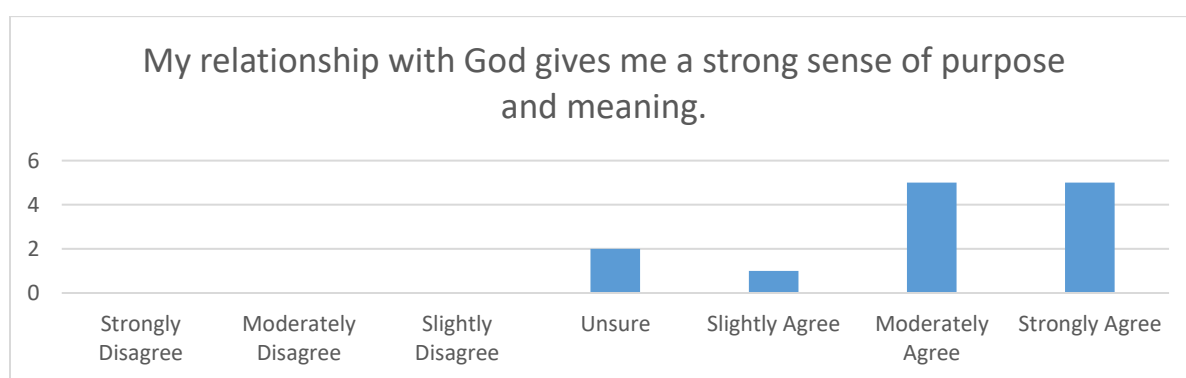


Figure 5

The cultural climate infused with Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, as described earlier, would be expected to affect Christian perspective regarding a personal relationship with God. Statement 16 shows the effect of that philosophy in some of the participants at CTR as two of them were unsure if God loves them in a personal way. Fewer than half strongly agreed with that statement. As the participants journey along the path of spiritual formation, their deepened relationship with God should strengthen their understanding of God's personal love for them.

### Statement 16 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment

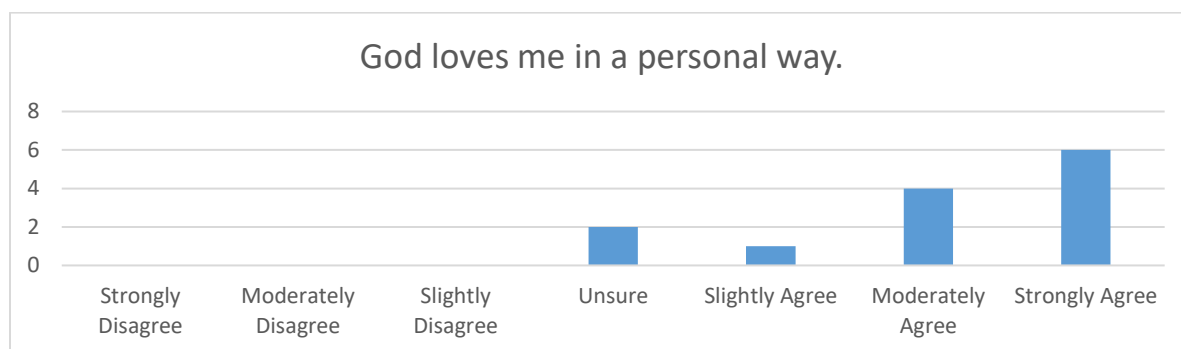


Figure 6

Forgiveness is an important part of any relationship, and Jesus declares its importance consistently and frequently in the Gospels. The Old Testament depicts Israel's innumerable transgressions against God, and His repeated forgiveness when they turned back to Him. Yet fewer than half the respondents agree strongly with the statement that they know God forgives them. Two people agreed slightly. The researcher anticipated that, as the participants developed spiritually, the critical element of realizing God's forgiveness would become more apparent to them.

### Statement 17 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment

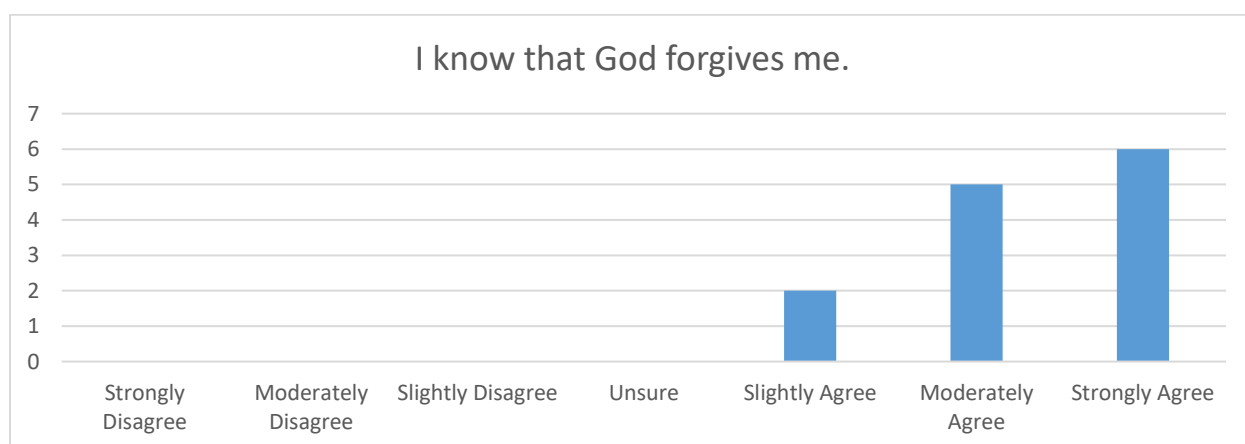


Figure 7

How one practices one's faith affects one's relationship with God, and one's relationship with God affects how one practices one's faith. It is a symbiotic effect that grows as one's spiritual formation deepens. For example, recognizing that one has been forgiven by God should spur the ability to forgive oneself as well. And the survey results show that many of the participants were not yet at that stage of spiritual formation, as five of them were unsure of the claim that they had forgiven themselves for things they had done. Just three participants agreed strongly. This is the second of a three-part concept regarding forgiveness and one's relationship with God. The first being forgiveness by God.

#### **Statement 27 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment**

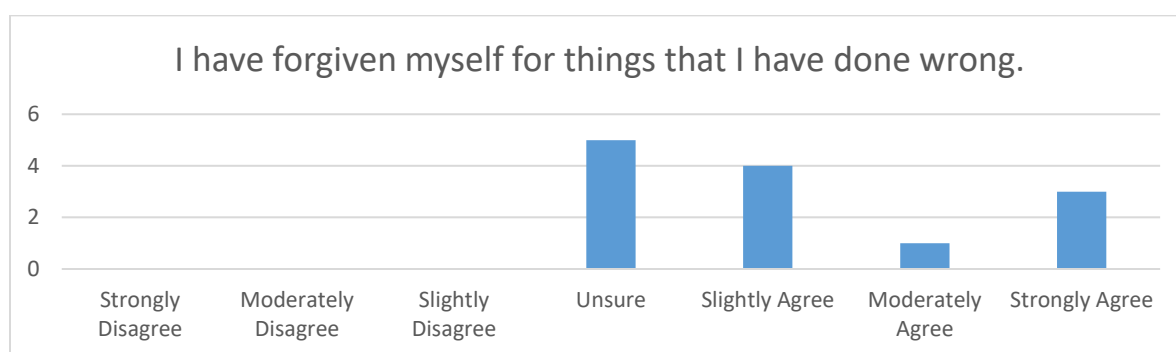


Figure 8

After identifying their level of self-forgiveness, the assessment addressed the respondents' practice of forgiving those who have hurt them. Forgiveness carries an added aspect beyond merely no longer being angry at the person or carrying a grudge. This third part of forgiveness—forgiving others—is seemingly the most difficult, as only three participants agreed strongly with the statement that they have forgiven those who have hurt them. Two were unsure or disagreed. The researcher expected the ability to forgive to increase through God's grace during the process of spiritual formation.

### Statement 28 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment

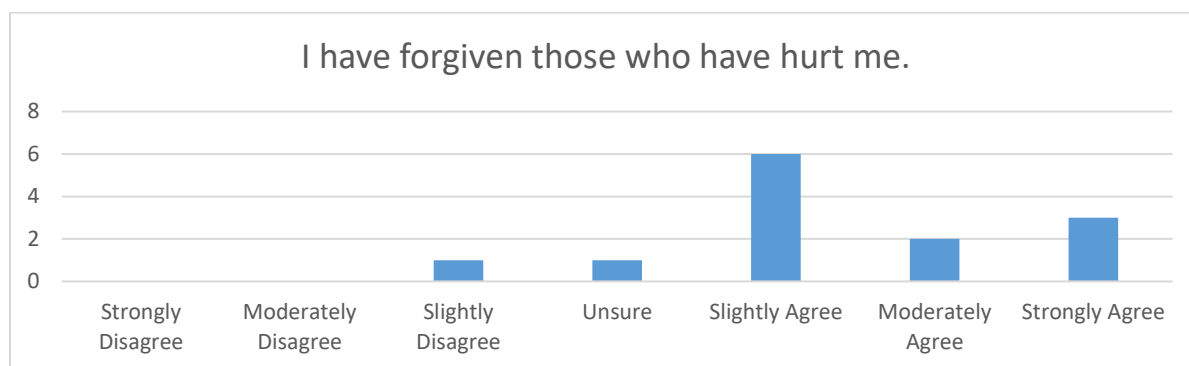


Figure 9

Prayer is a critical component of spiritual formation and often lacking in Christian lives. Statement 37 offers a range of choices to describe the frequency of the participants' prayers, from never to more than once a day. Five of the participants prayed just once a week or less at the start of the project. The researcher hoped that by introducing morning and evening prayer services into the project, the participants would develop more frequent prayer habits as part of the spiritual disciplines in their formation.

### Statement 37 of Preliminary Spiritual Fitness Assessment

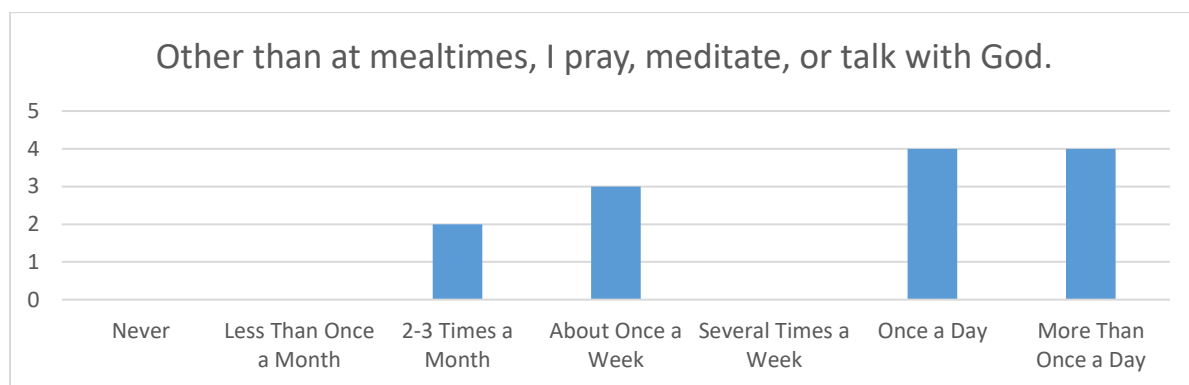


Figure 10

The initial assessment results for the participants indicate that some of them have had strong spiritual formation and are already mature disciples who are making other disciples, and a few are fairly new followers of Jesus who are willing to learn more about being disciples. Their development during this project is what the post-session assessment is expected to track.

### Morning and Evening Prayer

In the Anglican tradition, morning and prayer services are included in the Book of Common Prayer and are part of the daily spiritual discipline encouraged for all members. Some pray individually at home, and some large congregations have services at the church each day. Over the centuries, dedication to this discipline has dwindled. At CTR, some congregants use the prayer book at home, most do not. So, the implementation of morning and evening prayer service as part of spiritual formation in this project was a new practice for most of the participants. The researcher expected some reluctance to commit to the half-hour group service on Zoom twice daily, except Sundays and Wednesday nights. Instead, most were quite willing to try it. Nine of the participants consistently joined together at 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. As the project progressed, they commented about how much they looked forward to those times to gather online as a group and pray. As the project neared the end, they asked the researcher if he would continue having morning and evening prayer on Zoom after the project ends. For the seven months so far since the research project was completed, those original nine participants have continued this particular spiritual discipline, and two more congregants have joined. For a church like CTR, in which Sunday attendance drops to about twenty-five in the summer, having eleven of them gather virtually for prayer each day is significant and indicates a consistent habit within their spiritual formation.

### Post-Project Findings of Spiritual Assessment

After the six video sessions had completed, the participants re-took the Spiritual Fitness Assessment. As the researcher had hoped, the respondents now viewed their beliefs and behaviors through a more biblical perspective, as reflected in the higher rankings they chose. The participants who had been unsure or agreed slightly that one's spirit, mind, emotion, and body are connected now agreed strongly or moderately.

#### Statement 1 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment

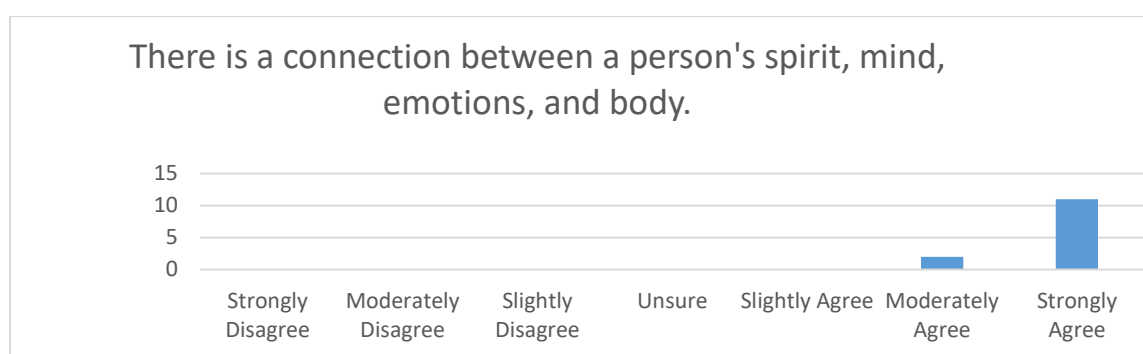


Figure 11

Regarding the impact faith has on their sense of meaning and purpose, two of the three lowest level responses had improved, recognizing their purpose is determined by God and comes through faith in Him, and that strengthened faith is a key aspect of their spiritual formation.

#### Statement 6 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment

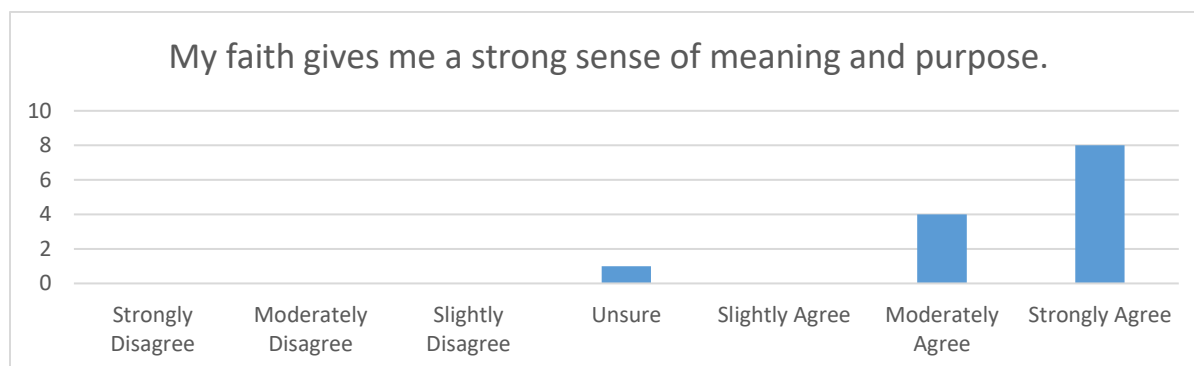


Figure 12

As their faith leads them to a deeper understanding of meaning and purpose in their lives, that understanding elicits trust in God to bring them through obstacles to fulfill his purpose for them. That is the basis for hope, which Paul describes as resulting from faith in his letter to the Church in Rome, writing, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:13). Hope in Christ draws disciples closer to God, as declared in the letter to the Hebrews, which reads, “...there is the introduction of a better hope through which we draw near to God” (Heb 7:19). The final assessment results regarding that issue showed that the two participants who were previously unsure now agreed with the statement, and the number of participants who agreed strongly increased by 29 percent.

#### Statement 10 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment



Figure 13

As one’s faith and hope in God’s purpose increases, the belief that God hears and responds to prayer is strengthened as well, as indicated in the respondents’ assessments of the statement that God hears them cry out to Him. Before the sessions, one participant disagreed with that statement; afterward, all of them agreed with the statement, with at least three of the respondents increasing their level of agreement.

### Statement 11 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment

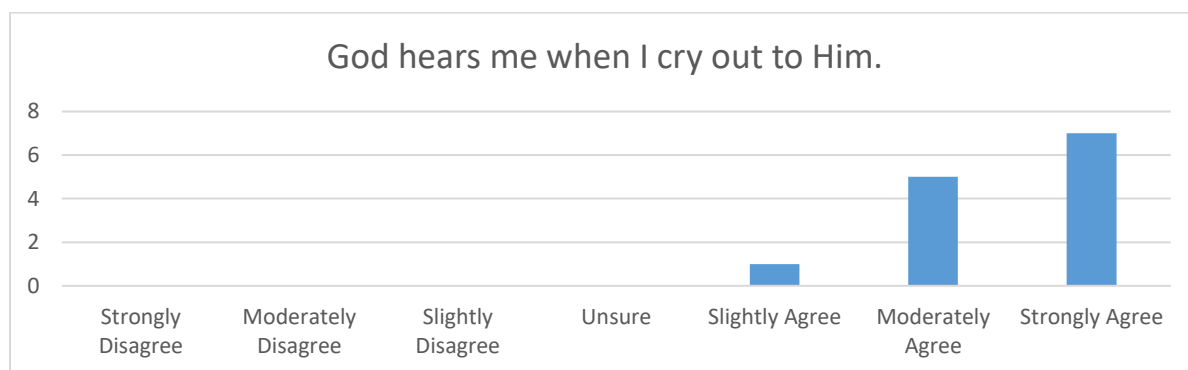


Figure 14

In developing their attitudes and beliefs such as hope and trust in God through faith, and recognizing that He hears their prayers, the participants' relationship with God strengthened. That formational development increased their levels of belief regarding purpose and meaning. The two participants who had been unsure no longer were, and the number of those who agree strongly had increased by two.

### Statement 14 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment

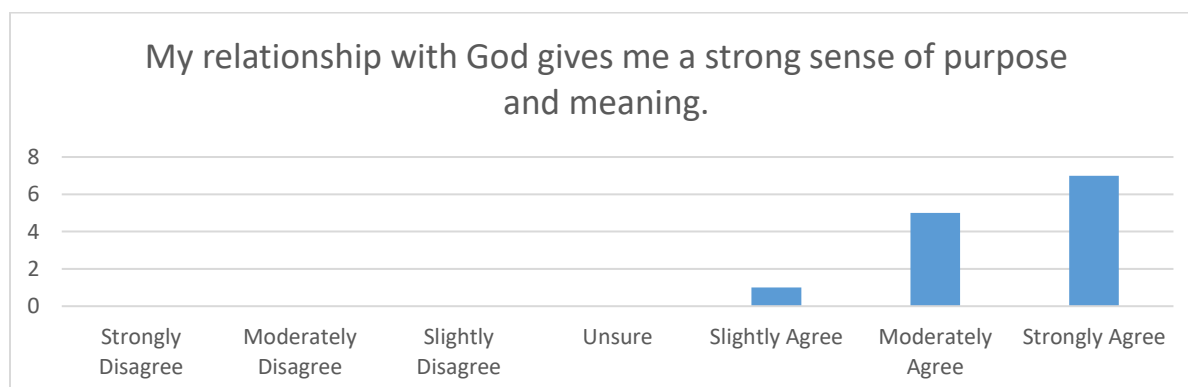


Figure 15

The participants' spiritual formation included an understanding of the reciprocal nature of God's love. His love for them enables them to love Him in return, which leads to the understanding that since they are able to love God in a personal way, then He loves them that

way as well. As John wrote in his first letter, “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Nearly all the participants’ belief in the statement that God loves them in a personal way increased; one remained unsure, but the number agreeing strongly increased by two thirds.

### Statement 16 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment

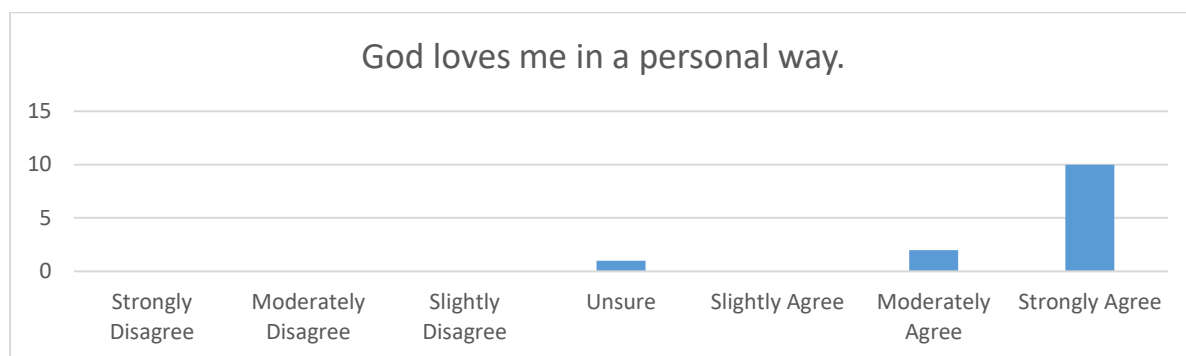


Figure 16

Part of the morning and evening prayer services includes an acknowledgment and repentance of any sins one may have committed, followed with a declaration of God’s forgiveness of those sins of commission or omission. The daily recitation of that prayer seems to have affected the participants’ spiritual formation positively, in that the number who agreed strongly that God forgives them increased by half, and the two who agreed only slightly before the sessions now agreed at least moderately.

### Statement 17 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment

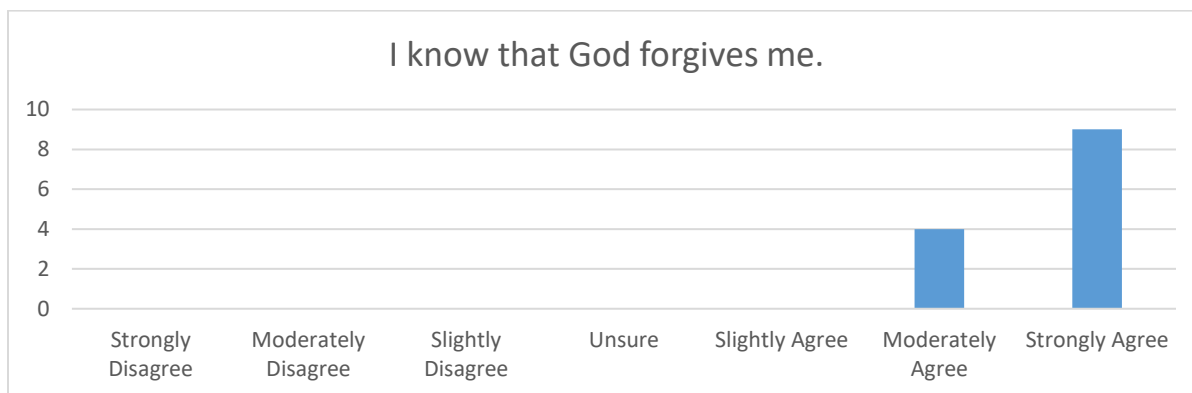


Figure 17

One of the more drastic changes in the assessments was in the participants' ability to forgive themselves. Their increased recognition that they are loved and forgiven by God enabled them to modify their own perspective of themselves and how they practice their faith by consciously forgiving themselves for the things God had already forgiven. Although two participants were still unsure, the other three, who had been unsure, along with the four participants who agreed only slightly with the statement, now agreed moderately or strongly that they have forgiven themselves for things they have done wrong.

### Statement 27 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment

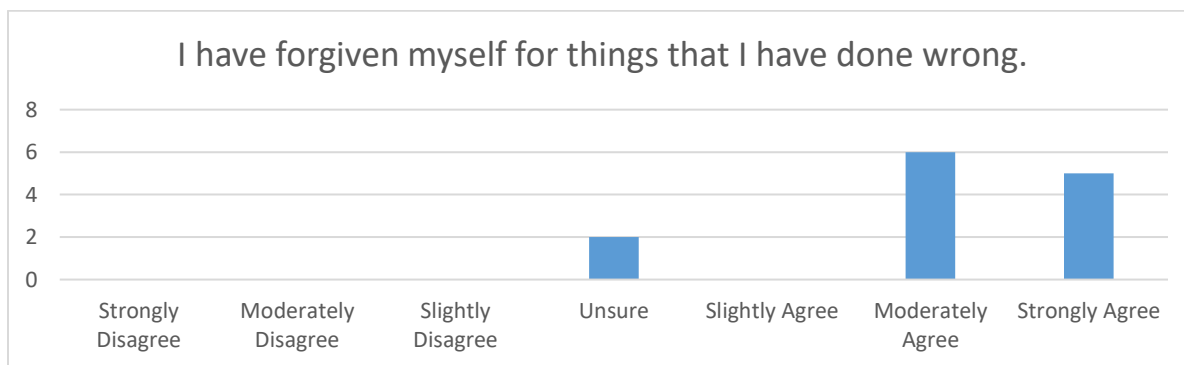


Figure 18

Actually practicing forgiveness is more difficult than just agreeing that it is a good character trait that God expects of His disciples. After completing the sessions, most of the participants significantly increased their agreement with the statement that they had forgiven those who hurt them. This represented a change of heart and a volitional act in response to their spiritual development and relationship with Jesus. Although one respondent was unsure, no one disagreed anymore, and five of the six who had agreed slightly at the start of the sessions now agreed strongly or moderately, more than doubling those categories.

#### Statement 28 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment

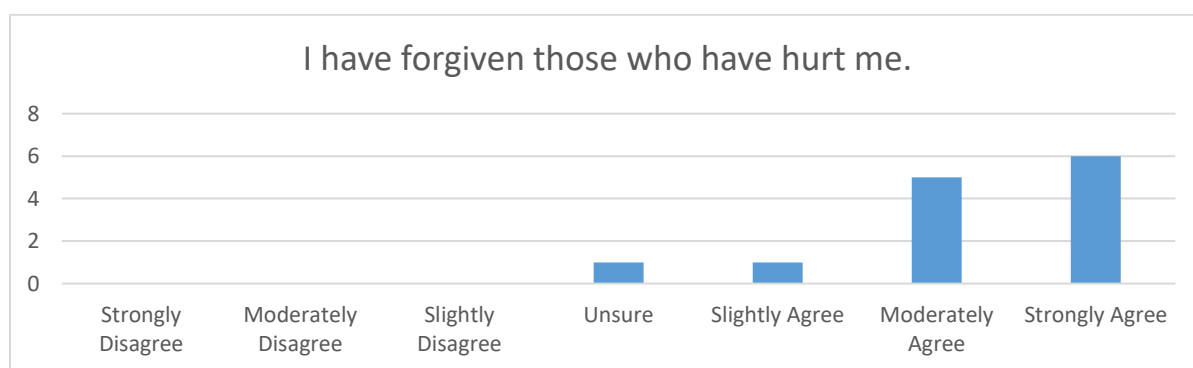
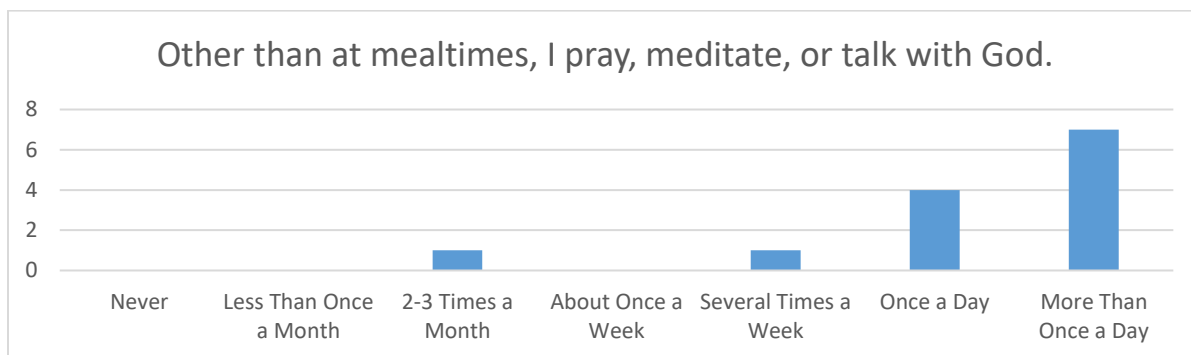


Figure 19

One of the more recognizable indicators of spiritual formation is prayer. One's comfort with, and frequency of, prayer increases through spiritual disciplines in the course of formation. Communication is an important part of any relationship, especially one's relationship with God. Going into this research project, some of the participants already had a deep and prayerful relationship with Jesus. Others rarely prayed outside of church or to saying grace before a meal. Four of the five, who before this research project prayed, meditated, or talked with God once a week or less, now did so—most of them at least daily—with the number praying more than once a day almost doubling.

**Statement 37 of Final Spiritual Fitness Assessment****Figure 20**

The Spiritual Fitness Assessment scores indicate a general trend of positive spiritual formation in the participants resulting from the Zoom sessions of the *What on Earth Am I Here For?* video presentations and the daily Zoom sessions of morning and evening prayer. The complete before and after chart comparisons are in Appendix G.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

This research project adds to the limited availability of data showing the viability of interactive discipleship training through a virtual medium to increase spiritual formation. Though in-person church gatherings are optimal in many instances, it is not always optional, as the recent pandemic has shown. Whereas, previously, group meetings required the physical presence of all participants, current technology enables live visual and aural interaction among participants across long distances.

### **A Broad Need for Discipleship**

Jesus' call in the Great Commission for His disciples to make other disciples who will likewise make more disciples brought great expansion to the Early Church. Luke attests to three thousand new believers being baptized on Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Those newly baptized followers of Jesus then demonstrated sincere dedication and devotion to Jesus. As Luke described, "And they were devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers...and every day, devoting themselves to meeting with one purpose in the temple courts..." (Acts 2:41, 46).

The Church in twenty-first century America, however, faces challenges in developing disciples. Research shows that fewer than three out of five people attend church regularly.<sup>179</sup> Additionally, biblical literacy and engagement are continuing to decline among modern-day Christians.<sup>180</sup> Within CTR, about 10 percent of the congregation attends worship services less than once a year. Fellowship is lacking as well. Apart from monthly lunches for women and

---

<sup>179</sup> Barna Group, "State of the Bible."

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

breakfast for men, there is no intentionality in gathering together outside of Sunday morning coffee.

These realities present a notable challenge for spiritual formation, as Jesus' imperative for His disciples to teach new disciples "to observe everything I have commanded you..." (Matt 28:20) requires that they learn what He has commanded. Additionally, the only way to devote oneself "to the teaching of the apostles" is through the Bible. This, coupled with both teaching and fellowship are necessary for deeper spiritual formation and discipleship.

One of the cultural factors establishing the need for this research project is what Smith and Denton describe as Moral Therapeutic Deism. This perspective encompasses the belief that God's primary consideration for humanity is that they be happy, and thus He responds to their prayerful requests to accommodate their happiness, but otherwise stays out of their lives. He wants people to be nice to each other, and if people are good, they go to Heaven when they die.<sup>181</sup>

### **The Local Need for Discipleship at CTR**

The challenges facing Western Christianity in general also are apparent in the congregation at CTR. Some of the parishioners read the Bible consistently, others rarely if at all. Some meet together in small groups, but these groups do not always focus on spiritual formation. Additionally, the societal and governmental restrictions related to COVID-19 caused difficulty for any sort of group gathering. Although Arizona had minimal restrictions imposed, most of the congregation was still uncomfortable about being with other people in confined spaces and therefore an opportunity for virtual gatherings developed as the impetus for this research project.

---

<sup>181</sup> Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 163-164.

During the pandemic, CTR was live streaming worship services on Facebook, and using Zoom for monthly parish council meetings. The ministerial use of virtual technology seemed to be passive rather than participatory; people could watch the worship services at home, but they could not interact with the liturgy as they would be able to do in person. The desire to implement small discipleship groups at CTR within the boundaries imposed by the pandemic, led to this researcher investigating the feasibility of using virtual technology currently in use by businesses and schools for meetings and classes for spiritual formation. This spiritual need drove the design of the project.

The purpose for this DMIN action research thesis is to develop a small group to improve the spiritual direction and formation of congregants at Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church in Yuma, Arizona. The lack of spiritual maturity among some of this population offers some challenges because it hinders obedience to Christ's (and CTR's) mission statement of "Making disciples who make disciples" (Matt 28:18-20). This small group study would seek to promote opportunities for greater spiritual formation and maturity.

### **Logistical Aspects of the Project**

The congregation of CTR comprises approximately four dozen members attending worship services each Sunday. Some of the members are friends with each other and meet during the week. Some participate in small "prayer and share" groups of three or four people that meet weekly to help stay accountable to each other along their Christian journey. Many, however, worship each Sunday morning with very little interaction with other congregants outside that time. This research project established a small group of thirteen people similar to Wesley's classes and bands, focused on prayer, development as disciples, and spiritual formation.<sup>182</sup> The

---

<sup>182</sup> Henderson, *Class Meeting*, 83.

resulting behavior changes compare with Wesley's models in that the participants developed a more biblical worldview, and many increased the amount of personal prayer and Bible study.

Putman's model shows stages of disciple and leader development similar to child development, and was seen in this project in some clear areas.<sup>183</sup> His description of new Christians as spiritual infants includes the admonition that disciple makers are *in loco parentis* regarding their spiritual development, saying, "a disciple maker who helps a spiritually dead person come to faith in Jesus needs to help that spiritual infant grow up."<sup>184</sup> This research project helped some of the participants grow more comfortable with their talents and spiritual gifts, using them more openly. They demonstrated a greater understanding of spiritual formation through their discussions following each weekly video segment. The participants also learned to facilitate the daily morning and evening prayer service, taking turns leading the various portions of the services. Some of the participants volunteered to host the services when the researcher was unavailable due to travel. Additionally, they demonstrated a greater interest and commitment to prayer by consistently participating in the prayer services and requesting that they continue after the project's completion. Many of the participants had not prayed out loud or read Scripture in a group before. Through the course of the project, they became more comfortable doing so and many of them became readers and prayer ministers for the Sunday Eucharist services.

### **Expectations and Realizations**

While there are some natural challenges that surface when shifting to virtual ministry, a positive result was the unifying effect that the technology has had on CTR's winter visitors. Before COVID, many members were out of the area for half the year. As a haven for winter

---

<sup>183</sup> Putman, *Real Life Discipleship*, 23.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

visitors, with daytime temperatures in the sixties and seventies throughout the season, much of Yuma's population comprises people from northern states and Canada from fall until spring. When the temperatures climb back up in the spring to the hundreds, the winter visitors head back north, along with any Yuma residents able to leave the region for a few months. Previously, that meant a complete severance from any participation with CTR during their absence. The online presence with live-streamed services and Zoom meetings enables them to still be a part of CTR activities even from thousands of miles away. Use of these platforms at CTR will continue after the pandemic threat has dissipated.

### **Spiritual Fitness Assessment Comparison**

The cultural ambience of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is also diminished, as the responses in the Spiritual Fitness Assessment show the participants increasing their belief that God hears their cries for help, loves them in a personal way, forgives them, responds to prayer, expects obedience, and encourages them to trust Him with their problems. Those aspects run counter to concepts of earning salvation through moral behavior, that feeling good about oneself is most important, or that a creator established the world and set it off on its own without intervention or guidance. Spiritual formation is a holistic process, so the participants' increased understanding that one's spirit, mind, emotions, and body are connected is a significant foundational improvement. Before the sessions, some were unsure or agreed just slightly, but afterward, nearly all agreed strongly (two agreed moderately) with the statement.

The project helped mold disciples, not mere church service attendees.

### **Project Outcomes**

The thirteen participants represent about a third of the Sunday congregation size at CTR, and the increased participation they now demonstrate will improve the effectiveness of its

ministries. The old saying that 20 percent of an organization does 80 percent of the work is no longer operative at CTR as a result of this project.

Some of the participants have begun inviting others to church also. The video segments and discussions helped foster a more outward focus toward bring others to know Jesus. They have also increased the fellowship efforts by establishing a group dinner tradition following the Wednesday evening Eucharist service, by which eight-ten people share a meal at a local restaurant, opening with public prayers of thanksgiving. A group of Christians holding hands and praying out loud in crowded restaurants is a significant step forward, and often includes the group's waiter or waitress. This practice has expanded to multiple groups gathering for brunch also after the Sunday service.

Although morning and evening prayer is part of a daily spiritual discipline within Anglicanism that is called the Daily Office, it is sparsely used by parishioners. The Book of Common Prayer contains those services and others for use at home and in church, and has been a ubiquitous aspect of Anglican tradition for five centuries; yet, most Anglicans do not practice that discipline. The researcher was surprised by the popular response to the incorporation of this discipline in the research project. Having nine of the participants consistently engage in the practice for the duration of the project was surprising. Their request to continue the practice after completion of the project amazed the researcher. This marked a significant behavioral change in the spiritual discipline of nearly a third of CTR's average Sunday attendance in the spring and summer. The participants have been able to stay linked to each other during these corporate and personal prayer times despite traveling out of town for holidays or other reasons. As long as they can find a wi-fi signal, they are able to join.

Another significant and surprising result for this researcher was that, despite notifications in the church newsletter and verbal announcements during the worship services inviting the entire congregation to join in the morning and evening prayer services, not a single parishioner joined. For about six months following the project's completion, the original group was still going strong, but none of their fellow congregants were willing to join them in that spiritual discipline. Then, two more parishioners joined the Zoom prayer group. A few weeks later, another parishioner joined, and all three have been participating consistently since. Although three people is not a large group, it represents about 10 percent of CTR's Sunday attendance in the summer and a 33 percent increase in the size of the group.

Yet another indicator of increased spiritual formation came a few months after this research project had finished, during a regional gathering in Phoenix, more than two hundred miles away, addressing the missional focus in Arizona Anglican churches. In previous years, CTR participation was sparse, often with no one traveling to participate. This time, ten parishioners attended, nine of whom were either participants in this project or the spouse of a participant. The CTR contingent was larger than most of the others, including churches in the Phoenix area.

A key result that has affected fellowship participation is the increase in forgiveness by the participants. The number of people who agreed strongly that they have forgiven those who had hurt them doubled and the number agreeing moderately almost tripled. Perceived slights and grudges between parishioners exist in every congregation, and CTR is no exception; however, the interaction between various ministries involving participants in this research project has improved considerably. There was nothing dramatic, just the occasional sibling disagreements that occur in biological families were sometimes noticeable in the spiritual family. The frequency

of these conflicts diminished significantly following the project. Forgiving others helped them rejoin in fellowship.

### **Future Research Recommendations**

How this advanced spiritual formation influences evangelism is beyond the scope of this project but would be a natural expansion for future research. If discipleship is meant to expand the kingdom, then one would reasonably expect that increased discipleship in individuals would yield a corresponding increase in new disciples. As Putman points out, children eventually become adults, but not all become parents. One must have a child in order to be a parent. He writes, “In the final stage of spiritual development, we become spiritually mature enough to reproduce disciples—we become **spiritual parents**. I am purposely using the term *parent* here rather than *adult*. As Christians we are called to make disciples—to do our part to reproduce our faith in another. Adults are *able* to reproduce, but that does not mean they are reproducing.”<sup>185</sup>

A larger sample group with longer tracking could provide more detailed data regarding the effects of this type of medium on congregational growth—whether the increased spiritual formation yields evangelistic fruit. A larger pool from which to draw participants would also likely yield more people who are in the early stages of their spiritual journeys.

Additionally, research regarding the effects of local culture on spiritual perspectives and determining an appropriate means of bringing change within a congregation to overcome negative cultural effects would be beneficial in understanding the impact that environment can have on Christian spiritual formation.

---

<sup>185</sup> Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 42.

## **Conclusion**

This research project has demonstrated that small-group discipleship through a virtual platform can indeed affect spiritual formation. Some of the participants began the project unsure if God loves them and described the realization of that love as “drawing (them) out of the darkness.” Others expressed the desire to get back to the deep closeness of real family feeling enjoyed by the Early Church. Others had not thought of certain behaviors as sin, but now realize they are, imbuing in them a desire to change those behaviors. All expressed the desire to continue advancing in their spiritual formation, regardless of what level they were at the start of the project. One of the participants summed up the effects of the project saying, “The best part for me was how I saw people growing spiritually during morning and evening prayer. This should continue and be available for everyone. This has refocused me into praying as a community and not just as an individual.” And now, this small Anglican church in Yuma, Arizona, is reaping the benefit of their spiritual growth.



## Appendix A

**Spiritual Fitness Assessment**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

This questionnaire measures some of your faith-related attitudes, beliefs and practices that may have an impact on your health. Your responses will be used by Fr. Austin Mansfield as part of his Discipleship Research Project to help determine a starting point for each participant at the beginning of the project and to determine any changes that may have developed by the conclusion of the project. If you are uncomfortable providing a response to any statement, just skip that item. For each item, please circle the number that best describes your answer according to the scale provided. All information will be kept confidential.

**YOUR BELIEFS & ATTITUDES:**

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Moderately Disagree 3 = Slightly Disagree 4 = Unsure

5 = Slightly Agree 6 = Moderately Agree 7 = Strongly Agree

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. There is a connection between a person's spirit, mind, emotions, and body.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2. A person's faith-related beliefs, attitudes, and practices can have a positive impact on their health.                | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3. I am open to learning how faith-related beliefs, attitudes and practices might impact in a positive way on my health. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4. I obtain strength and comfort from my faith/spirituality.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. Aside from my frequency of attending worship services, I consider myself to be spiritual.                             | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. My faith gives me a strong sense of meaning and purpose.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. There is a God.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. God's Spirit lives in me.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 9. My spiritual beliefs affect absolutely every aspect of my life.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 10. My trust and faith in God gives me hope.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 11. God hears me when I cry out to Him.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 12. My thought patterns impact my emotions, feelings and associated behaviors.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 13. My relationship with God is the foundation for how I live my life.             | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 14. My relationship with God gives me a strong sense of purpose and meaning.       | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 15. I love God in a personal way.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 16. God loves me in a personal way.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 17. I know that God forgives me.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 18. I trust in God and have faith that He will take care of me.                    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 19. I try my very best to understand the principles and commandments of the Bible. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 20. I am obedient to the principles and commandments of the Bible.                 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 21. I do not harbor bitterness toward God for bad things that have happened to me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Moderately Disagree 3 = Slightly Disagree 4 = Unsure  
 5 = Slightly Agree 6 = Moderately Agree 7 = Strongly Agree

HOW YOU PRACTICE YOUR FAITH:

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 22. I have close relationships with others in my faith community who have influence in my life's direction.         | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 23. I feel a strong sense of support from others who are in my faith community.                                     | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 24. I engage in healthy behaviors to care for my body as God's temple.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 25. I draw special strength/power from God's Spirit to make health-related behavior choices and changes in my life. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 26. I tend not to hold grudges for a long time when people hurt me.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 27. I have forgiven myself for things that I have done wrong.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 28. I have forgiven those who have hurt me.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 29. I am not angry or bitter towards God, myself or others.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

1 = Never 2 = About once a year 3 = Several times a year 4 = About once a month  
5 = 2-3 times a month 6 = About once a week 7 = More than once a week

USE NEW SCALE ABOVE

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 30. I cry out to God when I need His help.                                | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 31. I attend religious services, activities or Bible studies.             | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 32. I confess my wrongdoings/sins to God and ask for His forgiveness.     | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 33. I volunteer at my place of worship or in my community.                | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 34. I consciously surrender or "let go" of all aspects of my life to God. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 35. I engage in social interaction with others of my faith.               | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

1 = Never 2 = Less than once a month 3 = 2-3 times a month 4 = About once a week  
5 = Several times a week 6 = Once a day 7 = More than once a day

USE NEW SCALE ABOVE

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 36. I monitor my thinking/thought patterns as a way to influence my emotions, feelings and associated behaviors. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 37. Other than at mealtime I pray, meditate, or talk with God.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 38. I read or study Holy Scriptures/the Bible privately.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 39. What is your current religion and denomination? <sup>186</sup>   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

---

<sup>186</sup> Fletcher, *Spiritual Exercises*.

## Appendix B

## DAILY MORNING PRAYER

*The Officiant may begin Morning Prayer by reading an opening sentence of Scripture. One of the following, or a sentence from among those provided at the end of the Office (pages 27-29), is customary.*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 1:2

*or this*

I was glad when they said unto me, "We will go into the house of the LORD."

PSALM 122:1

*or this*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

PSALM 19:14

## CONFESSION OF SIN

*The Officiant says to the People*

Dearly beloved, the Scriptures teach us to acknowledge our many sins and offenses, not concealing them from our heavenly Father, but confessing them with humble and obedient hearts that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy. We ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before Almighty God, but especially when we come together in his presence to give thanks for the great benefits we have received at his hands, to declare his most worthy praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things which are necessary for our life and our salvation. Therefore, draw near with me to the throne of heavenly grace.

*or this*

Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

*Silence is kept. All kneeling, the Officiant and People say*

**Almighty and most merciful Father,**

**we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.**

**We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.**

**We have offended against your holy laws.**

**We have left undone those things which we ought to have done,**

**and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;**

**and apart from your grace, there is no health in us.**

**O Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**Spare all those who confess their faults.**

**Restore all those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to all people in**

**Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,**

**that we may now live a godly, righteous, and sober life,**

**to the glory of your holy Name. Amen.**

*The Priest alone stands and says*

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, desires not the death of sinners, but that they may turn from their wickedness and live. He has empowered and commanded his ministers to pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all who truly repent and genuinely believe his holy Gospel. For this reason, we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that our present deeds may please him, the rest of our lives may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or this*

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*A Deacon or layperson remains kneeling and prays*

Grant to your faithful people, merciful Lord, pardon and peace; that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*All stand.*

*Officiant* O Lord, open our lips;

*People* **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

*Officiant* O God, make speed to save us;

*People* **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Officiant* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

*People* **As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

*Officiant* Praise the Lord.

*People* **The Lord's Name be praised.**

*Then follows the Venite. Alternatively, the Jubilate may be used.*

*One of these antiphons, or one from the seasonal antiphons provided at the end of the Office (pages 29-30), may be sung or said before and after the Invitatory Psalm.*

The earth is the Lord's for he made it: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

*or this*

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

*or this*

The mercy of the Lord is everlasting: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

VENITE

*O Come*

**O come, let us sing unto the LORD; \***

**let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.**

**Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving \***

**and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.**

**For the LORD is a great God \***

and a great King above all gods.  
 In his hand are all the depths of the earth, \*  
 and the heights of the hills are his also.  
 The sea is his, for he made it, \*  
 and his hands prepared the dry land.  
 O come, let us worship and fall down, \*  
 and kneel before the LORD our Maker.  
 For he is our God, \*  
 and we are the people of his pasture,  
 and the sheep of his hand.

*The following verses may be omitted, except in Lent.*

Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts \*  
 as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness,  
 When your fathers tested me, \*  
 and put me to the proof, though they had seen my works.  
 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation and said, \*  
 “It is a people that err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways,”  
 Of whom I swore in my wrath \*  
 that they should not enter into my rest.

PSALM 95:1-7, 8-11

*or this*

JUBILATE  
*Be Joyful*

O be joyful in the LORD, all you lands; \*  
 serve the LORD with gladness,  
 and come before his presence with a song.  
 Be assured that the LORD, he is God; \*  
 it is he that has made us, and not we ourselves;  
 we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.  
 O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving,  
 and into his courts with praise; \*  
 be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.  
 For the LORD is gracious, his mercy is everlasting, \*  
 and his truth endures from generation to generation.

PSALM 100

*During the first week of Easter, the Pascha Nostrum, without antiphons, is used in place of the Invitatory Psalm, and it may be used throughout Eastertide.*

PASCHA NOSTRUM  
*Christ our Passover*

Alleluia. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us; \*  
 therefore let us keep the feast,  
 Not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, \*  
 but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Alleluia.  
 Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; \*

death no longer has dominion over him.  
 The death that he died, he died to sin, once for all; \*  
 but the life he lives, he lives to God.  
 So also consider yourselves dead to sin, \*  
 and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Alleluia.  
 Christ has been raised from the dead, \*  
 the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.  
 For since by a man came death, \*  
 by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.  
 For as in Adam all die, \*  
 so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Alleluia.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7-8; ROMANS 6:9-11; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-22

*Then follows*

#### THE PSALM OR PSALMS APPOINTED

*At the end of the Psalms the Gloria Patri (Glory be...) is sung or said*

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; \*  
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
 world without end. Amen.**

#### THE LESSONS

*One or more Lessons, as appointed, are read, the Reader first saying*

A Reading from \_\_\_\_\_.

*A citation giving chapter and verse may be added.*

*After each lesson the Reader may say*

The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*Or the Reader may say*

Here ends the Reading.

*The following Canticles are normally sung or said after each of the lessons. The Officiant may also use a Cantic drawn from the Supplemental Canticles (pages 79-88) or an appropriate song of praise.*

#### TE DEUM LAUDAMUS

*We Praise You, O God*

**We praise you, O God; we acclaim you as Lord; \*  
 all creation worships you, the Father everlasting.  
 To you all angels, all the powers of heaven, \*  
 the cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:  
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of power and might, \*  
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
 The glorious company of apostles praise you. \*  
 The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.  
 The white-robed army of martyrs praise you. \*  
 Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you:  
 Father, of majesty unbounded,**

your true and only Son, worthy of all praise, \*  
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the king of glory, \*  
the eternal Son of the Father.

When you took our flesh to set us free \*  
you humbly chose the Virgin's womb.

You overcame the sting of death \*  
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

You are seated at God's right hand in glory. \*  
We believe that you will come to be our judge.

Come then, Lord, and help your people, \*  
bought with the price of your own blood,  
and bring us with your saints \*  
to glory everlasting.

*The following verses may be omitted*

Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance; \*  
govern and uphold them now and always.

Day by day we bless you; \*  
we praise your Name for ever.

Keep us today, Lord, from all sin; \*  
have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.

Lord, show us your love and mercy, \*  
for we have put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope; \*  
let us never be put to shame.

*During Lent the Benedictus es, Domine usually replaces the Te Deum, and it may be used at other times.*

BENEDICTUS ES, DOMINE  
*A Song of Praise*

Glory to you, Lord God of our fathers; \*  
you are worthy of praise; glory to you.

Glory to you for the radiance of your holy Name; \*  
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.

Glory to you in the splendor of your temple; \*  
on the throne of your majesty, glory to you.

Glory to you, seated between the Cherubim; \*  
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.

Glory to you, beholding the depths; \*  
in the high vault of heaven, glory to you.

Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; \*  
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.

SONG OF THE THREE YOUNG MEN, 29-34

BENEDICTUS  
*The Song of Zechariah*

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; \*  
 he has come to his people and set them free.  
 He has raised up for us a mighty savior, \*  
 born of the house of his servant David.  
 Through his holy prophets he promised of old  
 that he would save us from our enemies, \*  
 from the hands of all who hate us.  
 He promised to show mercy to our fathers \*  
 and to remember his holy covenant.  
 This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, \*  
 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
 Free to worship him without fear, \*  
 holy and righteous in his sight  
 all the days of our life.  
 You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, \*  
 for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
 To give his people knowledge of salvation \*  
 by the forgiveness of their sins.  
 In the tender compassion of our God \*  
 the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
 To shine on those who dwell in darkness  
 and in the shadow of death, \*  
 and to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; \*  
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
 world without end. Amen.

LUKE 1:68-79

THE APOSTLES' CREED

*Officiant and People together, all standing*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
 creator of heaven and earth.  
 I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
 He was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
 and born of the Virgin Mary.  
 He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
 was crucified, died, and was buried.  
 He descended to the dead.  
 On the third day he rose again.  
 He ascended into heaven,  
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
 He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
 the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

# THE PRAYERS

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And with your spirit.**

*Officiant* Let us pray.

*The People kneel or stand.*

Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Christ, have mercy upon us. or**

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

*Officiant and People*

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

*Officiant* O Lord, show your mercy upon us;

*People* **And grant us your salvation.**

*Officiant* O Lord, guide those who govern us;

*People* **And lead us in the way of justice and truth.**

*Officiant* Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

*People* **And let your people sing with joy.**

*Officiant* O Lord, save your people;

*People* **And bless your inheritance.**

*Officiant* Give peace in our time, O Lord;

*People* **And defend us by your mighty power.**

*Officiant* Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

*People* **Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

*Officiant* Create in us clean hearts, O God;

*People* **And take not your Holy Spirit from us.**

*The Officiant then prays one or more of the following Collects, always beginning with the Collect of the Day (usually the Collect of the Sunday or Principal Feast and of any of the weekdays following, or of the Holy Day being observed), found on pages 598-640. It is traditional to pray the Collects for Peace and Grace daily. Alternatively, one may pray the Collects on a weekly rotation, using the suggestions in italics.*

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY  
*From the Collects of the Christian Year*

A COLLECT FOR STRENGTH TO AWAIT CHRIST'S RETURN  
*Sunday*

O God our King, by the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ on the first day of the week, you conquered sin, put death to flight, and gave us the hope of everlasting life: Redeem all our days by this victory; forgive our sins, banish our fears, make us bold to praise you and to do your will; and steel us to wait for the consummation of your kingdom on the last great Day; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR THE RENEWAL OF LIFE  
*Monday*

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR PEACE  
*Tuesday*

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR GRACE  
*Wednesday*

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day: Defend us by your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin nor run into any danger; and that, guided by your Spirit, we may do what is righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR GUIDANCE  
*Thursday*

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR ENDURANCE  
*Friday*

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR SABBATH REST  
*Saturday*

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures: Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties, may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary, and that our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Unless the Great Litany or the Eucharist is to follow, one of the following prayers for mission is added. If the Great Litany is used, it follows here, or after a hymn or anthem, and concludes the Office.*

#### PRAYER FOR MISSION

Almighty and everlasting God, who alone works great marvels: Send down upon our clergy and the congregations committed to their charge the life-giving Spirit of your grace, shower them with the continual dew of your blessing, and ignite in them a zealous love of your Gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or this*

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or this*

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the Cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

*The Officiant may invite the People to offer intercessions and thanksgivings.*

*A hymn or anthem may be sung.*

*Before the close of the Office one or both of the following prayers may be used.*

#### THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING

*Officiant and People*

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts  
we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
by giving up our selves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.**

## A PRAYER OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time, with one accord to make our common supplications to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will grant their requests: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

*Officiant* Let us bless the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, "Alleluia, alleluia" may be added to the preceding versicle and response.*

*The Officiant says one of these concluding sentences (and the People may be invited to join)*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14<sup>T</sup>

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

ROMANS 15:13<sup>T</sup>

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.**

EPHESIANS 3:20-21<sup>T</sup>

## OPENING SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

## ADVENT

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
ISAIAH 40:3

## CHRISTMAS

Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.  
LUKE 2:10-11

## EPIPHANY

From the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.  
MALACHI 1:11

LENT *and* OTHER PENITENTIAL OCCASIONS

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.  
MATTHEW 3:2

Turn your face from my sins, and blot out all my misdeeds.  
PSALM 51:9

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.  
MARK 8:34

## HOLY WEEK

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger.  
LAMENTATIONS 1:12

## EASTER

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.  
COLOSSIANS 3:1

## ASCENSION

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.  
HEBREWS 4:14, 16

## PENTECOST

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.  
ACTS 1:8

## TRINITY SUNDAY

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!  
REVELATION 4:8

## DAYS OF THANKSGIVING

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

PROVERBS 3:9-10

#### AT ANY TIME

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.

HABAKKUK 2:20

O send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill, and to your dwelling.

PSALM 43:3

Thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite."

ISAIAH 57:15

The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

JOHN 4:23

### SEASONAL ANTIPHONS

#### ADVENT

Our King and Savior now draws near: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

#### CHRISTMAS

Alleluia, to us a child is born: \*

**O come, let us adore him. Alleluia.**

#### EPIPHANY, *and* THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

The Lord has shown forth his glory: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

#### PRESENTATION *and* ANNUNCIATION

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

#### LENT

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

#### EASTER UNTIL ASCENSION

Alleluia. The Lord is risen indeed: \*

**O come, let us adore him. Alleluia.**

## ASCENSION UNTIL PENTECOST

Alleluia. Christ the Lord has ascended into heaven: \*

**O come, let us adore him. Alleluia.**

## DAY OF PENTECOST

Alleluia. The Spirit of the Lord renews the face of the earth: \*

**O come, let us adore him. Alleluia.**

## TRINITY SUNDAY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

ALL SAINTS' *and* OTHER MAJOR SAINTS' DAYS

The Lord is glorious in his saints: \*

**O come, let us adore him.**

## ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS

The Confession and Apostles' Creed may be omitted, provided each is said at least once during the course of the day.

The Gloria Patri (Glory be...) in the opening versicles may be said in unison. The following form of the Gloria Patri may alternatively be used:

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

The Officiant and People may join in saying "Alleluia" (except in Lent) as an alternative to the versicles "Praise the Lord. The Lord's Name be praised."

If an offering is to be received, it is appropriate to do so during the hymn or anthem following the Collects.

A sermon may be preached after the lessons, after the hymn or anthem following the Collects, or after the conclusion of the Office.<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>187</sup> Anglican Church in North America, *Book of Common Prayer 2019* (Los Angeles: Anglican Liturgy Press, 2019), accessed December 7, 2020, <https://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/index.php/downloads/>.

## Appendix C

## DAILY EVENING PRAYER

*The Officiant may begin Evening Prayer by reading an opening sentence of Scripture. One of the following, or a sentence from among those provided at the end of the Office (pages 54-56), is customary.*

Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

JOHN 8:12

*or this*

LORD, I have loved the habitation of your house and the place where your honor dwells.

PSALM 26:8

*or this*

Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

PSALM 141:2

## CONFESSION OF SIN

*The Officiant says to the People*

Dearly beloved, the Scriptures teach us to acknowledge our many sins and offenses, not concealing them from our heavenly Father, but confessing them with humble and obedient hearts that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy. We ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before Almighty God, but especially when we come together in his presence to give thanks for the great benefits we have received at his hands, to declare his most worthy praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things which are necessary for our life and our salvation. Therefore, draw near with me to the throne of heavenly grace.

*or this*

Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

*Silence is kept. All kneeling, the Officiant and People say*

**Almighty and most merciful Father,**

**we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.**

**We have followed too much the devices and desires**

**of our own hearts.**

**We have offended against your holy laws.**

**We have left undone those things which we ought to have done,**

**and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;**

**and apart from your grace, there is no health in us.**

**O Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**Spare all those who confess their faults.**

**Restore all those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to all people in**

**Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,**

**that we may now live a godly, righteous, and sober life,**

**to the glory of your holy Name. Amen.**

*The Priest alone stands and says*

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, desires not the death of sinners, but that they may turn from their wickedness and live. He has empowered and commanded his ministers to pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. He pardons and absolves all who truly repent and genuinely believe his holy Gospel. For this reason, we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that our present deeds may please him, the rest of our lives may be pure and holy, and that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or this*

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*A Deacon or layperson remains kneeling and prays*

Grant to your faithful people, merciful Lord, pardon and peace; that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### THE INVITATORY

*All stand.*

*Officiant* O Lord, open our lips;

*People* **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.** *Officiant* O God, make speed to save us;

*People* **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Officiant* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

*People* **As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

*Officiant* Praise the Lord.

*People* **The Lord's Name be praised.**

*The following or some other suitable hymn or Psalm may be sung or said.*

#### PHOS HILARON

*O Gladsome Light*

**O gladsome light,**

**pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven, \***

**O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!**

**Now as we come to the setting of the sun,**

**and our eyes behold the vesper light, \***

**we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

**You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, \***

**O Son of God, O Giver of Life,**

**and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

*Then follows*

#### THE PSALM OR PSALMS APPOINTED

*At the end of the Psalms the Gloria Patri (Glory be...) is sung or said*

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; \***

**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

## THE LESSONS

*One or more Lessons, as appointed, are read, the Reader first saying*

A Reading from \_\_\_\_\_.

*A citation giving chapter and verse may be added.*

*After each Lesson the Reader may say*

The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*Or the Reader may say*

Here ends the Reading.

*The following Canticles are normally sung or said after each of the lessons. The Officiant may also use a Cantic drawn from the Supplemental Canticles (pages 79-88) or an appropriate song of praise.*

## MAGNIFICAT

*The Song of Mary*

My soul magnifies the Lord, \*  
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
 For he has regarded \*  
 the lowliness of his handmaiden.  
 For behold, from now on, \*  
 all generations will call me blessed;  
 For he that is mighty has magnified me, \*  
 and holy is his Name.  
 And his mercy is on those who fear him, \*  
 throughout all generations.  
 He has shown the strength of his arm; \*  
 he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
 He has brought down the mighty from their thrones, \*  
 and has exalted the humble and meek.  
 He has filled the hungry with good things, \*  
 and the rich he has sent empty away.  
 He, remembering his mercy, has helped his servant Israel, \*  
 as he promised to our fathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.  
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; \*  
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

LUKE 1:46-55

## NUNC DIMITTIS

*The Song of Simeon*

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, \*  
 according to your word.  
 For my eyes have seen your salvation, \*  
 which you have prepared before the face of all people;  
 To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, \*  
 and to be the glory of your people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; \* as it was in the beginning, is now,

and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

LUKE 2:29-32

#### THE APOSTLES' CREED

*Officiant and People together, all standing*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

#### THE PRAYERS

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And with your spirit.**

*Officiant* Let us pray.

*The People kneel or stand.*

Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Christ, have mercy upon us. or**

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

*Officiant and People*

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

*Then follows one of these sets of Suffrages*

*Officiant* O Lord, show your mercy upon us;

*People* **And grant us your salvation.**

*Officiant* O Lord, guide those who govern us;

*People* **And lead us in the way of justice and truth.**

*Officiant* Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

*People* **And let your people sing with joy.**

*Officiant* O Lord, save your people;

*People* **And bless your inheritance.**

*Officiant* Give peace in our time, O Lord;

*People* **And defend us by your mighty power.**

*Officiant* Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

*People* **Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

*Officiant* Create in us clean hearts, O God;

*People* **And take not your Holy Spirit from us.**

*or this*

That this evening may be holy, good, and peaceful,  
**We entreat you, O Lord.**

That your holy angels may lead us in paths of peace and goodwill,  
**We entreat you, O Lord.**

That we may be pardoned and forgiven for our sins and offenses,  
**We entreat you, O Lord.**

That there may be peace in your Church and in the whole world,  
**We entreat you, O Lord.**

That we may depart this life in your faith and fear, and not be condemned before the great judgment seat of Christ,  
**We entreat you, O Lord.**

That we may be bound together by your Holy Spirit in the communion of [ \_\_\_\_\_ and] all your saints, entrusting one another and all our life to Christ,  
**We entreat you, O Lord.**

*The Officiant then prays one or more of the following Collects, always beginning with the Collect of the Day (usually the Collect of the Sunday or Principal Feast and of any of the weekdays following, or of the Holy Day being observed) found on pages 598-640. It is traditional to pray the Collects for Peace and Aid against Perils daily. Alternatively, one may pray the Collects on a weekly rotation, using the suggestions in italics.*

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY  
*From the Collects of the Christian Year*

A COLLECT FOR RESURRECTION HOPE *Sunday*

Lord God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of death and prepared for us our place in the new Jerusalem: Grant that we, who have this day given thanks for his resurrection, may praise you in that City of which he is the light, and where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR PEACE *Monday*

O God, the source of all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works: Give to your servants that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments, and that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR AID AGAINST PERILS *Tuesday*

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR PROTECTION *Wednesday*

O God, the life of all who live, the light of the faithful, the strength of those who labor, and the repose of the dead: We thank you for the blessings of the day that is past, and humbly ask for your protection through the coming night. Bring us in safety to the morning hours; through him who died and rose again for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST *Thursday*

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR FAITH *Friday*

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. **Amen.**

A COLLECT FOR THE EVE OF WORSHIP *Saturday*

O God, the source of eternal light: Shed forth your unending day upon us who watch for you, that our lips may praise you, our lives may bless you, and our worship on the morrow give you glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Unless the Great Litany or the Eucharist is to follow, one of the following prayers for mission is added. If the Great Litany is used, it follows here, or after a hymn or anthem, and concludes the Office.*

PRAYER FOR MISSION

O God and Father of all, whom the whole heavens adore: Let the whole earth also worship you, all nations obey you, all tongues confess and bless you, and men, women, and children everywhere love you and serve you in peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or this*

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

*or this*

O God, you manifest in your servants the signs of your presence: Send forth upon us the Spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The Officiant may invite the People to offer intercessions and thanksgivings.*

*A hymn or anthem may be sung.*

*Before the close of the Office one or both of the following prayers may be used.*

#### THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING

*Officiant and People*

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
by giving up our selves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.**

#### A PRAYER OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time, with one accord to make our common supplications to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will grant their requests: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

*Officiant* Let us bless the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, "Alleluia, alleluia" may be added to the preceding versicle and response.*

*The Officiant says one of these concluding sentences (and the People may be invited to join)*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14<sup>T</sup>

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

ROMANS 15:13<sup>T</sup>

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.**

EPHESIANS 3:20-21<sup>T</sup>

## OPENING SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

## ADVENT

Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

MARK 13:35-36

## CHRISTMAS

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

REVELATION 21:3

## EPIPHANY

Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

ISAIAH 60:3

LENT *and* OTHER PENITENTIAL OCCASIONS

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:8-9

For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me.

PSALM 51:3

To the LORD our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him.

DANIEL 9:9

## HOLY WEEK

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

ISAIAH 53:6

## EASTER

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:57

## ASCENSION

For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

HEBREWS 9:24

## PENTECOST

The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

REVELATION 22:17

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling place of the Most High.

PSALM 46:4

## TRINITY SUNDAY

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!

ISAIAH 6

#### DAYS OF THANKSGIVING

The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.

PROVERBS 3:19-20

#### AT ANY TIME

O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

PSALM 96:9

I will thank the LORD for giving me counsel; my heart also chastens me in the night season. I have set the LORD always before me; he is at my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.

PSALM 16:8-9

#### ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS

The Confession and Apostles' Creed may be omitted, provided each is said at least once during the course of the day.

The Gloria Patri (Glory be...) in the opening versicles may be said in unison. The following form of the Gloria Patri may alternatively be used:

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

The Officiant and People may join in saying "Alleluia" (except in Lent) as an alternative to the versicles "Praise the Lord. The Lord's Name be praised."

If an offering is to be received, it is appropriate to do so during the hymn or anthem following the Collects.

A sermon may be preached after the lessons, after the hymn or anthem following the Collects, or after the conclusion of the Office.<sup>188</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> Anglican Church, *Common Prayer*.

## Appendix D

**Consent Form**

I understand that the information I provide during this project with Fr. Austin Mansfield will be processed by him to determine the current likely level of my spiritual formation in order to ascertain any changes that may occur during the project as part of the final published record of events and observations of the project's effectiveness overall.

All information provided by me will be kept confidential, except as may be used in general group terms in the final report. My name will not be used in the project report.

I agree to attend all seven sessions of our gathering each week by Zoom videoconferencing at dates and times established as convenient for all participants unless unable to attend due to health or family emergency. I understand my personal commitment to this project is beneficial to our church and my own spiritual formation and reaches well beyond a class project solely for the student's benefit.

I further agree to pray each day for all participants of this project and attempt to participate in morning and evening daily prayer as much as possible. We can do nothing without Christ, and his guidance and help are available to us through the Holy Spirit by prayer. Attempting to affect my spiritual formation without prayer would be fruitless and reckless.

I agree also to maintain the confidentiality of my fellow participants and not discuss comments or concerns by anyone in my group with anyone outside it.

---

Name

---

Date

## Appendix E

### ACTS of Prayer

One of the models used to guide us in prayer is the acronym ACTS, which stands for: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

1. Adoration: Praising God for Who He is
  - a. “Yahweh is great and very worthy of praise...” (Psalm 48:1a).
  - b. Worship describes this portion of prayer—focused totally on God, not us.
2. Confession: Confessing our sins to God
  - a. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, so that he will forgive us our sins and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
  - b. We all sin and need to seek God’s forgiveness at the start of our conversation.
3. Thanksgiving: Thanking God for the things He has already done for us
  - a. “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:16–18).
  - b. Giving thanks in everything includes our adversity. How we react to the difficulties we endure in life develops who we become.
  - c. Praying constantly requires listening, not constant talking.
4. Supplication: Asking for God’s help
  - a. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Phil 4:6).
  - b. Jesus says, “Do not be anxious” (Matt 6:25-34).
    - i. Doing what Jesus says not to do is the definition of sinning.
    - ii. Therefore, being anxious is a sin.

1. Jesus did not add exceptions for parents, epidemics, or national elections.
- iii. If we have the time to worry about something, we should pray.
  1. Jesus says that prayer affects things and anxiety does not.

## Appendix F

### Foster's Spiritual Discipline Streams

Richard Foster elaborated on that idea in his 1998 book, *Streams of Living Water*.<sup>189</sup> He also founded the infrachurch movement, Renovaré, which is dedicated to church renewal. Renovaré recently published a synopsis of Foster's list of the six traditions of: Contemplative, Holiness, Charismatic, Social Justice, Evangelical, and Incarnational.<sup>190</sup>

#### 1) Contemplative - Prayer-Filled Life: Our Heart's Steady Attention on God

- a) The focus is on silence, prayer, and solitude as ways of drawing closer to God.

Using those things while hiking on a trail, commuting to the office, doing housework, etc. helps us engage with God in His presence.<sup>191</sup> As Foster describes it, "Put simply, the contemplative life is the steady gaze of the soul upon the God who loves us."<sup>192</sup>

- b) Examples: Henri Nouwen, Benedict of Nursia

#### 2) Holiness - Virtuous Life: Responding with Integrity

- a) The focus is on changing our hearts to respond properly to life's challenges. The ultimate goal is "not to get us into Heaven, but to get Heaven into us."<sup>193</sup> The virtuous life is not about rules or judgment or getting "brownie points" for doing good deeds. The word *virtue* carries some difficult connotations in current times,

---

<sup>189</sup> Foster, *Streams*.

<sup>190</sup> "The Six Streams."

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Foster, *Streams*, 43.

<sup>193</sup> "The Six Streams."

but the Greek word from which we translate it (*arete*) means “enabled to achieve its end or purpose.”<sup>194</sup> Foster describes the implementing of a holy life: “We see Jesus consistently doing what needs to be done when it needs to be done. We see in him such deeply ingrained ‘holy habits’ that he is always ‘reponse-able,’ always able to respond appropriately. This is purity of heart. This is the virtuous life.”<sup>195</sup>

i) Examples: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thomas a Kempis, Ignatius of Loyola.

### 3) Charismatic - Spirit-Empowered Life: Fueling our Lives from the Presence and Power of God

i) Just as cars require fuel to run, and bodies require food, our souls need God’s spirit to thrive. The Holy Spirit enables us to build up the Body of Christ through love and keeps us linked to God’s presence.<sup>196</sup> Foster elaborates on the importance of the Holy Spirit in the disciple’s life. “Frankly, there are no ‘noncharismatic Christians’ ... the Christian life is by definition a life in and through the Spirit.”<sup>197</sup>

ii) Examples: John Wimber, Dennis Bennett, Charles Wesley, Francis of Assisi

### 4) Social Justice - Compassionate Life: Extending Compassion in Every Sphere of Life

i) This stream emphasizes kindness, justice, and peace to bring harmony and balance to life. It is part of every aspect of one’s life, private and public, local

---

<sup>194</sup> Bible Sense Lexicon, *Logos Bible Software*.

<sup>195</sup> Foster, *Streams*, 8.

<sup>196</sup> “The Six Streams.”

<sup>197</sup> Foster, *Streams*, 125.

and global, and is empowered by the love of God to effect true change.<sup>198</sup> As Foster writes, “Love of God makes love of neighbor possible.”<sup>199</sup>

ii) Examples: Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa, Harriet Tubman

#### 5) Evangelical - Word-Centered Life: Living the Life-Giving Message

i) God’s great message to humanity, the Good News, is that everything and everyone can be redeemed and restored to God’s original design. This message was established in Scripture, made incarnate in Jesus, and continues today through the lives of His disciples. God’s amazing grace is evident in the lives of His followers.<sup>200</sup> This faith stream addresses the crying need for people to see the Good News lived and hear the Good News proclaimed.<sup>201</sup>

ii) Examples: Billy Graham, C. S. Lewis, Dwight L. Moody, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Thomas Aquinas, Augustine of Hippo, Jerome

#### 6) Incarnational - Sacramental Life: Encountering the Invisible God in the Visible World

i) The focus is on being able to see God’s divine presence in the physical realm of His creation, not just the amazing, but also the mundane.<sup>202</sup> Every aspect of life is God-breathed. The situational ethics of our culture are offset by learning “to do our work as Jesus would do our work if he were in our

---

<sup>198</sup> “The Six Streams.”

<sup>199</sup> Foster, *Streams*, 167.

<sup>200</sup> “The Six Streams.”

<sup>201</sup> Foster, *Streams*, 187.

<sup>202</sup> “The Six Streams.”

place.”<sup>203</sup> The Reformation principle of the “priesthood of all believers” teaches us that “that the plow boy and the milk maid can do priestly work. But even more profoundly it teaches us that the plow boy *in his plowing* and the milk maid *in her milking* are in fact doing priestly work.”<sup>204</sup>

- ii) Examples: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Isaac Newton, John Milton, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo.

---

<sup>203</sup> Foster, *Streams*, 264.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

## Appendix G

### Contagious Christian Styles

In *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels, Mark Mittleberg, and Lee Strobel describe six personality styles that align with particular evangelism methods that are most comfortable for certain people. These are: Direct, Intellectual, Testimonial, Interpersonal, Invitational, and Serving. Each style feels most natural for people with corresponding personality traits.<sup>205</sup>

**Direct** - Direct and often confrontational. Peter's sermon in Acts 2:22-41 is a good example of this style. Bold and "in your face." Speaking up instead of being quiet. Ray Comfort and Chuck Colson are good examples.

**Intellectual** - Presenting the Gospel in logical format. Like a lawyer laying out evidence in his case layer upon layer, building on previous points made. Paul used this many times with people from very different cultures (Jews, Greeks, Galatians, Romans), especially Acts 17:15-34. Josh McDowell and C. S. Lewis are good examples of this style.

**Testimonial** - How one's life has been changed by Jesus. The blind man whom Jesus healed in John 9:1-25. It is difficult to argue with "I was blind, but now I see." Good examples of this personality style are Joni Eareckson Tada and Lee Strobel.

**Interpersonal** - A "people person" who enjoys sharing hospitality. Sharing a meal and talking to someone to get to know them better is a comfortable way for some people to reach others spiritually. Mathew demonstrated this in Luke 5:27-29 when, after leaving everything behind to follow Jesus, he threw a huge dinner party at his house so others could meet Him also.

---

<sup>205</sup> Williams, *Styles*.

Invitational - When someone's life has been changed by Jesus, he or she may tell others and invite them to experience the same thing. It may be excitement about one's church or a spiritual retreat, or to see a visiting evangelist. Billy Graham's Crusades were huge venues for people with this personality style. They invited people to come with them to see Graham, and many of those visitors committed themselves to following Jesus at the end of the service. The woman at the well in John 4:1-30 runs back into town to tell the rest of her community about Jesus and brought them back with her to Him. Similarly, Andrew brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus saying, "Come and See" (John 1:40-42).

Serving - Exemplifies patience and fulfilling the needs of others. These people are the ones who take meals to neighbors who have lost a loved one, or have just returned from the hospital, or they mow the lawn of a neighbor who broke his leg. Dorcas in Acts 9 was described as having this trait, and Mother Teresa is probably the most familiar contemporary example.

Appendix H

Spiritual Fitness Assessment Results

Beliefs and Attitudes

Statement 1 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment



Table 1 (before and after, left to right)

Statement 2 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

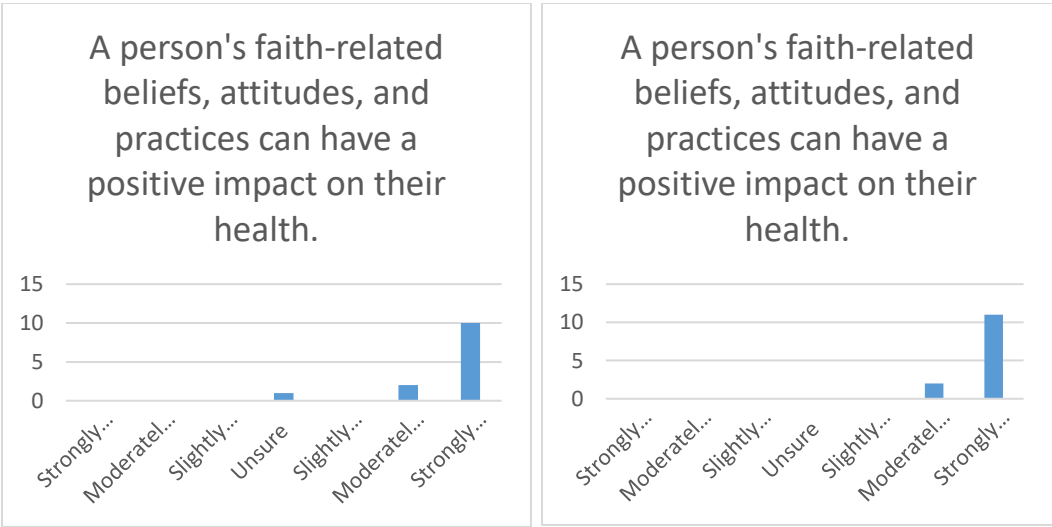


Table 2 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 3 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

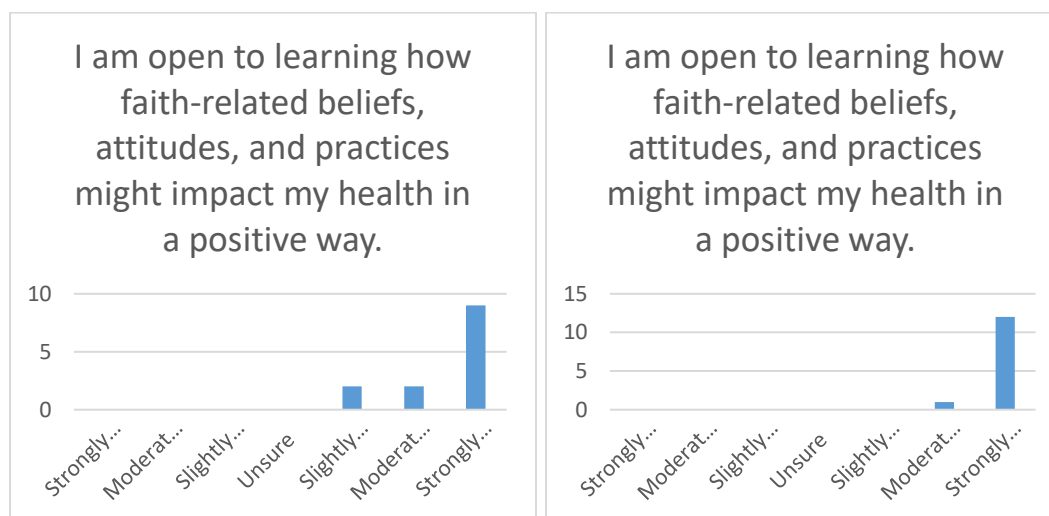


Table 3 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 4 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

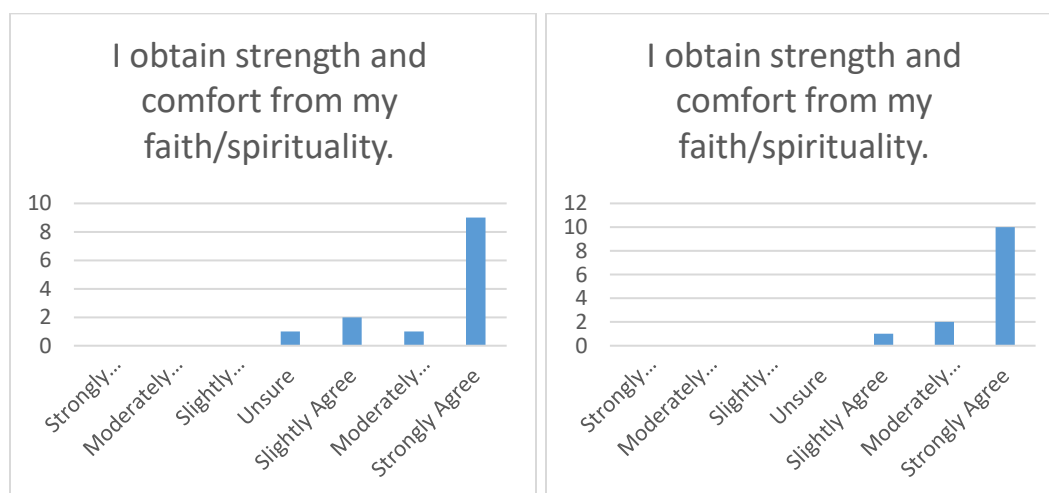


Table 4 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 5 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

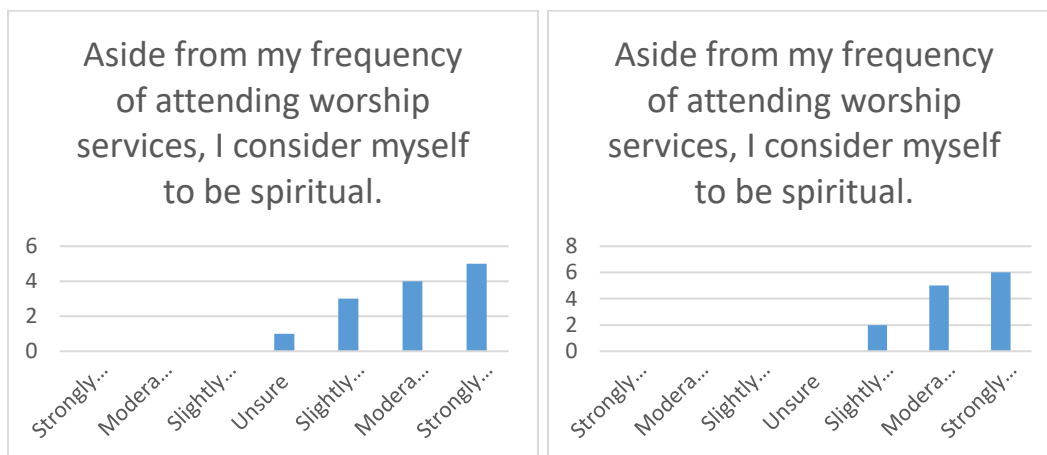


Table 5 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 6 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

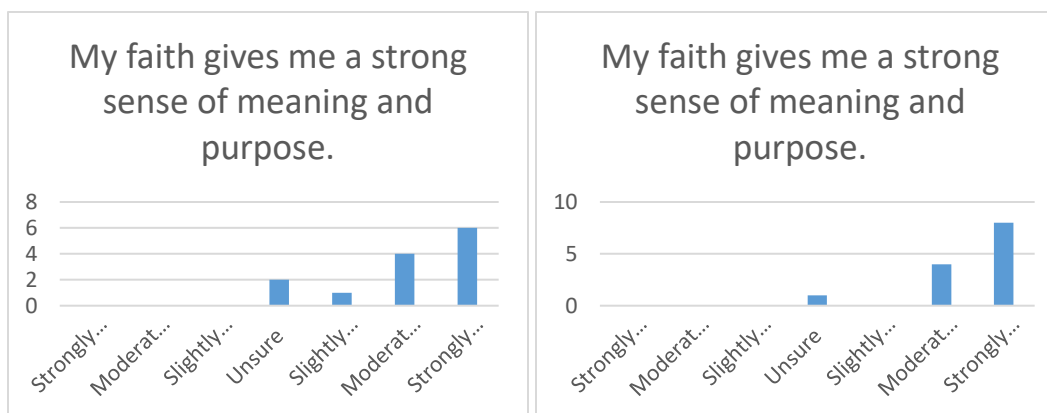


Table 6 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 7 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

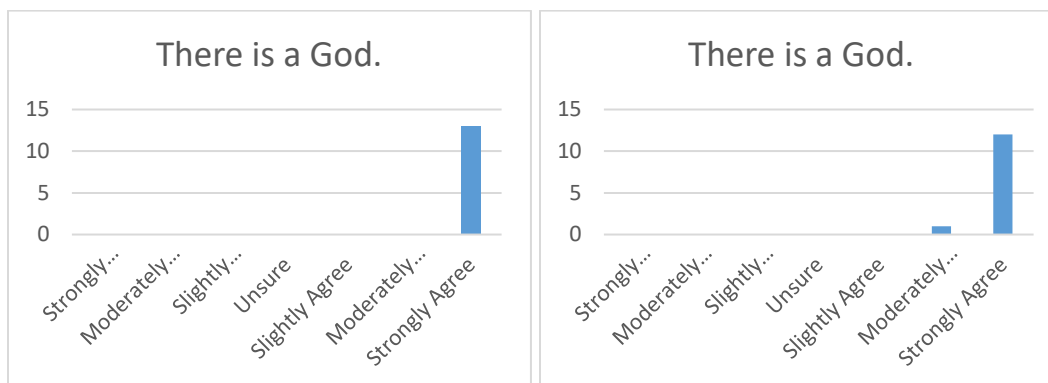


Table 7 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 8 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

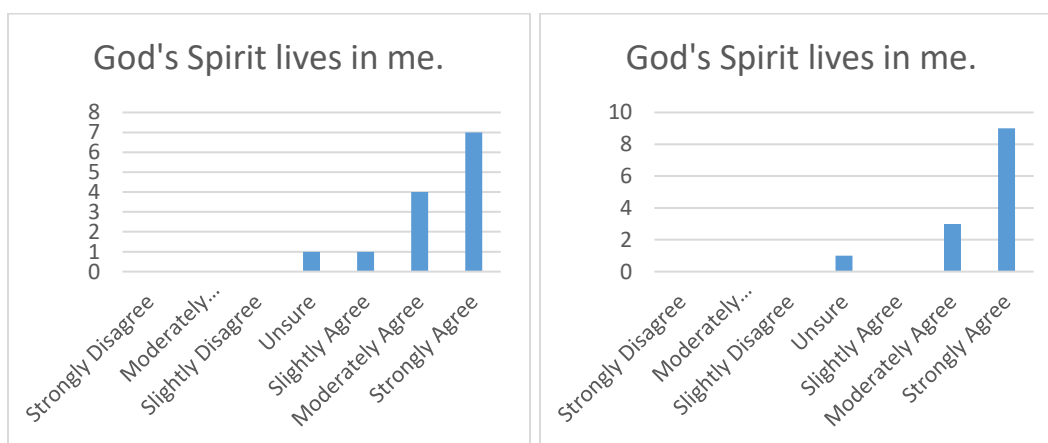


Table 8 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 9 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

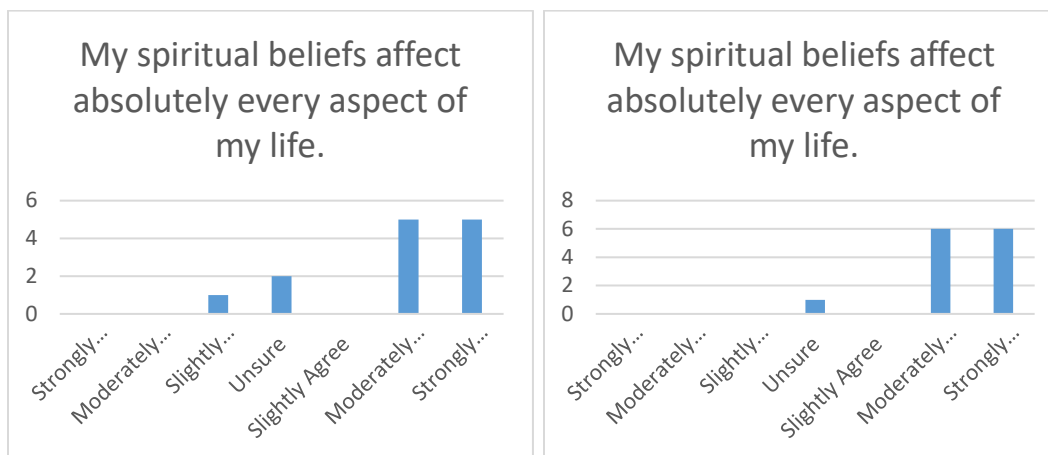


Table 9 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 10 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

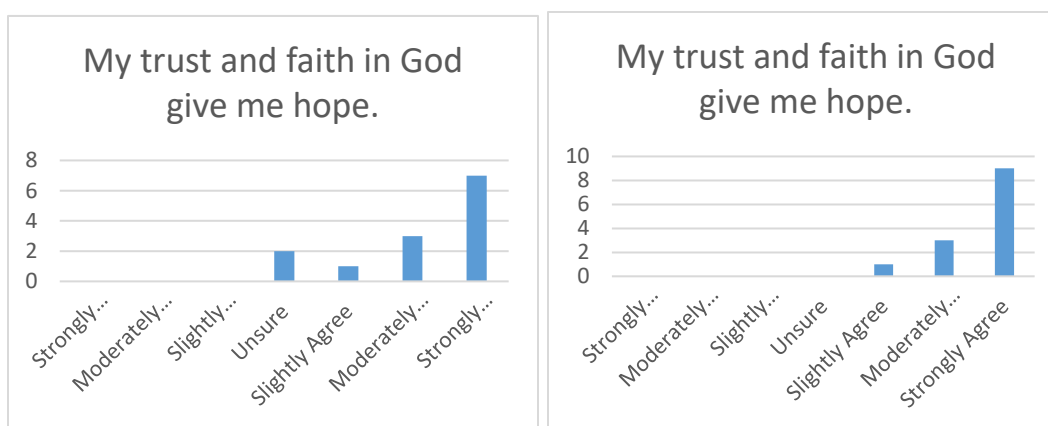


Table 10 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 11 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

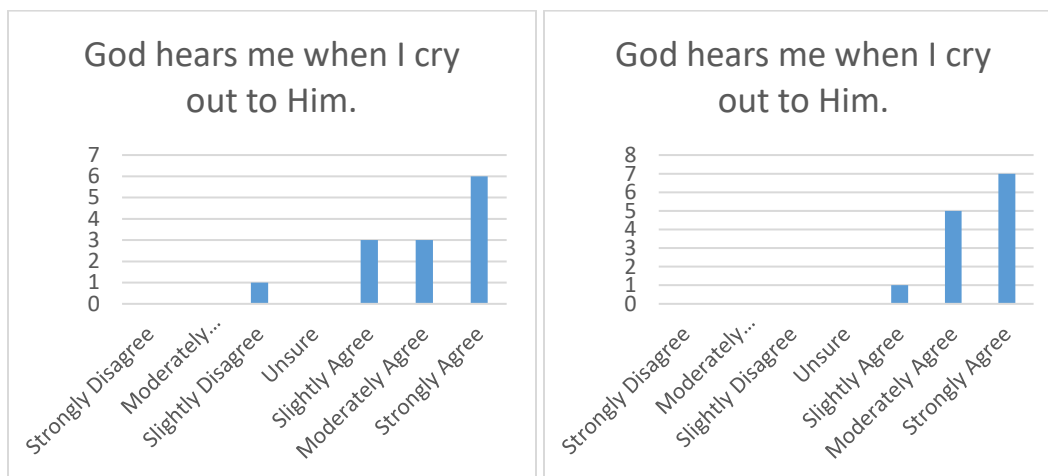


Table 11 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 12 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment



Table 12 (before and after, left to right)

Relationship with God

Statement 13 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

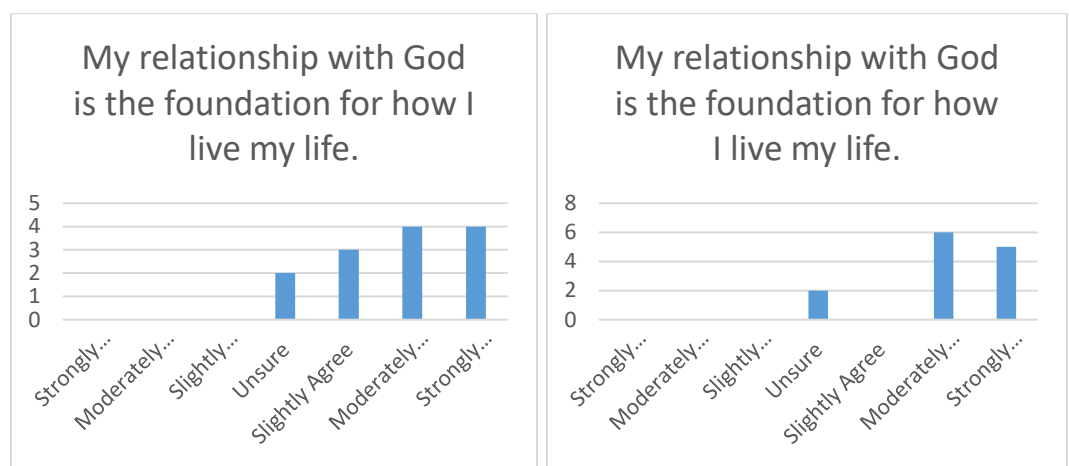


Table 13 (before and after, left to right)

Statement 14 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

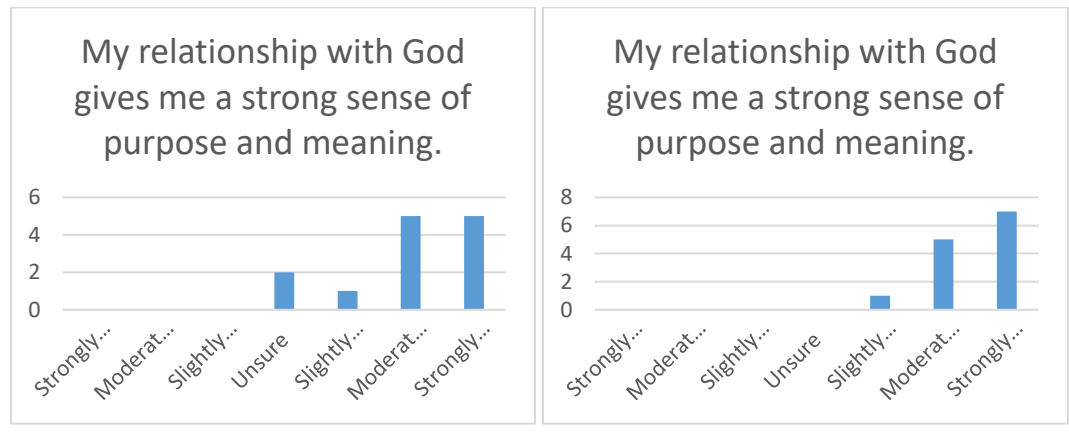


Table 14 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 15 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

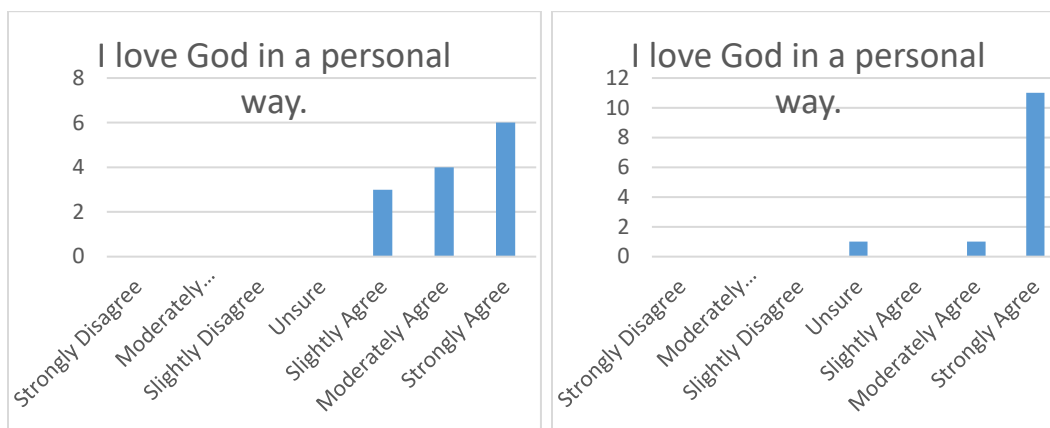


Table 15 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 16 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

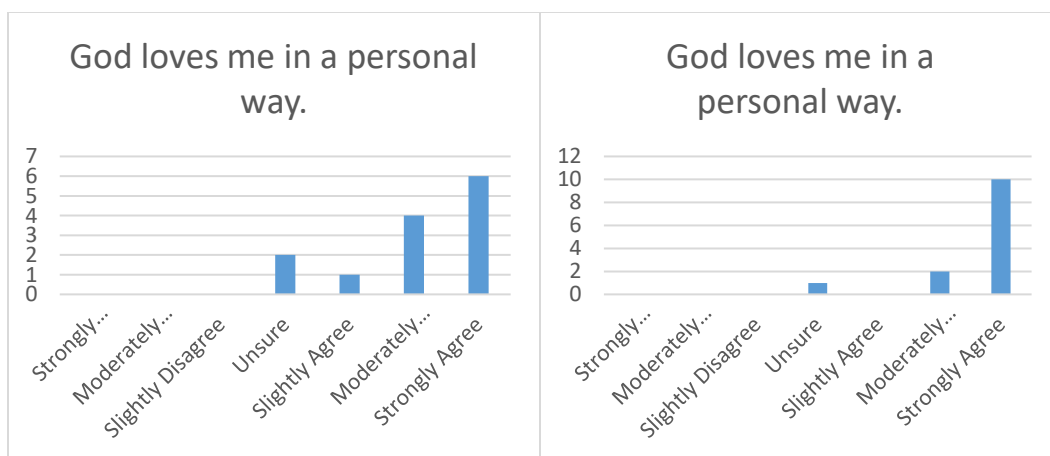


Table 16 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 17 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

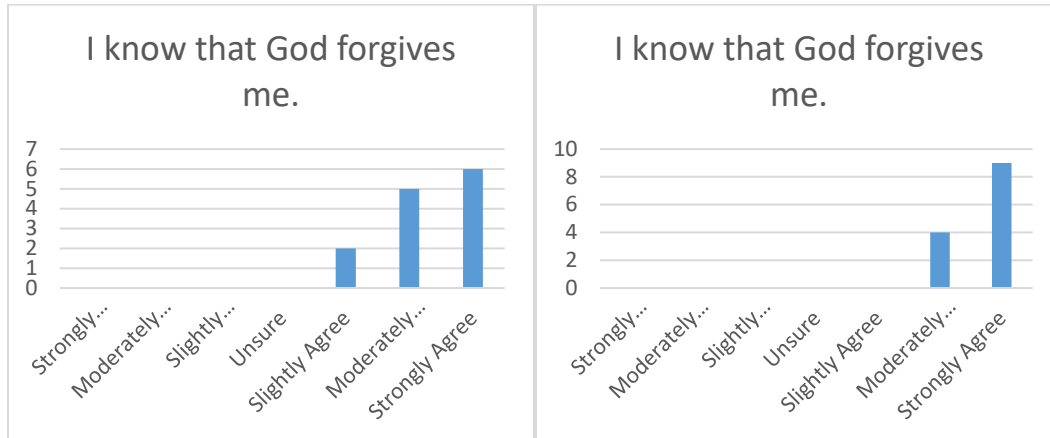


Table 17 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 18 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

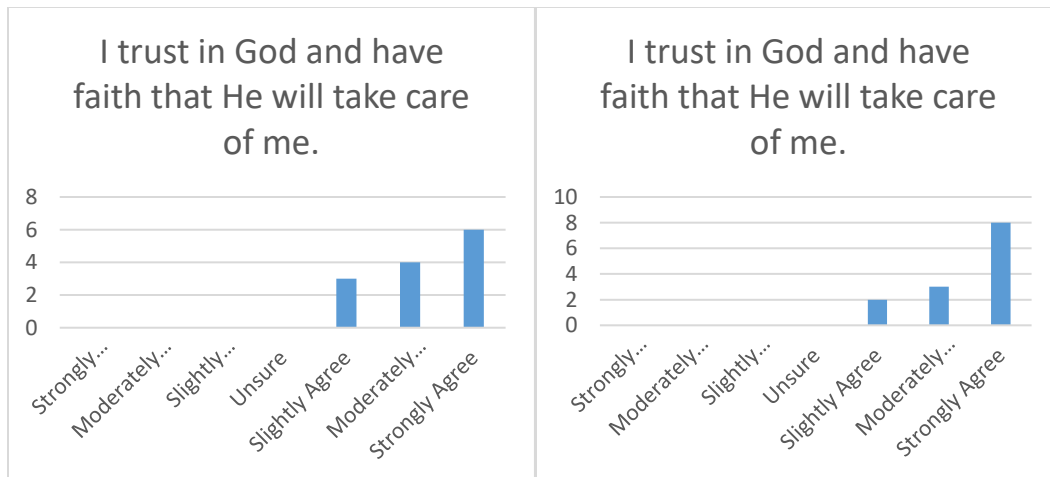


Table 18 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 19 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

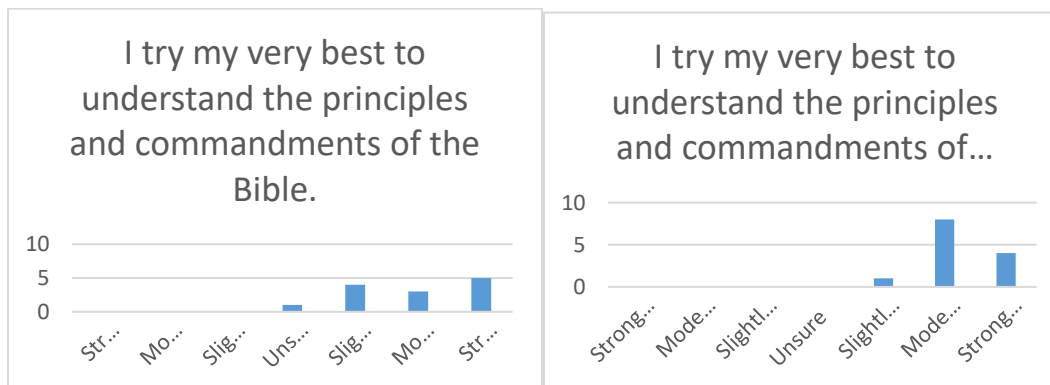


Table 19 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 20 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

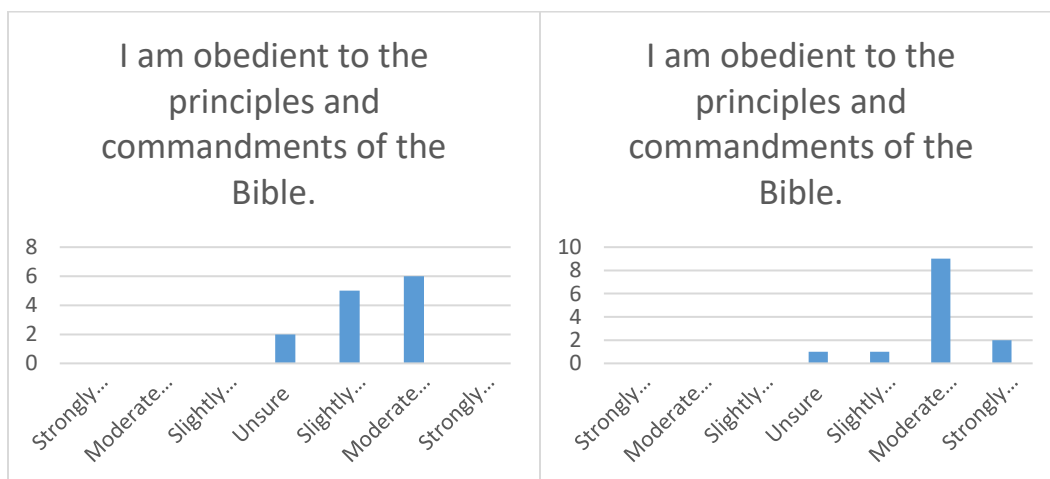


Table 20 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 21 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

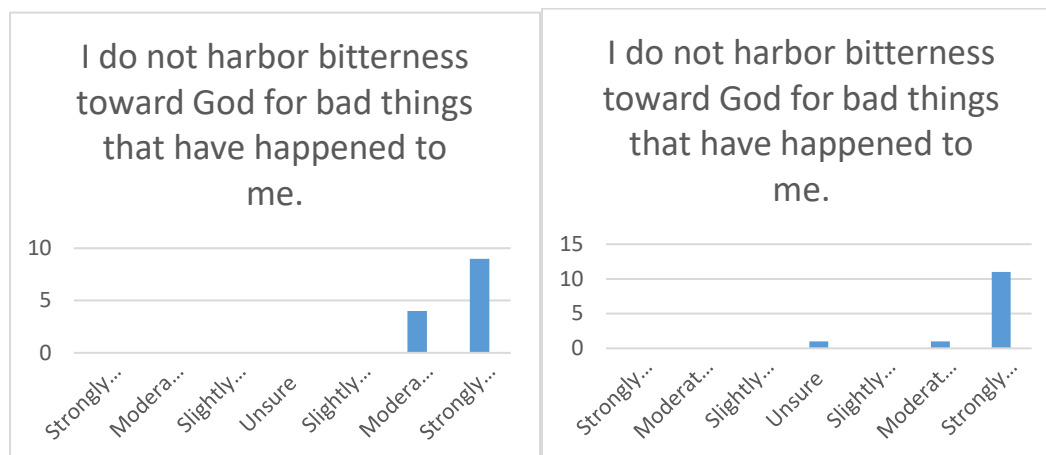


Table 21 (before and after, left to right)

### Practicing Faith

### Statement 22 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

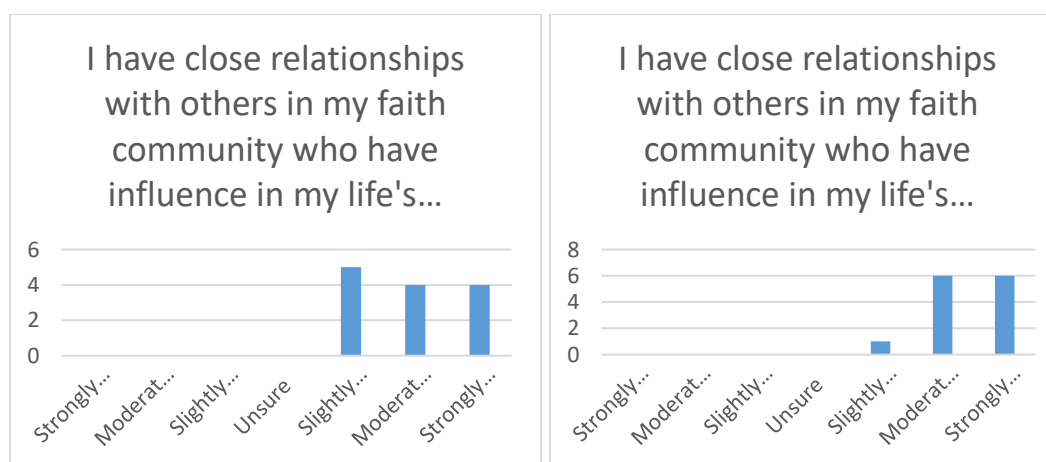


Table 22 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 23 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

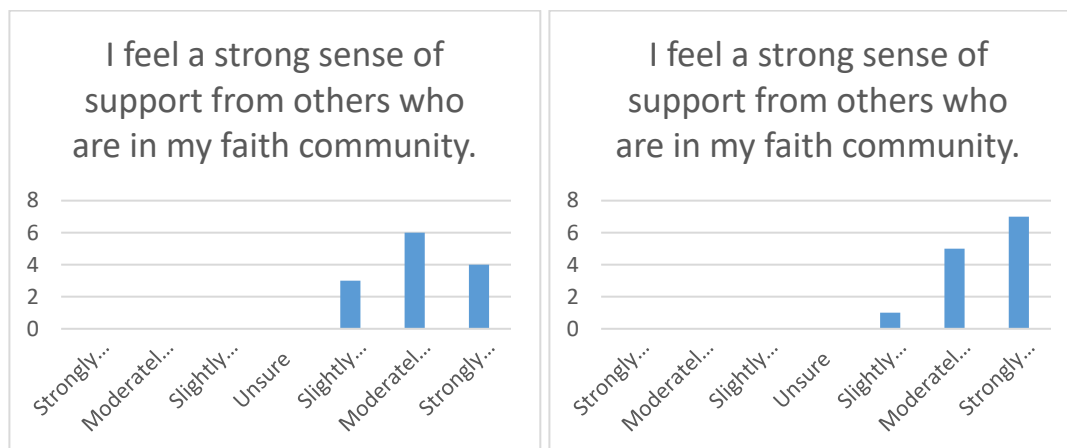


Table 23 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 24 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

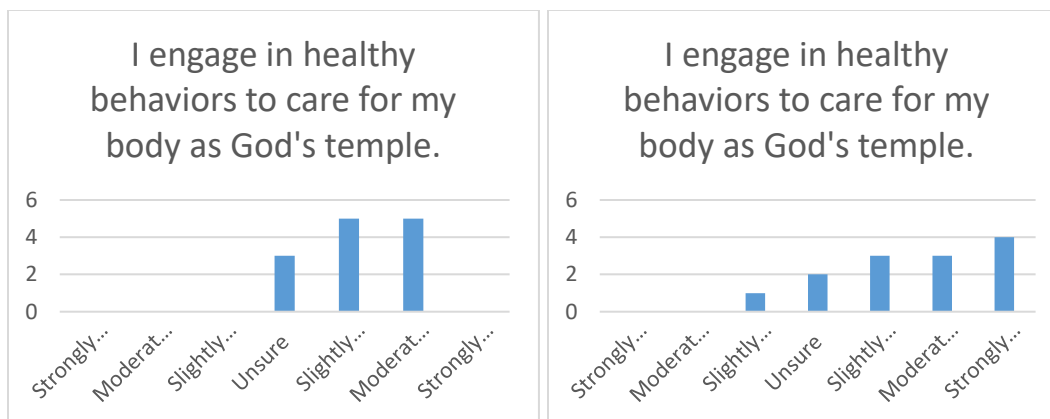


Table 24 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 25 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment



Table 25 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 26 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

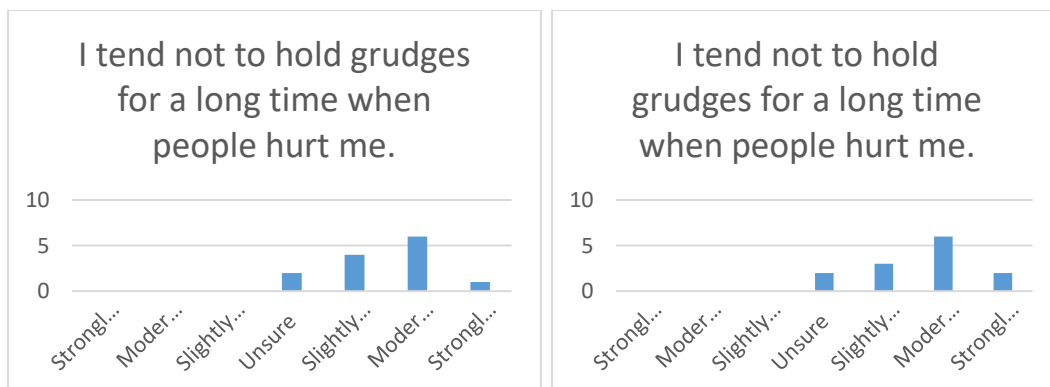


Table 26 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 27 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

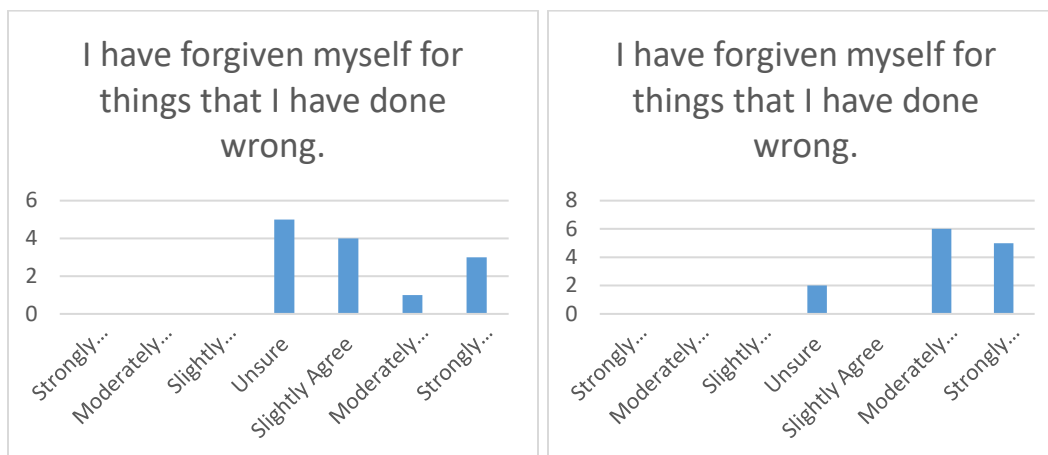


Table 27 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 28 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

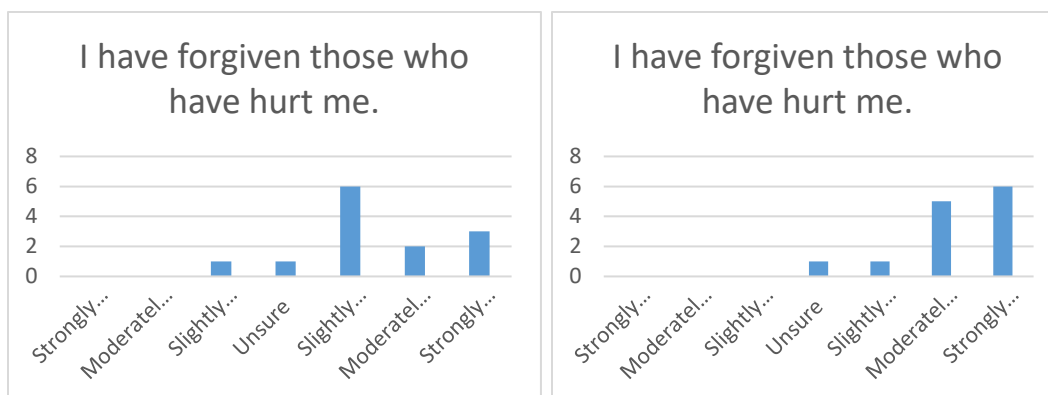


Table 28 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 29 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment



Table 29 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 30 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment



Table 30 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 31 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

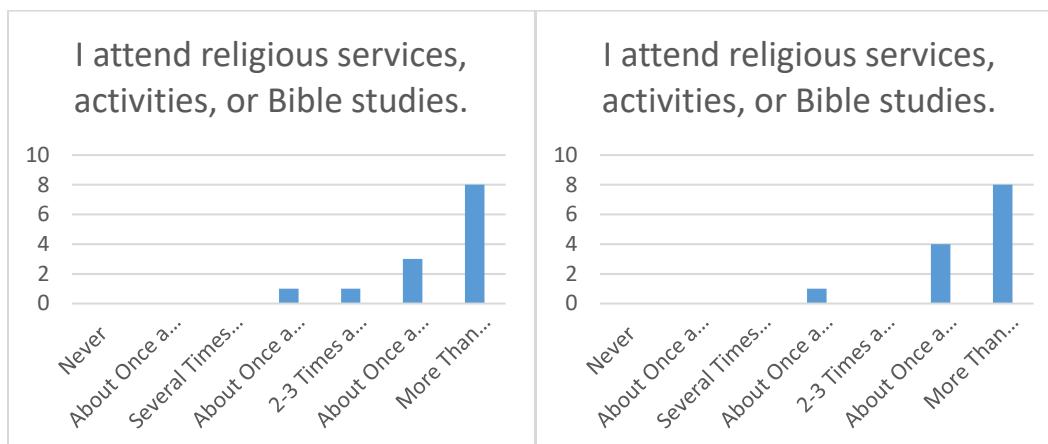


Table 31 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 32 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

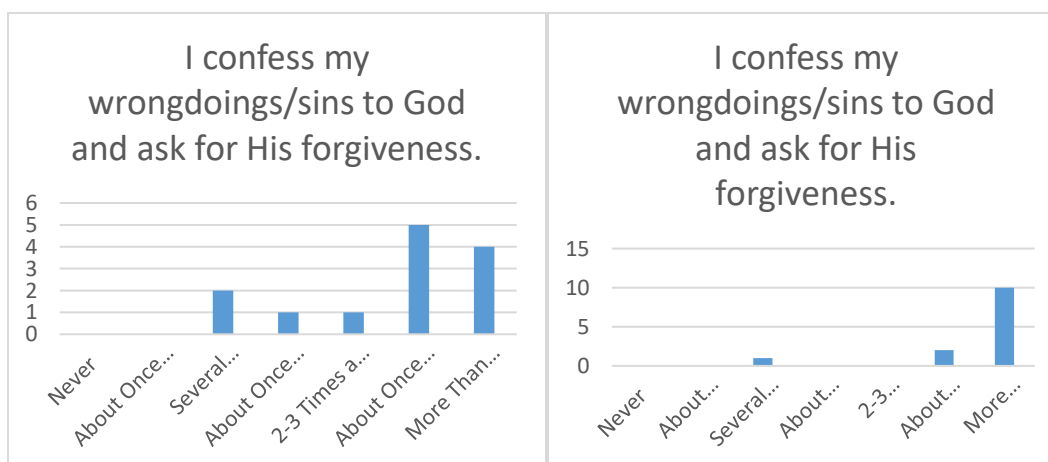


Table 32 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 33 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

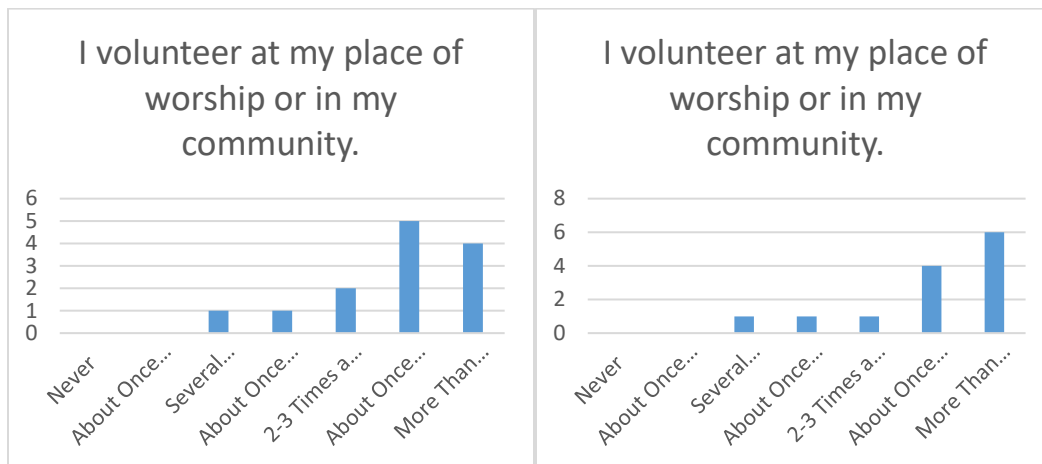


Table 33 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 34 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

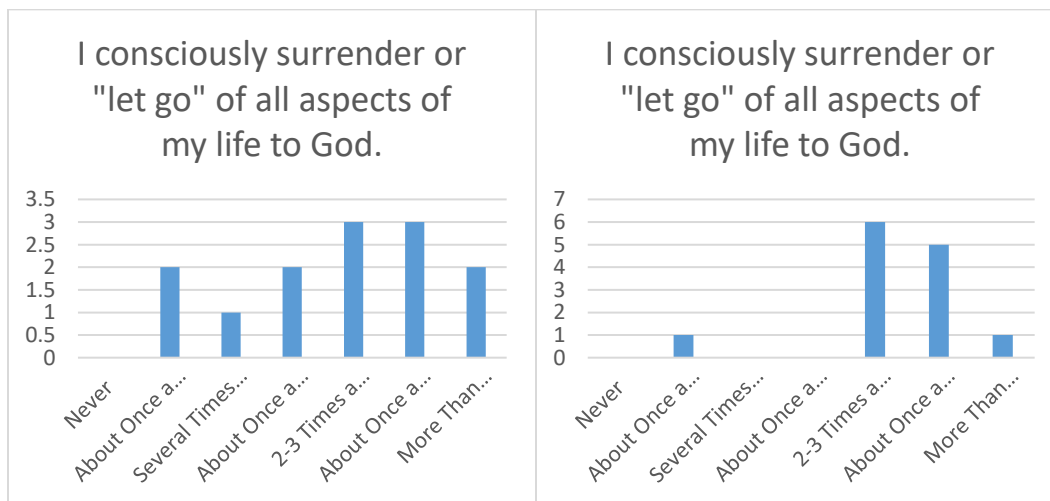


Table 34 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 351 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

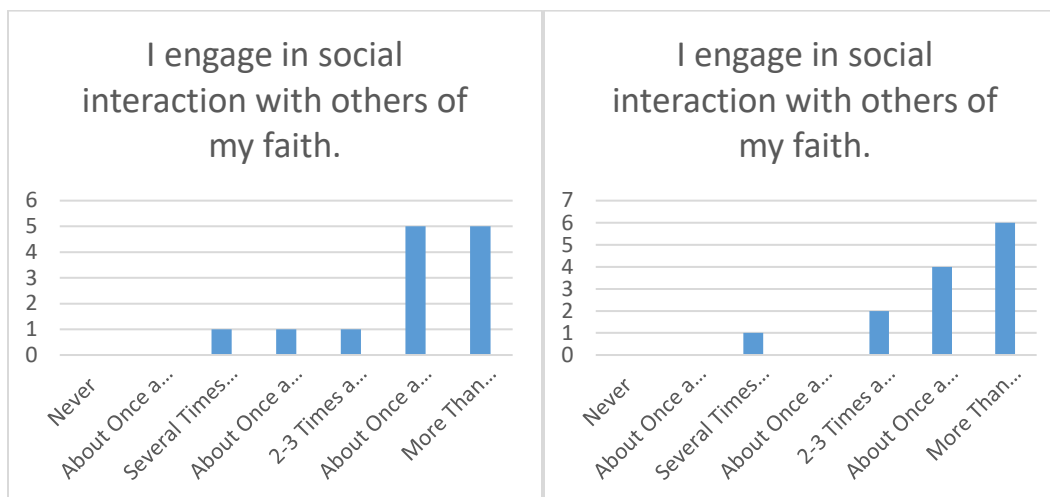


Table 35 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 36 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

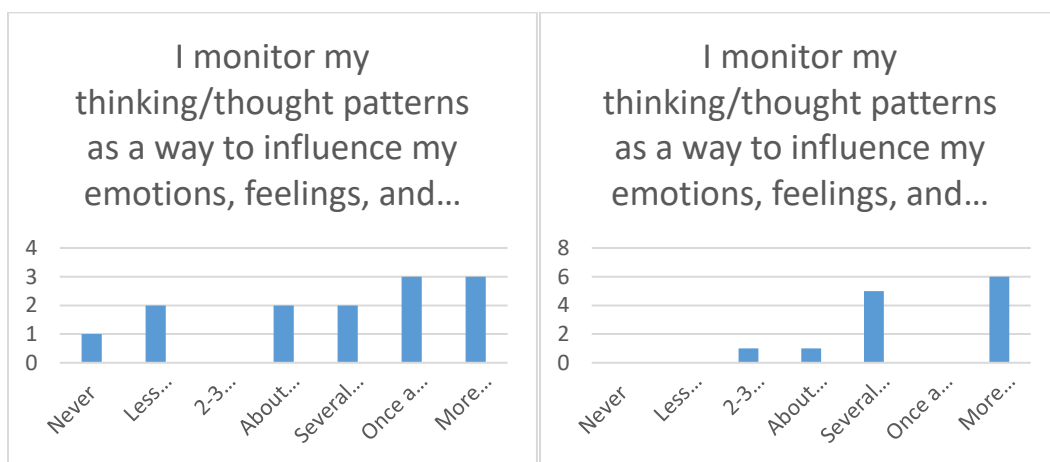


Table 36 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 37 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

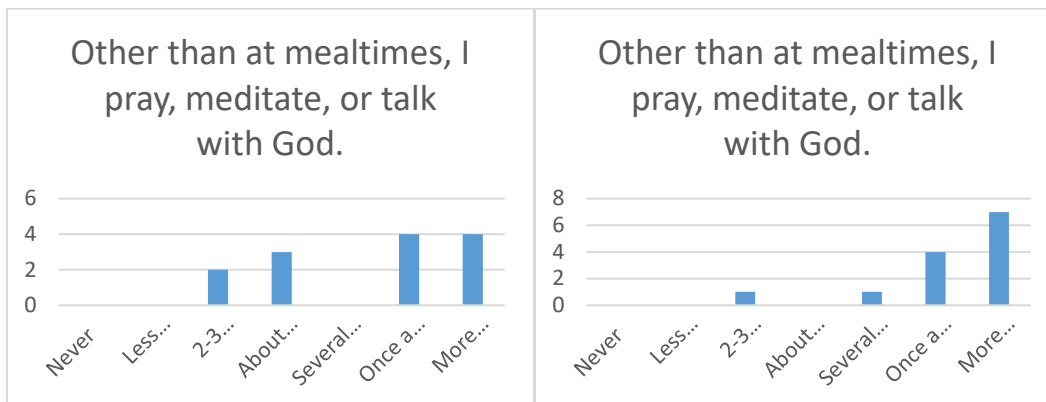


Table 37 (before and after, left to right)

### Statement 38 of Spiritual Fitness Assessment

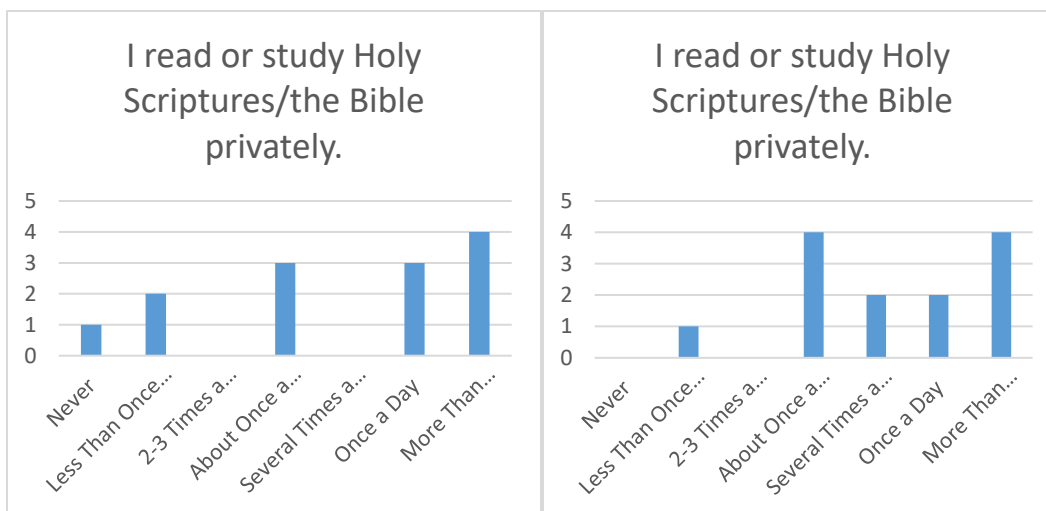


Table 38 (before and after, left to right)

## Appendix I

### **S.H.A.P.E.**

The acronym SHAPE describes how God shapes us for service: spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences all work together to form who we are and how we are best suited to benefit the rest of the body.<sup>206</sup>

The first aspect of SHAPE entails discerning one's spiritual gifts from a list as described in 1 Cor 12, Eph 4, and Rom 12:

- Administration
- Apostle
- Discernment
- Encouragement
- Evangelism
- Faith
- Giving
- Healing
- Hospitality
- Leadership
- Mercy
- Miracles
- Pastoring
- Preaching/Prophecy

---

<sup>206</sup> Williams, *Styles*, 78.

- Service
- Teaching
- Tongues
- Wisdom<sup>207</sup>

The second aspect of Heart requires discerning one's passions as clues to help determine where one should be serving in the church.<sup>208</sup>

The third aspect of Abilities involves identifying one's skills and God-given abilities to help determine the ministries for which one is best suited. Warren provides a list of forty examples and five blank slots for the readers to list others that may apply. Some of his examples are:

- Conversing
- Mechanics
- Writing
- Athletics
- Hosting
- Decorating
- Cooking
- Carpentry
- Videography<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>207</sup> Warren, *What on Earth*, 78-79.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 80.

The Fourth aspect of Personality uses a series of five pairs of oppositional personality traits on a sliding scale to help the participant discern minor or extreme preferences between each pair, similar to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator surveys. The pairs of traits listed are:

- Introvert/Extrovert
- Prefer Routine/Prefer Variety
- Thinker/Feeler
- Work Alone/Team Player
- Structured/Unstructured<sup>210</sup>

The fifth and final aspect of Experience includes both good and bad events in one's life across a broad spectrum of family, educational, vocational, spiritual, and ministry events.<sup>211</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> Warren, *What on Earth*, 80-81.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 81-82.

## Appendix J

**Copyright Approval for Book of Common Prayer 2019****From:** Archbishop Duncan**Sent:** Friday, August 26, 2022 10:20 AM**To:** Ron Speers**Cc:** Austin Mansfield; Fr. Ben Jefferies**Subject:** Re: Copyright Request

To Fr. Austin Mansfield:

Copyright permission for including the texts of Morning and Evening Prayer in your published dissertation is hereby granted.

+Robert William Duncan

Custodian of the Book of Common Prayer (2019)

26 August, AD 2022

Sent from my iPhone

## Appendix K

### Copyright Permission for Spiritual Fitness Assessment

Hello Austin. Thank you for what you are doing with spiritual fitness assessments. You may certainly use my assessment with proper credit to my ministry.

I pray that your dissertation goes well.

Blessings to you,

Dale

PS - PathWay 2 Wholeness is now available in a self-paced format

Dale Fletcher, M.S.

Executive Director

Faith and Health Connection Ministry

[www.faithandhealthconnection.org](http://www.faithandhealthconnection.org)

704-502-2121

Join me on FaceBook to receive snippets of encouragement.

**First Name** Austin

**Last Name** Mansfield

**Reason for Contacting Us** Requesting permission to use an image/content

**Subject** Doctor of Ministry Thesis Use

#### Message

Dear Sir,

I am a pastor working on my Doctor of Ministry in Discipleship degree through Liberty University and am requesting your permission to publish your Spiritual Fitness Assessment questions as an appendix in my dissertation. This was part of an educational, non-profit, church discipleship project to help improve the spiritual formation of about 12 volunteers in my congregation. I had purchased the .pdf version in Nov. 2020.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Blessings,

Fr. Austin Mansfield

## Bibliography

- Anglican Church in North America. "Title I: Organization and Administration of the Church." *The Canons of the Anglican Church in North America* (2009): 3, accessed October 31, 2020, [http://fwepiscopal.org/resources/ACNA\\_Constitution\\_and\\_Canons\\_June\\_2012.pdf](http://fwepiscopal.org/resources/ACNA_Constitution_and_Canons_June_2012.pdf).
- . *2019 Book of Common Prayer*. Los Angeles: Anglican Liturgy Press, 2019. Accessed December 7, 2020. <https://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/index.php/downloads/>.
- Arnold, Jeffrey and Stephanie Black, *The Big Book on Small Groups*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Barna Group. *American Bible Society State of the Bible 2015* (2015): 11-12. Accessed November 3, 2020. [https://www.americanbible.org/uploads/content/State\\_of\\_the\\_Bible\\_2015\\_report.pdf](https://www.americanbible.org/uploads/content/State_of_the_Bible_2015_report.pdf).
- . *Church Attendance Trends Around the Country* (2017). Accessed November 3, 2020. <https://www.barna.com/research/church-attendance-trends-around-country>.
- . *State of the Bible 2018: Seven Top Findings* (2018). Accessed November 3, 2020. <https://www.barna.com/research/state-of-the-bible-2018-seven-top-findings/>
- "Best-Selling Book." Guinness World Records. <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction>.
- Bevins, Winfield. *4 Lessons from St. Patrick for Making Disciples the Irish Way*. Accessed November 12, 2020. [https://learn.liberty.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-39428391-dt-content-rid-471415237\\_1/courses/DSMN820\\_B01\\_202030/4%20Lessons%20from%20St.%20Patrick%20for%20Making%20Disciples%20the%20Irish%20Way.pdf](https://learn.liberty.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-39428391-dt-content-rid-471415237_1/courses/DSMN820_B01_202030/4%20Lessons%20from%20St.%20Patrick%20for%20Making%20Disciples%20the%20Irish%20Way.pdf).
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. "On the 'Extraordinary' of Christian Life." In *Discipleship*, edited by Victoria J. Barnett, translated by Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss, 80. Reader's Edition. Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015.
- Breen, Mike and Walt Kallestad. *The Passionate Church*. Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2005.
- Bruce, Alexander Balmain. *The Training of the Twelve; Or, Passages out of the Gospels, Exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus under Discipline for the Apostleship*. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1889.
- Buchanan, Rodney. *History of Pre-Reformation Small Groups*. Article used by Dr. Rod Dempsey at Liberty University Class DSMN 830, 2020.
- Bunton, Peter. "300 Years of Small Groups—The European Church from Luther to Wesley." *Christian Education Journal*. Series 3, Vol 11, No. 1 (2014): 88-106. Accessed

- November 12, 2020. [https://learn.liberty.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-40817961-dt-content-rid-494193756\\_1/xid-494193756\\_1](https://learn.liberty.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-40817961-dt-content-rid-494193756_1/xid-494193756_1).
- Byrley, Chris. "Discipleship." Edited by Douglas Mangum, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, and Rebekah Hurst. *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Lexham Bible Reference Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014.
- Carson, D. A. "Matthew." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 8:595. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.
- Chan, Edmund. *Mentoring Paradigms: Reflections on Mentoring, Leadership, and Discipleship*. Oklahoma City: Lifestyle Impact Ministries, 2008.
- Chesterton, Gilbert. "Gilbert K. Chesterton Quotes." BrainyQuote. Xplore. Accessed August 9, 2022. [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/gilbert\\_k\\_chesterton\\_102389](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/gilbert_k_chesterton_102389).
- Comiskey, Joel. *Biblical Foundations for the Cell-Based Church: New Testament Insights for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Church*. Moreno Valley, CA: CCS Publishing, 2012.
- Daniel, Terri. *Loss and Trauma as a Path to Spiritual Awareness: Applying Fowler's Stages of Faith Development to the Grief Journey*. Oregon: Oregon Hospice, 2016. Accessed November 12, 2020. <https://oregonhospice.org/media/PPEDanielStagesofFaith.pdf>.
- Dreher, Rod. "Christian and Countercultural: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life." *First Things*, no. 250 (02, 2015): 44-6, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1647820392%3Faccountid%3D12085>.
- The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Rick Warren." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rick-Warren#ref1023379>.
- "The Episcopal Church, USA, and Homosexuality." Religious Tolerance. Accessed August 9, 2022. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/homepis14.htm>.
- Evans, William and S. Maxwell Coder. *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, Enl. ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 1974.
- Fletcher, Dale A. *Spiritual Exercises for a Healthier Life and Spiritual Assessment Tool*. Faith and Health Connection, 2009. Accessed November 22, 2020. <http://www.faithandhealthconnection.org>
- Foster, Richard. *Streams of Living Water*. New York: Harper Collins, 1998.
- Galli, Mark. "In the Beginning, Grace: Evangelicals Desperately Need Spiritual and Moral Renewal—On That Everyone Agrees. But What Do We Do About It?" *Christianity Today*. Vol. 53, No. 10. Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today International, 2009.

- Gibbs, E. S. "Van Kaam, Adrian L." Edited by David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill. *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling*. Baker Reference Library. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.
- Hall, Christopher A. *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Harvey, Sarah. *Kaizen: The Japanese Secret to Lasting Change*. New York, NY: The Experiment, 2020.
- Hellerman, Joseph H. *When the Church Was a Family*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009.
- Henderson, D. Michael. *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*. Wilmore, KY: Rafiki Books, 1997.
- Hipps, Shane. *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- Horton, Michael. *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. Kindle.
- Hull, Bill. *The Complete Book of Discipleship—On Being and Making Followers of Christ*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014.
- Hunt, Jodi G. "The Digital Way: Re-imagining Digital Discipleship in The Age of Social Media." *Journal of Youth and Theology* 18, no. 2 (2019): 91-112. Accessed April 24, 2021. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1163/24055093-01802003>.
- Jones, Karen. "What is Moralistic Therapeutic Deism?" *Kids Ministry 101* (2014). Accessed May 1, 2021. <https://kidsministry.lifeway.com/2014/12/18/what-is-moralistic-therapeutic-deism/>.
- Josephus, Flavius, and William Whiston. *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987.
- Keller, Timothy. "Pharisees With Low Standards." (2009). Accessed May 11, 2021. <https://timothykeller.com/blog/2009/2/27/pharisees-with-low-standards>.
- . *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2008.
- King, Brian. "How Long Does It Take to Form A New Habit?" *Psychology Today*, January 2, 2020. Accessed June 26, 2021. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/taking-it-easy/202001/how-long-does-it-take-form-new-habit>.

- Koessler, John. *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003.
- Lawrence, Brother. *The Practice of the Presence of God the Best Rule of a Holy Life*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 2011. Kindle Edition.
- Lewellen, Eric. "Servant." Edited by Douglas Mangum, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, and Rebekah Hurst. *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Lexham Bible Reference Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014.
- MacDonald, William. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Edited by Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995.
- Maddix, Mark A. "John Wesley's Small Groups: Models of Christian Community." *Holiness Today*, 2009. Accessed May 10, 2021. <https://www.holinesstoday.org/john-wesley-small-groups-christian-community>.
- Mak, Simon. "Forming a Kingdom-Minded Missional Community of Discipleship Small Groups." DMIN focus ppr., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2016.
- McCallum, Dennis. "Phillip Jacob Spener's Contribution to Protestant Ecclesiology." *Xenos Christian Fellowship*. Accessed November 12, 2020. <https://www.xenos.org/essays/phillip-jacob-speners-contribution-protestant-ecclesiology>.
- McKee, Jonathan. *Connect: Real Relationships in a World of Isolation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. Accessed May 15, 2021. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1948582&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994. Kindle.
- Meadows, Philip R. "Mission and Discipleship in a Digital Culture." *Mission Studies: Journal of the International Association for Mission Studies* 29, no. 2 (2012): 163–182. Accessed April 24, 2021. <https://web-a-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=aedbbe19-e4a7-48a2-901c-02334039a3cb%40sdc-v-sessmgr01>
- Meyers, Richard C. *One Anothering, Volume 2: Building Spiritual Community in Small Groups*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Books, 2006.
- Miller, Kara. "Keeping the Faith in Seminary." *Christianity Today*. Vol. 60, No. 8. Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 2016.
- Miller, Liam. "Christification of the Least: Potential for Christology and Discipleship." *Studies in World Christianity* 24.3 (2018): 255-276.

- Mounce, William D. *Pastoral Epistles*. Vol. 46. *Word Biblical Commentary*. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000.
- Nel, Malan. "Discipleship: The priority of the 'Kingdom and his Righteousness.'" *HTS Theological Studies* 73 (4). (2017): 1-9. Accessed October 1, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4583>.
- Newman, Barclay Moon, and Philip C. Stine. *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*. UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies, 1992.
- O'Loughlin, Thomas. *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; Baker Academic, 2010.
- Ogden, Greg. *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*, rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Perdue, Leo G., Joseph Blenkinsopp, John J. Collins, and Carol Meyers. *Families in Ancient Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.
- Peters, Rebecca. "We Get Who We Are: Cultural Adult Faith Produces Cultural Adolescent Faith." *Christian Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (Fall, 2009): 376-83. Accessed October 2, 2020. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F205466548%3Faccountid%3D12085>.
- Phillips, Peter. *The Bible, Social Media, and Digital Culture*. London: Routledge, 2019.
- Pope, Conor. "Pope Francis Warns 80,000 at Croke Park of Social Media Dangers." *The Irish Times* (August 25, 2018). Accessed April 24, 2021. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/pope-francis-warns-80-000-at-croke-park-of-social-media-dangers-1.3608016>.
- Powell, Mark E. *Discipleship in Community: A Theological Vision for the Future*. Abilene, Texas: Abilene Christian University Press, 2020. ProQuest, accessed April 24, 2021, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/reader.action?docID=6223106>.
- Putman, Jim. *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010.
- Rees, Erik. *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Richards, E. Randolph, and Richard James. *Misreading Scripture with Individualist Eyes: Patronage, Honor, and Shame in the Biblical World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020.

- Ritter, Chris. "Speaking of Sin: Augustine, Luther, and The Inward Curve (Part 1 of 4)." *The Gospel Matters* (2012). Accessed April 15, 2021. Speaking of Sin: Augustine, Luther, and The Inward Curve (Part 1 of 4) | thegospelmatters (wordpress.com).
- Ritzema, Elliot. *300 Quotations for Preachers from the Early Church*. Pastorum Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013.
- Renovare. "The Six Streams: A Balanced Vision." Accessed April 9, 2021. <https://renovare.org/about/ideas/the-six-streams>.
- Sefik, Thomas. "Effective Small Group Discipleship Ministry in the Local Church." Dmin proj. Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, 2016.
- Schwarz, Christian. *Natural Church Development*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996.
- Simonetti, Manlio, ed. *Matthew 14-28*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- "The Six Streams: A Balanced Vision." Renovare. Accessed April 9, 2021. <https://renovare.org/about/ideas/the-six-streams>.
- Smith, Christian, and Melinda Lundquist Denton. *Soul Searching the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Smith, Pam. *Online Mission and Ministry: A Theological and Practical Guide*. London: SPCK, 2015. Accessed May 15, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Stedman, Ray C. *The Body Life, The Book that Inspired a Return to the Church's Real Meaning and Mission*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1995. Accessed November 12, 2020. <https://platform.virdocs.com/r/s/0/doc/526304/sp/24231618/mi/84761943?cfi=%2F4%5BBodyLife-10%5D%2F2%2F22%2C%2F1%3A117%2C%2F1%3A117>.
- Stetzer, Ed, and Mike Dodson. *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can, Too*. Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2007.
- Tertullian. "On Fasting in Opposition to the Psychics." In *Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian, Part Fourth; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen, Parts First and Second*, edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, translated by S. Thelwall, 4:102. The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885.
- Thomas, Adam. *Digital Disciple: Real Christianity in a Virtual World*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011. Accessed May 15, 2021. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=856638&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

“U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Yuma County, Arizona.” United States Census Bureau.  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/yumacountyarizona>.

Vaughn, John. “Yuma Crops...A to Z.” *Southwest Living*. Accessed October 31, 2020.  
<http://southwestlivingyuma.yumawebteam.com/industry/yuma-crops-a-to-z/>.

Walton, Roger. “Disciples Together: The Small Group as a Vehicle for Discipleship Formation.”  
*Journal of Adult Theological Education*, 8:2 (2011): 100-113. Accessed September 11,  
 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1558/JATE.v8i2.99>

Warren, Rick. *What on Earth Am I Here For?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.

———. *What on Earth Am I Here For? – Study Guide*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

Wax, Trevin. *Eschatological Discipleship: Leading Christians to Understand Their Historical and Cultural Context*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018.

Willard, Dallas. *Divine Conspiracy*. NY: HarperCollins, 1998.

———. *The Great Omission: Rediscovering Jesus’ Essential Teachings on Discipleship*. NY: HarperCollins, 2006.

Williams, Dennis. *Six Effective Evangelistic Styles: Reflective Analysis of Personality Traits Impacting the Sharing of our Faith* (2013). Accessed April 9, 2021.  
<https://www.perimeter.org/files/4394/?r=868064192>.

Wright, N. T. *For All the Saints? Remembering the Christian Departed*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2003.



August 25, 2021

Austin Mansfield  
Claudia Dempsey

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-1039 Impact of Virtual Gatherings on Small Group Discipleship

Dear Austin Mansfield, Claudia Dempsey,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

**Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB.** Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,  
**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**Research Ethics Office**