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The Avoidance of Burnout Among Open Bible Pastors: Creating Healthy and Vibrant Leaders in Ministry

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

THE AVOIDANCE OF BURNOUT AMONG OPEN BIBLE PASTORS:
CREATING HEALTHY AND VIBRANT LEADERS IN MINISTRY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

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has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on February 19, 2020
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation

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For all of the pastors who have loved me and have invested so much of their time into me
And especially for Katie, whose constant patience and love continues to make me a better
person and follower of Christ

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ABSTRACT

Pastors in the Open Bible Churches denomination struggle with spiritual health, even as they lead local congregations. The perils of vocational ministry can often contribute to emotional fatigue, disillusionment, and exhaustion, commonly referred to as “burnout.” Pastors serve sacrificially in their churches, giving all that they have for the lives of the others. However, the life many pastors live actually negatively impacts themselves as well as others around them, thus negating the purpose for which they strive.

This Doctor of Ministry project sought to discover how ministers can remain spiritually healthy while actively leading the local church. Much of the problem stems from an identity crisis. Many pastors lack the certainty of their identity because they have inadvertently remained self-deceived. Lacking self-awareness is a dangerous and systemic problem among people in general, but Open Bible pastors specifically. Jesus said that He came to give life, and give it abundantly (John 10:10). Since Jesus indicated that abundant life is possible for individuals, pastors too have hope that they can experience a vibrant, fruitful life in the ministry, yet many never actually experience this.

Open Bible’s heritage plays a central role both positively and negatively in how pastors experience the abundant life. Key features, such as the power of the Spirit and a reliance on prayer, are healthy and necessary for pastors to live abundantly. A foundation is in place. The next steps for healthy pastors involve the awareness of the problem and then development of a plan of action that implements practices often foreign to the Open Bible perspective, but are still Christian in nature. This author’s hope is that this work

encourages pastors that they are not alone in their journey of pastoral leadership, as well as reminds pastors of key pillars that can sustain them throughout their ministry.

CHAPTER 1:
FLICKERING MINISTRY OF OPEN BIBLE PASTORS
AND THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES

Several years ago, I registered for a marathon. Marathons are grueling and physically, emotionally, and mentally exhausting. However, the euphoria and joy of completing the marathon, along with the preparation needed for the journey, can bring life transformation and be incredibly fulfilling. The pastoral life can be like a marathon.

On one particular training day, I was out of town visiting my in-laws and needed to go on a longer run of fourteen to sixteen miles. About twelve miles into the run, as I was headed back toward my in-laws' house, I knew that I needed a few more miles, so instead of going directly home, I took a road I had never been on that went a little further west. My intent was to go a few miles on that road before cutting back east to my in-laws' place.

As I ran, I kept looking for a road to cross over to their house. The problem was that there was no road. I could see the eastern street that I needed to be on way off in distance, but the further I ran, the further west this road took me. Between the road home and me was a massive, impassable marsh. There was no way across. So, I kept running.

Eventually, I ran over sixteen miles with no water, no end in sight on my current road, nor a road that would take me back to my in-laws'. Finally, I had to admit that I was lost. It was not the type of "lostness" one typically thinks of where one has no idea where he or she is. I knew right where I was; it just was not where I intended to be. I had veered off course and was going in the wrong direction. I missed the signs that indicated that there was no outlet. I was unfamiliar with my surroundings.

Being lost is not a destination. “Lost” is a condition.¹ Philosopher, professor, and author Dallas Willard says that “to be lost means to be *out of place*.”² I had veered off course and was not in the place I intended to be. Willard added, “Something that is lost is something that is not where it is supposed to be, and therefore it is not integrated into the life of the one to whom it belongs and to whom it is lost.”³ Without recognizing my condition, I was no longer headed towards home, but was on my way to a dead end, miles down the road.

In a fast, ever changing world, pastors can become lost on their own journey, missing warning signs like fatigue, stress, and lack of passion. Pastors can become, as I was on my journey that day, isolated, exhausted, thirsty, and frustrated. My journey culminated in a lonely call to my wife to see if she and my father-in-law could come pick me up along the side of the road. I had to admit defeat that day; I needed help. Many pastors in the Open Bible Churches denomination feel this sense of defeat. They want to help the people in their congregation, they want to help people come to a deep saving knowledge of God, but they are limited in their ability because their condition is so frail and they are not even aware of it. Instead, pastors live frustrated, tired lives, searching for a silver bullet to expand their ministry. Pastors know they give their life for the Church, but often feel isolated, alone, disillusioned, and spiritually dry; yet Jesus has come to give pastors a fruitful, abundant life today.

¹ John Ortberg presents this helpful idea in conversation with Dallas Willard in Ortberg’s book, *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 62.

² Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 55.

³ Ibid.

Open Bible Pastors Struggle for Health

Many pastors along the way have grown discouraged and disheartened, doubted their pastoral call and purpose, and wonder what went wrong. A recent survey of Open Bible pastors, conducted by the Open Bible National Office, revealed that many struggle with their overall health while trying to lead a congregation.⁴ Unfortunately, many pastors in the Open Bible Churches denomination are ending their run as pastors with retirement looming, frustrated, lonely, isolated, and stressed about their future financial stability and the future of the churches they have shepherded for years. Other pastors, far from retirement, struggle with same issues, realizing that they have decades to go in ministry and wondering if it is worth it. Few young pastors exist. For example, in the Pacific Region of Open Bible, out of 250 licensed pastors, only one is in his twenties.⁵ The spiritual health of the pastors does not appear to be improving.

The current state of burnout and fatigue among Open Bible pastors exists for numerous reasons. However, one of the main reasons is the neglect to care for the pastors' individual souls. The result is that many pastors feel anxious, frustrated, tired, lonely, and stressed, which is to say—burnt out. Many others feel this way, but are not even aware of their own level of poor health. The lack of awareness to their soul is such that they do not even recognize how stressed, lonely, or tired they are. The fatigue, lack of production, and anxiety they feel point towards this problem.

⁴ Open Bible Churches, “National Survey on Soul Care,” April 10, 2019. This survey was sent to both men and women with no category regarding gender. It is the stance of this author that men and women have the ability and calling to be pastor, therefore when the comment of gender is singular in nature, it is not a representation of the specific gender. Alternating gender usage will be used throughout. Further explanation of the survey is found in the appendix.

⁵ Vicki Adams, email message to author, September 13, 2018.

What is Burnout?

The feeling of isolation, anxiety, fatigue, stress, and lack of passion for the job that Open Bible pastors experience is commonly called burnout.⁶ In recent decades, much work has been done to better understand what burnout truly is and how to remain healthy and productive despite its potential danger. An expert in the study of burnout, Christina Maslach, defines it as a syndrome of emotional fatigue and cynicism primarily in occupations with extensive people work that results in emotional exhaustion, cynicism and depersonalization, and a “sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment.”⁷ For example, social work often involves actively helping others, which can be rewarding when successful, but depleting when unsuccessful.

Professor Ayala M. Pines from the University of California at Berkeley says, “Burnout characterizes people who start out believing that the work they do is important, caring deeply about the people they chose to help, and hoping to have a significant impact on their lives and make the world a better place to live in. They burn out when they feel that they have failed.”⁸ Thus Pastors’ high involvement in people’s lives leads to a risk of experiencing burnout.

⁶ Christina Maslach, Wilmar B. Schaufeli, and Michael P. Leiter, “Job Burnout,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, no. 1 (February 2001): 398.

⁷ Christina Maslach and Susan Jackson, “The Measurement of Experienced Burnout,” *Journal of Occupational Behavior* 2 (1981): 99. A similar, and perhaps nuanced, definition by Maslach is also found in her “Job Burnout” on page 399.

⁸ Ayala Pines, “Burnout: An Existential Perspective,” in *Professional Burnout: Recent Developments in Theory and Research*, ed. Wilmar Schaufeli, Christina Maslach, and Tadeusz Marek, Series in Applied Psychology (Washington, DC: Taylor and Francis, 1993), 39.

Over time, pastors often feel a lack of passion for their job, as well as isolation, frustration, hopelessness, anxiety, and spiritual dryness.⁹ As they struggle to find a reason to continue in ministry, they are forced to continue to lead the congregation, often to the neglect of their own health. It is important to note that “health” in this writing is not just physical or spiritual health, but rather, holistic health is emphasized, unless otherwise noted.

Humans were created as whole beings, but too often the components of an individual are compartmentalized into different dimensions of the individual. For example, diets are often suggested to lose weight, but the real problem could be anxiety, meaning that the long-term success of the diet is unlikely. A more appropriate response to bring health to an individual is to include all aspects of humanity, including the will, the mind and emotions, the body, the soul, and relationships.¹⁰ The goal then is to find ways to integrate these dimensions to bring complete healing throughout the person.

Burnout occurs when aspects of an individual have been neglected and fatigue begins to set in. Pastors continue to lead without awareness of their current level of unhealth.¹¹ Eventually, they simply can go no further. Their options are to leave the ministry or live the rest of their ministry trudging through their pain, unaware of another way of life. Others end up projecting their own pain onto the lives of the parishioners,

⁹ Diane J. Chandler, “The Impact of Pastor’s Spiritual Practices on Burnout,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 64, no. 2 (2010): 2. Numerous other resources list other, although similar, symptoms of burnout. For another example, see Robin John Snelgar, Michelle Renard, and Stacy Shelton, “Preventing Compassion Fatigue amongst Pastors: The Influence of Spiritual Intelligence and Intrinsic Motivation,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 45, no. 4 (2017): 248.

¹⁰ Gary L. Harbaugh and Evan Rogers, “Pastoral Burnout: A View from the Seminary,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 38, no. 2 (June 1984): 105.

¹¹ Carey Nieuwhof, *Didn’t See It Coming: Overcoming the 7 Greatest Challenges That No One Expects and Everyone Experiences* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2018), 1.

bringing damage to the congregation or even their family. The latter has significant impact on the family of the pastor and the local congregation. New York pastor and author, Pete Scazzero writes, “The overall health of any church or ministry depends primarily on the emotional and spiritual health of its leadership. In fact, the key to successful leadership has much more to do with the leader’s internal life than with the leader’s expertise, gifts, or experience.”¹² The internal health of the leader impacts those around her.

A loss of identity takes root in the pastor’s life. What was once a clear vision for the church has become muddled along with all of the other components of running a church. Grammy Award-winning duo, Twentyone Pilots, address the fatigue, insecurity, loss of identity, and stress in their song “Stressed Out”:

I wish I found some better sounds no one’s ever heard
 I wish I had a better voice that sang some better words
 I wish I found some chords in an order that is new
 I wish I didn't have to rhyme every time I sang

I was told when I get older all my fears would shrink
 But now I’m insecure and I care what people think

My name’ Blurryface and I care what you think.¹³

“Blurryface” explains the emotion within the pastor due to the stress of his job and constant need to perform at high levels. He has lost sight of who he is personally while he seeks meaning through approval of others. This is the life of the unhealthy pastor.

¹² Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 20.

¹³ Twentyone Pilots, “Stressed Out,” track 2 on *Blurryface*, Fueled by Ramen, 2015.

Burnout Symptoms

Signs that indicate that one is living in burnout include lack of hope, uncertainty of a purpose, isolation, emotional suppression with sudden outbursts, and physical unhealth. The loss of hope and optimism is a serious problem for pastors. Canadian pastor and leading podcaster on pastoring, Carey Nieuwhof experienced burnout and wrote about his experience in his book *Didn't See It Coming*. He says, “Perhaps the most disturbing part of my burnout was my loss of hope...I thought God could never use me. I thought he was finished with my ministry and with me. I began to wonder if I could ever be of use to anybody, for work or otherwise.”¹⁴ Nieuwhof felt lost—useless—a sure sign that burnout was emerging.

As pastors begin to question their calling and their ability to be used by God, it diminishes their ability to lead. Hope is necessary for leadership. Finnish Pentecostal expert and Fuller Theological Seminary professor, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, says, “Unless there is hope beyond this suffering, there is no point at all.”¹⁵ Pastors are God’s agents to bring hope to people. If they lose hope in what God is doing in their own life, unhealth begins to take root in their life, which will eventually produce symptoms of burnout.

Closely related to a loss of hope is a loss of meaning. Meaning and purpose are essential to humanity in general and especially to pastors. Renowned philosopher and expert on the existential meaning of life, Ernest Becker says,

The basic law of human life is the urge to self-esteem (self-meaning)... We can see that the seemingly trite words “self-esteem” are *at the very core of human adaptation*. They do not represent an extra-indulgence, or a mere

¹⁴ Nieuwhof, *Didn't See It Coming*, 148.

¹⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “‘March Forward to Hope’: Yonggi Cho’s Pentecostal Theology of Hope,” *Pneuma* 28, no. 2 (2006): 253.

vanity, but a matter of life and death. The qualitative feeling of self-value is the basic predicate for human action, precisely because it epitomizes the whole development of the ego.¹⁶

When fatigue, failure, and isolation start to take root in pastors, the sense of meaning and purpose in life becomes forgotten. This “self-meaning” in church parlance is often referred to as “a call,” which comes from God and gives direction to each person in regards an individual’s unique purpose in life. This “call” helps determine who to marry, where to live, and what occupation to choose. Author, professor, and social critic, Os Guinness describes “the call” as “the ultimate why for living, the highest source of purpose in human existence. Apart from such a calling, all hope of discovering purpose (as in the current talk of shifting ‘from success to significance’) will end in disappointment.”¹⁷

The loss of purpose is a critical component to the feeling of burnout. People must have a sense of purpose or they will begin to despair. Again, Becker writes,

When the child poses the question, “Who am I? What is the value of my life?” he is really asking something more pointed: that he be recognized as an *object of primary value* in the universe. Nothing less. And this more pointed question has ramifications immediately broad and embracing: He wants to know ‘What is my contribution to world-life?’ Specifically, ‘Where do I rank *as a Hero?*’

This is the uniquely human need, what man everywhere is really all about—each person’s need to be an object of primary value a heroic contributor to world-life—the heroic contributor to the destiny of man.¹⁸

Pastors who have lost their sense of call, of purpose and meaning in life, eventually find themselves wandering the pastoral path burnt out, tired, and lonely.

¹⁶ Ernest Becker, *Birth and Death of Meaning* ([New York?]: Free Press, 2014), 66–67.

¹⁷ Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1998), 4.

¹⁸ Becker, *Birth and Death*, 76.

Another major component of burnout is the sense of isolation. In a recent survey of Open Bible pastors, the question was asked, “What would strengthen your daily walk with Christ in such a way that the fruit of the Spirit would be more evident in your life?” The most common response was prayer. The second most common response was better time management skills or less busyness in their schedule. The third most needed component for pastors was a friend or community.¹⁹ Doctors Melissa Wolf and Shaun Gillis, who work in the occupational field of patient health care and experience very similar problems as pastors, explain, “Isolation is a dangerous beast. We may be surrounded by patients, coworkers, family, and friends, but have exactly zero trusted confidants with whom to share our true experiences. It can feel like there’s *no one to talk to.*”²⁰ This feeling of isolation often leaks into a sense despair and loneliness, further worsening a pastor’s health.

Suppression of emotions with occasional and unexpected emotional outbursts often seen through depersonalization is another major sign of burnout. Maslach defines “depersonalization” as “an attempt to put distance between oneself and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging people.”²¹ A pastor moves from a heart motivated to help care for an individual to viewing them as yet another person demanding attention and stealing their time.²² Compassion and care fade away into an attempt to survive. The fatigue and loss of energy shows itself in a lack of

¹⁹ Open Bible Churches, “National Survey.”

²⁰ Melissa Wolf and Shaun Gillis, *Other Side of Burnout: Solutions for Healthcare Professionals* (Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear Publishing, 2017), 26.

²¹ Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 403.

²² Wolf and Gillis, 48.

passion for everything. Pastor Carey Nieuwhof rightly says, “When you close your heart to people, you close your heart to God.”²³

Interestingly, even the exciting and exhilarating aspects of being a pastor can lead to depersonalization. The adrenaline rush of preaching and teaching in front of people can cause a burden on the physical body that eventually brings fatigue and emotional numbness.²⁴ The nature of the pastoral ministry, with its highs and lows, contributes to the effect of burnout.

Reasons for Burnout

The numerous reasons for burnout can be distilled into four main categories: high demand of expectations from others, lack of personal boundaries to care for one’s self, the reality of an occupation with a high demand and low tangible rewards, and the inattention to a pastor’s own spiritual climate. The expectations of each congregant play an important role in pastors’ burnout because of the high level of role ambiguity within the job of the pastor. Pastors are public speakers, teachers, counselors, administrators, managers, CEO’s, and spiritual directors to name a few of the requirements.²⁵ Each congregant has their own idea of how the pastor can meet his or her given need. Some may expect 24-hour care because crises have no time frame. Others want dynamic

²³ Nieuwhof, *Didn’t See It Coming*, 20.

²⁴ Christopher Adams et al., “Clergy Burnout: A Comparison Study with Other Helping Professions,” *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 2 (April 2017): 150.

²⁵ This is a list compiled with financial details explaining the potential salary a pastor could expect if actually charged for the services they provided as seen in Leslie Gonzales, “Utilizing a Contextualized, Coach-Supported, Emotional Intelligence-Based, Seminar-Style Curriculum to Reduce Stress Leading to Burnout in Pastors of Harlingen, TX” (DMin diss., Regent University, 2017), 70–71, ProQuest Dissertation Publishing 10616882.

preaching. Many even expect pastors to conform to the work schedule of the congregants or people in need. The variety of expectations, ambiguity of roles, and the recognition of what is actually possible to provide becomes a gap that increases the likelihood of burnout.²⁶ Additionally, with the increase in technology, there is a growing awareness of the church down the street or on the other side of the country; the expectation of growth, production, and provisions can become a heavy burden for the pastor to carry.²⁷

The pastor's inability to create and maintain personal boundaries also creates a potential for burnout. The need to care for others overcomes the necessity to care for self. The schedule can quickly overtake the life of a pastor with meetings, appointments, hospital visits, and study time taking more hours in the day than are available. The times to meet with people can start early in the morning and run until late in the evening because these times are when people, especially leaders, are available due to their own work constraints. These meetings then run into family time, causing missed opportunities with the spouse and children, including school events, family meals, and general family time.²⁸ The pastor is torn between the care of the people and the care of his family. He has a biblical mandate in 1 Timothy 3:4 to manage his family well, but this is difficult to do without regularly being present.

Open Bible pastors echoed this sentiment from the previously mentioned "National Survey on Soul Care" from Open Bible. One pastor said in regard to the

²⁶ Joseph Visker, Taylor Rider, and Anastasia Humphers-Ginther, "Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms Among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota," *Journal of Religion & Health* 56, no. 3 (June 2017): 952.

²⁷ Robert Elkington, "Adversity in Pastoral Leadership: Are Pastors Leaving the Ministry in Record Numbers, and If so, Why?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34, no. 1 (August 12, 2013): 8–9.

²⁸ Visker, Rider, and Humphers-Ginther, 952.

question about what would strengthen her daily walk with Christ, “Having a day, weekend or a longer period of time to seek the face of God for the people that God has called me to minister to [sic]. It is challenging to minister to your family and others.”²⁹ Others commented on the challenge of maintaining several jobs while leading a congregation.³⁰ The time needed to lead a congregation well is a massive challenge to the souls of pastors. Each aspect of the job requires significant time. Sermon preparation, hospital visits, worship service coordination, board meetings, and small groups are several activities that require time for the leader to develop a healthy church. Another person could always be called or another email could be sent. Something more could always be done. Time is always limited for pastors.

Boundary issues leak over into more than just time constraints. Pastors often begin to view their own person as a pastor and their identity becomes “the Pastor.” As pastors begin to view their role as heroic or important to people, they can become emotionally caught up in playing the hero. Scazzero calls this “overfunctioning.” He says, “Most of us in leadership struggle with [overfunctioning], including myself. Like an archeological tell, the depth of the issue only becomes clearer with time. Overfunctioning can be defined as: doing for others what they can and should do for themselves.”³¹ In principle, this looks like attending too many meetings, making every hospital visit, involvement in every decision in the church or area of ministry. Danger exists in overfunctioning as pastors can make it sound spiritual and healthy. Pastors explain it as

²⁹ Open Bible Churches, “National Survey.”

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Peter Scazzero, “Overfunctioning,” *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship* (blog), February 2, 2009, <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/overfunctioning/>.

caring for people. As a pastor cares for her congregation she attends every meeting and visits every elderly member of her church, thereby stretching herself to thin, worried what others may think of her, and neglecting her own soul.

This overactive desire to help is really a wound or sign of brokenness within the pastor. Becker says, “We began to understand that the individual’s view of himself depended hopelessly on the general reflection he received back from society.”³² The way that the pastor views others’ perspective of him will emotionally impact his life unless he is able to self-differentiate. According to Jewish rabbi, leadership consultant, and therapist, Edwin Friedman, differentiation is “the process of striving to keep one’s being in balance through the reciprocal external and internal process of self-definition and self-regulation.”³³ Pastors who are not able to differentiate between their role as a pastor and who they are as an individual blur the lines of identity and get lost in what they do rather than who they are.³⁴

Another reason for burnout is the pastoral role has a high effort requirement with a seemingly low tangible reward outcome. The demand of time, energy, sacrifices to their own desires and the desires of their family, lack of financial security, and constant criticism are all aspects of the job.³⁵ People often understand that sacrifices, such as lower than normal income, are necessary when they become pastors. They willingly, even

³² Becker, *Birth and Death*, 87.

³³ Edwin H. Friedman, Margaret M. Treadwell, and Edward W. Beal, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 183.

³⁴ Recognizing that cultural context can impact an individual’s psychology, roles, and identity, this dissertation focuses on pastors in the United States, particularly as it is beyond the scope of this project to look at the global cultural perspectives.

³⁵ Adams et al., 149–50.

joyously, surrender many of the comforts of this world to engage in a life that is for Christ, about Christ, and with Christ in their occupation. However, many of the normal rewards for work are not available. Professor at Azusa Pacific University, Chris Adams says,

‘Rewards’ refers to tangible and intangible aspects of job fulfillment, such as making a difference in the world, financial compensation, approval by others, and the opportunity to influence one’s own job stability and clearly define one’s role. We contend that the helping professions in general and the clergy profession in particular, are potentially high-effort, low reward occupations.³⁶

While other professions receive benefits such as higher salary compensation, retirement plans, stock options, or a host of other possibilities, pastors do not have that option. They have all the pressures and demands of high stress jobs, but few of the external perks.

The most significant reason for burnout is that pastors have not done the necessary work to know their own selves. The 16th century reformer and theologian, John Calvin says, “Our wisdom . . . consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and *of ourselves*. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other.”³⁷ In order for pastors to know God, they must know themselves, and in order for them to know themselves, they must know God; the knowledge of one is dependent on the other. Pastors can often neglect self-knowledge.

Pastors spend considerable time, energy, money, and resources in their pursuit of the knowledge of God. Seminary, conferences, and study are all important components to their work. What is neglected is the other half of Calvin’s equation—self. Many pastors

³⁶ Adams et al., 151.

³⁷ Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 4.

have not done the work on themselves that they insist is so important in their ministry, namely discovering core values, developing a vision, and establishing a strategy.

The American psychologist Abraham Maslow, famous for recognizing Maslow's hierarchy of needs, says,

We have discovered that fear of oneself is very often isomorphic with, and parallel with the fear of the outside world...

In general this kind of fear is defensive, in the sense that it's a protection of the self-esteem of our love and respect for ourselves. We tend to be afraid of any knowledge that could cause us to despise ourselves or to make us feel inferior, weak, worthless, evil, shameful. We protect ourselves and our ideal image of ourselves by repression and similar defenses, which are essentially techniques by which we avoid becoming conscious of unpleasant or dangerous truths.³⁸

Fear of self-discovery has caused people to not do the necessary work to understand who they are. Inner work will certainly expose areas of shame, weakness, and inferiority.

People do not want to face these consequences. Rather, ignorance of self-deficiencies is often preferable to the truth.

People in general, but pastors specifically, have a difficult time confronting inner work that would make them healthy and whole beings. Professor, author, and pastor Sam Rima says, "When leaders refuse to take the inward journey to explore and resolve the inner-life issues...the result is almost always an explosion that spews its shrapnel into the lives of others."³⁹ This refusal to know and understand who the self truly is causes an individual to operate out of unhealth and limits the person's ability to lead well. Becker says, "Freud's greatest discovery, the one which lies at the root of psychodynamics is that

³⁸ Abraham Maslow, "The Need to Know and the Fear of Knowing," *Journal of General Psychology*, no. 68 (1963): 118–19.

³⁹ Gary McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 46.

the great cause of much psychological illness is the fear of knowledge of oneself.”⁴⁰ With no clear markers for values, vision, purpose, and identity, pastors can easily get off course and not even realize it. In order for pastors to avoid burnout, the excavation of their own person is necessary, so that they know who they are as individuals, what their purpose is, and how they might function within that purpose. Uncovering vulnerabilities and weaknesses will expose them to who they are and can help navigate around potential problem areas when loneliness, discouragement, and general fatigue sets in.

Self-Deception in Burnout

In a recent survey, Open Bible pastors reported that they overwhelmingly feel connected to God on a regular basis. One question asked them to rate how often they “feel connected to God on a daily basis using a scale of one to ten, one being never, and ten being always.” The average was 8.1 with 70 percent indicating they rated at least an eight or higher.⁴¹ This indicates that the Open Bible pastors have God on their mind approximately 80 percent of their day. This seems rather high, however, rating oneself higher than is reality is not unusual. Philosophy professor, Gregg Ten Elshof described a study revealed that 94 percent of people think they are better than average at their job. He quoted from the study, “A survey of one million high-school seniors found that 70 percent thought they were above average in leadership ability, and only 2 percent thought they were below average. In terms of ability to get along with others, *all* students thought they were above average, 60 percent thought they were in the top 10 percent, and 25

⁴⁰ Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 51.

⁴¹ Open Bible Churches, “National Survey.”

percent thought they were in the top 1 percent.”⁴² Obviously, people struggle to honestly assess the fruit of their lives and this includes pastors.

In *Leadership and Self-Deception*, The Arbinger Institute says, “There is nothing more common in organizations than self-deception.”⁴³ This is true even in Christian circles. Paul the apostle wrote to the church in Galatia, “For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”⁴⁴ The Galatian church had deceived itself on how well it was doing. Even in the current church, well intentioned, Christ-following, Spirit-led pastors can be unaware of the condition of their own soul and be self-deceived. In his book, *I Told Me So*, Ten Elshof quoted Mike Martin,

Evading self-acknowledgement of our faults enables us to avoid painful moral emotions: guilt and remorse for harming others; shame for betraying our own ideals; self-contempt for not meeting even our minimal commitments. We also bypass the sometimes onerous task of abiding by our values and manage to sin freely and pleasurably. We avoid the need to make amends and restitution for the harm we do. And, above all, we maintain a flattering self-image while pursuing immoral ends, often in the name of virtue.⁴⁵

Pastors often operate “in the name of virtue,” but underneath the cloak of health are woundedness, anxiety, and pain. What are thought to be biblical perspectives are really just their own developed self-protection mechanisms explained in a biblical construct. Becker explained, “Once (self-worth) has been achieved the rest of the person’s entire

⁴² Thomas Gilovich, *How We Know What Isn’t So* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 77, in Gregg Ten Elshof, *I Told Me So: Self-Deception and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2009), 1.

⁴³ Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting Out of the Box*. (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2002), 15.

⁴⁴ Galatians 6:3.

⁴⁵ Mike Martin, *Self-Deception and Morality* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), as quoted in Ten Elshof, *I Told Me So*, 8.

life becomes animated by the artificial symbolism of self-worth; almost all his time is devoted to the protection, maintenance, and aggrandizement of the symbolic edifice of his (self-worth).⁴⁶ Pastors have been trained and taught that they are leaders who are able to clearly hear the voice of God. Their self-worth can be wrapped up in this identity, and they to move to protect themselves from others that they may view as threats to their identity, which includes the perceived health of the church.

Scazzero and Warren Bird, author, professor, and pastor, give two reasons why self-deceit is so prevalent: time and pain. They say, “Understanding that world of feelings, thoughts, desires, and hopes with all its richness and complexity is hard work. It also takes time—tons of it.”⁴⁷ Pastors already feel limited in time and the amount of work required to spend on themselves when so many other things needs attention almost seems unwise. Scazzero and Bird also say, “It is painful to take our first deep, long look inside of our hearts. Jeremiah 17:9 affirms: ‘The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?’ (New American Standard Bible).”⁴⁸ The excavation of self is painful. It is difficult to see areas of weakness and vulnerability. Who wants to see where he falls short? Who wants to be confronted with the reality that she has unresolved issues? Therapist, professor, and vulnerability expert, Brené Brown, says, “Ordinary courage is about putting our *vulnerability* on the line. In today’s world, that’s pretty extraordinary.”⁴⁹ Vulnerability is not common.

⁴⁶ Becker, *Birth and Death of Meaning*, 67.

⁴⁷ Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives*, Updated and expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 57.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You’re Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2010), 13.

Rima calls this self-deception the “dark side.” He defined it as, “A natural result of human development. It is the inner urges, compulsions, and dysfunctions of our personality that often go unexamined or remain unknown to us until we experience an emotional explosion...or some other significant problem that causes us to search for a reason why.”⁵⁰ While many pastors think their connectedness to God automatically exposes the dark sides of their personality, Rima indicates that exposure might not occur at all unless something dramatic or intentional occurs to cause the search. Thus, many pastors generally, and Open Bible specifically, are unintentionally self-deceived into believing they are healthy, when in fact they are carrying silent emotional or spiritual toxins everywhere they go. For example, 57 percent of Open Bible pastors said that they collaborate well with others, meaning they scored themselves eight or higher on a recent Open Bible survey.⁵¹ However, since most of the respondents are senior pastors, they are accustomed to getting what they want. Many are self-deceived into believing they are collaborative, when the reality is they struggle to be team players. For most of their working life, they have had few quality team members to rely on and have grown accustomed to working on their own and not having people question their decisions—at least to their face. Their decision is the final word, which can bring a sense of intoxicating power and blindness to reality.

The late 1840s revealed what can occur in the medical field with care givers in the spiritual and emotional fields when life goes unexamined. The obstetrical ward at Vienna General Hospital in Hungary had a dramatically higher death rate for its patients than other

⁵⁰ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 28.

⁵¹ Open Bible Churches, “National Survey.”

wards in the area. In fact, 20 percent of patients died after childbirth. This became known as “childbed fever.” After much research as to why this division was significantly higher than others, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis noted that his] was the only division that also worked on cadavers. Semmelweis began instructing the doctors from his division to wash their hands prior to helping with the delivery. The mortality rate decreased from 18.3 percent to 1.3 percent.⁵² The doctors were inadvertent carriers of the toxins bringing harm and death to their patients. Similarly, pastors certainly do not intend to have infected lives and to bring those infections everywhere they go, but neither have they necessarily done the work to cleanse infected areas. Many have neglected regular spiritual and emotional checkups to search if areas might exist that would bring exposure and harm to others. Twentieth century Quaker missionary Thomas Kelly described the problem well: “We Western peoples are apt to think our great problems are external, environmental. We are not skilled in the inner life, where the real roots of our problem lie.”⁵³

For example, several pastors in Open Bible responded to the survey indicating that all aspects of the fruit of the Spirit as seen in Galatians 5 were fully evident in their life and they needed no change. One said, “I am satisfied with all the fruit of the Spirit being active in my life.” One suggested that he would score himself an eight or a nine in each category (of the fruit of the Spirit) because he is doing so well in this area. Another said she could not think of any fruit of the Spirit that needed attention, but rather “All fruits of the Spirit are extremely important to me and hope they are evident. I honestly am

⁵² Christa Colyer, “Death in a Viennese Maternity Ward,” *Journal of College Science Teaching: Washington* 29, no. 5 (April 2000): 297.

⁵³ Thomas R. Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 91.

not feeling inadequate toward any of them; I hope that does not sound prideful.”⁵⁴

Certainly many pastors have an abundance of the fruit of the Spirit active in their lives, however this author wonders how prevalent self-deception is in their lives. Have they done the necessary work to expose the dark side or is an explosion or burnout coming soon?

One sign that pastors are not healthy is the lack of leaders that are currently being trained to lead congregations. As previously mentioned, only one licensed pastor in their twenties exists in the largest region of Open Bible. This is despite the fact that the denomination’s former Bible college, New Hope Christian College, is geographically in the middle of the region.⁵⁵ This Bible college once produced the overwhelming majority of leaders in Open Bible. However, clearly times have changed, and Open Bible is struggling to find a new model to replace its former leadership development plan.

In the wake of the leadership gap, Open Bible has begun schools of ministry throughout the country that have begun to disciple and train future leaders.⁵⁶ Another option to train pastors is through Inste Global Bible College, which began as a means to train leaders in other parts of the world. Inste is portable and used around the globe to train men and women in foreign countries for the ministry. Its effectiveness was such that

⁵⁴ Open Bible Churches, “National Survey.”

⁵⁵ Over the past decade New Hope Christian College, formerly Eugene Bible College, has transitioned from an Open Bible College to non-denominational college.

⁵⁶ Examples of the Open Bible schools of ministry can be found at <https://www.openbible.org/About-Us/Extension-Ministries/Schools-of-Ministry>, which lists several including Discover Ministry School, Legacy School of Ministry, and Harvest Bible Institute. The primary goal of these schools is to train church leaders without the expense of people moving away to Bible college. The schools focus on being affordable and practical while teaching core doctrine and pastoral skills.

now Inste has been used nationally to train and license pastors.⁵⁷ These attempts have produced leaders, but they have fallen far short of fulfilling the need for quality pastors in congregations. Very few of the youth leaders and children's directors, formerly avenues of pastoral training, are licensed. Currently, the Pacific Region has thirty-three youth directors and only six are licensed and again, only one of those is in his twenties.⁵⁸

When ascertaining why there is a lack of younger pastors in Open Bible, more questions exist than answers. Certainly, the culture and lack of regular church attendance plays a significant role in a lack of new leaders. The loss of New Hope Christian College to another Christian organization has caused a change of culture that no longer sends students to Open Bible at the capacity it once did. This author wonders though if the problem is more systemic in Open Bible than US-American culture. This author also wonders if pastors have truly taken the time to cultivate their own souls. If not, surely this would result in an underdeveloped spirituality denomination wide.

Burnout Affects More than Pastors

Pastors that begin to feel the effects of burnout lose the passion they once had, and the vision and optimism that once sparked them also recedes. While this is harmful for the individual, but it also negatively impacts the pastor's family and the congregation. The cost of unhealthy and burned out pastors is great. South African pastor, Dr. Robert Elkington, suggests that every day three pastors leave the ministry in North America

⁵⁷ "Welcome," Inste, accessed April 18, 2019, <https://inste.edu/en/>.

⁵⁸ Mike Allison, Regional Youth Director of the Pacific Region of Open Bible, personal conversation with the author, April 18, 2019.

alone.⁵⁹ The reality is that the Baby Boomer generation is in the middle of retiring. Many have already retired, while many others are just a few years away. With only one licensed pastor less than thirty years old, numerous Open Bible churches will be left without a pastor. One has to wonder what type of qualifications, skills, and experiences will lead the next generation of the Church with this type of current climate.

The cost to the congregation that has a pastor experiencing burnout is also tragic. The congregation looks to the pastor for so many important decisions in their daily lives. The congregation looks to the pastor for vision, hope, spiritual direction, counseling support, and love.⁶⁰ For example, a member of the congregation in need of hope and direction seeks out the wisdom of the pastor. However, the pastor might be in need of hope and direction if she is experiencing burnout. How can she offer that which she does not have?

When roles of the pastor are not available because of unhealth, the congregation suffers as well. Author and church leader Ruth Haley Barton says, “When leaders lose their souls, so do the churches and organizations they lead.”⁶¹ Leadership guru, John Maxwell calls this the “Law of the Lid.” He writes, “Personal and organizational effectiveness is proportionate to the strength of leadership.”⁶² When the leader is healthy,

⁵⁹ Elkington, “Adversity in Pastoral Leadership,” 7.

⁶⁰ Visker, Rider, and Humphers-Ginther, “Ministry-Related Burnout and Stress Coping Mechanisms Among Assemblies of God-Ordained Clergy in Minnesota,” 957.

⁶¹ R. Ruth Barton, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 13.

⁶² John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 8.

the congregation is more likely to move toward health. However, if the leader is unhealthy the congregation has a difficult time moving beyond the health of the pastor.

The family of the fatigued pastor also pays the price. Since he is overwhelmed with life at the church, working longer hours to get more done, the family goes neglected. Shared meals are missed. Extra-curricular activities go unwatched. The constant phone call to have other parents pick up and drop off the children becomes the norm, rather than the family experiencing life together. Hawaiian Foursquare pastor Wayne Cordeiro, experienced burnout and now writes and teaches others about the effects. He told the story of a pastor he met who said, “My greatest fear is that my kids will grow up hating God because of me.” Cordeiro continued, “His fear was not only that his children would be indifferent; the fear was that his children would be antagonistic toward God. And he placed the blame not on the church or on the surrounding secular culture or even his children’s individual free wills but on himself.”⁶³ The choices that pastors make impacts his family. Oftentimes those choices are positive, such as following Christ, but other times, the decisions, like putting the congregation in priority over the family, can be detrimental to family members.

As a pastor’s kid, and now a pastor, this author knows the routine of regular evening meetings, early morning breakfasts, Friday rehearsals, and Saturday funerals. I have lived it my entire life. When the family is left unprotected, marital frustration can set in or the children resent the church for taking away their parent. I can still give a list of names of people who would often take my dad away from time that he had promised

⁶³ Wayne Cordeiro, Francis Chan, and Larry W. Osborne, *Sifted: Pursuing Growth through Trials, Challenges, and Disappointments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 91.

me. The tension to care for the family and for members of the church is a difficult one to manage. The pastor can, without recognizing it, give his life to people who often leave for the church down the street, while the spouse and kids eat dinner without him again.

To Do or To Be Is the Question

The danger in this discussion is to add more guilt and shame to people who love Christ and are genuinely trying to follow Him. This study is not intended to add more items to the list of a pastor, which would only increase the anxiety and feeling of hopelessness, rather than offer a solution. The pressure of already not measuring up frequently weighs pastors down.⁶⁴ When presented with the idea that perhaps pastors are not as healthy as they think, guilt and shame can enter their soul. Defensiveness takes root. Quickly, the list of all the areas in which they faithfully serve Christ is recounted. Doing the work of the ministry can suck the life out of people. Unfortunately, pastors can go through the motions and miss God while doing His work. Why? Psychologist, professor, and author Gary Moon says, “I believe it’s because we fail to pursue him with the same reckless abandon with which we chased (or will chase) our spouse.”⁶⁵ The love and passion that once existed becomes a job. “Doing” the work becomes more prevalent than “being” Christ-like.

Rather, the purpose of this study is to understand how Open Bible pastors can become healthy and transformed into the image of Christ so that they can experience the abundant life Jesus spoke of in John 10:10; and from the overflow of that life, the

⁶⁴ Gonzales, 76–77.

⁶⁵ Gary W. Moon, *Falling for God: Saying Yes to His Extravagant Proposal* (Colorado Springs, CO: Shaw Books, 2004), 4.

congregation, community, and family can be transformed as well. If pastors can return to the work of the transformation of their own soul, it will produce, as Moon says, a “change that leads to abundant life in Christ and the emotions of love, joy, and peace happens as we cultivate a passionate relationship with God.”⁶⁶ The goal becomes a life with Christ, in Christ, for Christ. The circumstance and setting may vary, but a life lived in such a way will bring hope, joy, peace, patience, and kindness.

Pastor John Ortberg of Menlo Presbyterian describes the tension: “The danger is always that we think of a transformed person in terms of devotional practices, but they are a means to an end. The goal, the end, to which they are a means is love.”⁶⁷ A healthy, transformed pastor will be known for loving God and loving others. Getting lost in the practices of spiritual transformation is as faulty as getting lost in self-deception or doing the work of the ministry. All pose dangers that cause the condition of being lost. Our destination is a deepening relationship with Christ. This is the end we strive for.

Conclusion

Open Bible pastors love God with all of their heart, mind, soul, and strength. They have given so much of themselves that many are now experiencing various levels of burn out. They are tired, anxious, frustrated, lost, and lonely. The high expectations of others, together with low tangible rewards, have impacted pastors in every area of their life. They have limited time, few friends, deep financial concerns, and low boundaries causing many of these issues. Sadly, many of them are unaware of their own lack of help. They

⁶⁶ Moon, 5.

⁶⁷ John Ortberg in response to a question in Dallas Willard, *Living in Christ's Presence: Final Words on Heaven and the Kingdom of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2017), 66.

are self-deceived into thinking they are healthy, when the reality is that they have not done the work necessary to know themselves well. The family members and congregations often end up on the receiving end of this unhealth.

Paradoxically, instead of focusing more time and attention on others, if pastors spend more time focusing on being who God made them to be, perhaps they can regain a sense of purpose and meaning that has been lost. Jesus spent time developing His own soul. He was clear on His identity and purpose and practiced specific habits that allowed Him to live abundantly, despite the intense pressure of His earthly ministry.

CHAPTER 2: THE THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL HEALTH PRACTICES OF JESUS

Open Bible ministers seek to remain spiritually vibrant. Pastors know that the power of God transforms lives. They also know when they enter the ministry that they are sacrificing many areas in life, such as money and time, but do so willingly because of a deep love for God and for people. In the midst of working to connect people to God, pastors grow tired and weary. A significant reason for the loss of vibrancy and health in pastors is a misunderstanding of soteriology. Too often salvation simply means the afterlife, though Scripture teaches that salvation includes much more. Jesus taught and lived the path of salvation. Examination of His teachings and life reveals how pastors can live and work in the ministry. Pastors who have a fuller understanding of salvation and then seek to emulate the life of Christ are more likely to remain healthy and better pastors throughout their life.

What is needed is the development of a spiritual formation plan. Spiritual formation is the process through intentional habit that transforms the inner world of an individual into a more integrated and Christ-like person for the benefit of others. Pastors who have an intentional plan that is followed are more likely to actually grow in union with Christ. The Gospels are filled with evidence that Jesus Himself had a plan and strategy to stay connected with His Father.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught that the health of the individual is noticeable by the fruit that comes from the person. Jesus said, “So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut

down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:17–20). The fruit of a person reveals what is inside of them. In order for the life of a pastor and for their congregation to be healthy, the pastor himself must be healthy. An unhealthy pastor will eventually result in noticeable gaps in his life and ministry.

Pastors who desire to remain healthy have two critical components that need attention: who that person is and who they are becoming. Dallas Willard says, “The people to whom we will minister and speak will not recall 99 percent of what we say to them. But they will never forget the kind of persons we are.... So we must never forget that the most important thing happening at any moment, in the midst of all our ministerial duties, is the kind of persons we are becoming.”¹ Who we are influences every area of our life, every word we say, and every action we take. Author, megachurch pastor, and licensed Open Bible minister Wayne Cordeiro says, “Sometimes we get so busy rowing the boat, we don’t take the time to stop and see where we’re going...or what we are becoming.”² Pastors can become so busy doing the work of ministry that they are not aware of the person they are becoming. The person we are becoming impacts those around us.

How then do Open Bible pastors remain healthy and eventually produce good fruit? The wise ministers are the ones who follow the apostle Paul as he said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” Paul understood that only in

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 124.

² Wayne Cordeiro, *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2009), 71.

Christ could one be whole and complete. Following the model of Jesus brings life. Jesus even said that He “came to give (people) life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

Pastors believe that Jesus is the model to emulate, but have difficulty actually doing it. New Testament professor Les Hardin says, “The imitation of Christ—His life, His speech, His teachings, His faith, His willful submission to the Father—is the essence of Christian spirituality. It is the mimicry of His humanity, not His divinity...that Christians seek.”³ Jesus is fully human *and* fully divine. The challenge is to mimic the human elements of Jesus while recognizing that He lived in first-century Israel as a Jewish rabbi, while we live in the 21st century as westerners. Jesus’ life, though, transcends the differences of location and time. His followers can incorporate regular habits that He used, which will guide, instruct, and facilitate a life that is lived abundantly.

For Christ-followers, disciples of Jesus, this means that Jesus has a way of life that is worth following. Pentecostal theologians, historians, and authors, Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave say in *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, “A disciple is not one who merely learns the content of books and lectures; he is one who is matured by being in the presence of his teacher, following his example, imbibing his spirit.”⁴ Disciples take on the spirit and actions of their master. Disciples of Christ mimic His person and likeness, but to do so requires participating in the same activities of Christ that shaped Him.

³ Leslie T. Hardin, “The Quest for the Spiritual Jesus: Jesus and the Spiritual Disciplines,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 15, no. 2 (2012): 217.

⁴ Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: Foursquare Media, 1987), 101.

Missing the Abundant Life Today

The primary contributing factor to a lack of health in pastors is a misunderstanding of what the point of human existence on earth is really about. Individuals have enough trouble determining who they are, but without a clear idea in mind for who they want to become, people get lost, confused, and disillusioned easily. Many well-meaning people believe that the goal to humanity is “accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior,” which gets them a ticket into Heaven. Certainly the afterlife is a necessary topic, but such a heavy preaching emphasis on it misses the point of the here and now, which can lead to a frustrated and unfulfilled life. Fuller Theological Seminary professor George E. Ladd says, “From this point of view, salvation would only be an insurance policy....It has no value to me today except to give me a sense of security.”⁵ Jesus came to give more than an insurance policy. He came to give life immediately. The life He gives is available now. When this is understood, pastors can begin to focus on becoming more Christ-like.

However, a fundamental misunderstanding of salvation, which focuses on what people are saved from rather than what they are saved for, has perpetuated this problem of missing the importance and relevance of life today. Theology professor and writer James Bryan Smith says, “The good news about entering Heaven when we die has overshadowed the equally good news that we can enter Heaven now.”⁶ Salvation in Pentecostal churches is understood to mean cognitive assent to a prescribed orthodoxy.

⁵ George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), 40.

⁶ James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ*, Apprentice Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 36.

Correct answers pave the way to Heaven.⁷ However, the Gospels do not present salvation in this manner. In fact, Jesus rarely used the term “salvation.” Rather, what Jesus primarily taught is the “Kingdom of God.” Additionally, pastor and author John Ortberg claims that the primary synonym for salvation in the New Testament is “life.”⁸ A previously mentioned, John 10:10 as an example of this. Furthermore, 1 John 5:12 says, “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” Therefore, “salvation,” “the Kingdom of God,” and “eternal life” are all synonymous terms used to describe the same concept. This is seen in Mark 10 with the story of the Rich Young Ruler. Initially, the young man asks Jesus how he can “inherit eternal life” (v. 17). Jesus then tells him to sell all of his goods and follow him, which the man is unable to do. Jesus then turns to His disciples and laments how difficult it will be for the wealthy to “enter the Kingdom of God” (v. 23). Upon hearing this shocking news, Peter asks Jesus, “Who then can be saved?” (v. 26).⁹ Recognition that these three terms are interchangeable among Jesus and the New Testament authors is important to understand. Salvation becomes more than just an escape plan from Earth. The Kingdom of God is available for life now *and* is also future-oriented. Life does not just begin after death.

⁷ John Ortberg, *Eternity Is Now in Session: A Radical Rediscovery of What Jesus Really Taught about Salvation, Eternity, and Getting to the Good Place* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2018), 3–4.

⁸ Ortberg, *Eternity Is Now in Session*, 32.

⁹ Ortberg, 33.

Jesus brought much-needed correction to humanity's understanding about life with God. The point of existence is *life* lived in union *with God*.¹⁰ Living in union with God is different from waiting until death to go to Heaven. Being in union with God and having eternal life begins now on Earth once a person comes to *know* Christ. Jesus taught that life in the Kingdom of God is eternal life, which is dependent upon knowledge of Him (John 17:3). Dallas Willard says, "The eternal life that begins with confidence in Jesus is a life in His present kingdom, now on earth and available to all. So the message of and about Him is specifically a gospel for our life now, not just for dying. It is about living now as his apprentice in kingdom living, not just as a consumer of His merits."¹¹ Christ-followers do not need to wait until death to enter the Kingdom of God and to see fruit produced in their life. Rather, the Holy Spirit begins to produce the fruit of love, joy, peace, and patience, et al. as a Christ-follower walks regularly with God.

Jesus' friend and disciple, Peter, wrote to the church in 2 Peter 1:2, "May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." This assumes that knowledge of Christ is possible and that it continues to grow throughout one's lifetime.¹² Willard explains that "knowledge as the biblical tradition speaks of it is always *interactive relationship*."¹³ Eternal life then is the interactive life that we lead

¹⁰ These ideas come from N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 91–92.

¹¹ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (San Francisco: Harper, 1998), xvii.

¹² Dallas Willard, *Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 22.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 52.

every day in the growing knowledge of Christ, and Jesus wants this particular life to be lived abundantly.

Abundant life is found only in connection with Christ. John says in John 1:4, “In Him (the Word) was life.” Later in John 5:21, John says, “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.” God is the source of life, and the connection between the Father and the Son is abundant life. Pentecostal theologian J. Rodman Williams says,

Again, God is the living god in that He is the possessor of abundance. God lives not only in the sense of the fullness of animate existence but also in vitality. It is not that God has this life to the highest possible degree, for such is a quantitative measurement and wholly inapplicable. Rather, the divine life is immeasurable, boundless, overflowing. His life is a veritable river continuously pouring forth streams of living water. Life abundant is not only the life of God but also the life of all that comes from Him.¹⁴

God gives this abundant life to those people who know Him. A life that is full of vitality begins with a connection to God alone.

Abundant living is not the external outcome, but rather the internal way of life. Since it is internal, how does one know if abundant life actually being lived? Another way to ask this question is what is the result from a person who stays in close relationship with Christ? Paul answers this question in Galatians 5:22–23. He calls the result the “fruit of the Spirit.” He says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Abundant life is lived out as a person remains in close connection with Christ and the result of that connection are these characteristics which the Holy Spirit produces.

¹⁴ J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 50.

One can live a life full of joy, peace, and self-control in the midst of the worst of circumstances. Dallas Willard says about abundant life, “This is abundant life in its fullest sense: life lived from hidden sources that come into the soul from God and His Kingdom. Such abundant life is possible no matter where you are or what you happen to be doing.”¹⁵ The circumstances of life matter little because abundant life comes from God, who changes the nature of the person. People may notice changes, but they often slow and develop over time. Abundant life is a wellspring in the soul of an individual that influences every area of life.

Much like a stream of water, the elements that are found in life determine the health of life. The source of a river matters to the quality of water it provides. The quality of life functions in the same way. In his book *Renovation of the Heart*, Willard says,

Our soul is like an inner stream of water, which gives strength, direction, and harmony to every other element of our life. When that stream is as it should be, we are constantly refreshed and exuberant in all we do, because our soul itself is then profusely rooted in the vastness of God and His Kingdom, including nature; and all else within us is enlivened and directed by that stream.¹⁶

The stream of life begins with its source in connection to Christ. Abundant life then begins to occur by the grace of God as people care for their own individual streams.

Instead of focusing on the life that Jesus gives, attention has been placed on idea of forgiveness of sins or “going to Heaven.” The Bishop of Durham, N.T. Wright, says, “The purpose of forgiving sin...is to enable people to become fully functioning, fully image-bearing human beings within God’s world, already now, completely in the age to

¹⁵ Dallas Willard, “Your Place in This World,” in *Renewing the Christian Mind: Essays, Interviews, and Talks* (New York: HarperOne, 2016), 239.

¹⁶ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 204.

come.”¹⁷ He goes on to say, “[Forgiveness of sins is] the name for a new state of being, a new world, the world of resurrection, resurrection itself being the archetypal forgiveness-of-sins moment, the moment when the prison door is flung open, indicating that the jailor has already been overpowered.”¹⁸ Forgiveness of sins, then, is not merely a one-time cleansing, but is the beginning point of a new creation and entrance into the Kingdom of God that is marked by a continual connection with Christ. The emphasis, however, is placed on a one-time decision with a raised hand or a walk down the aisle to the altar, communicating that this is enough for eternal life.

Even the official doctrinal statements of faith in Open Bible, found in *We Believe: Core Truths for Christian Living*, come close to making salvation seem like a one-time decision that is simply about getting into heaven. More on this will be developed later in this chapter. However, in the official statement regarding salvation, the authors have included “An Invitation” to receive “abundant and eternal life.” Following this invitation is a prayer that one could pray to receive Jesus as Savior, after which is an encouragement to read the Bible, pray, and find a church.¹⁹

Invitations to a life with Christ are necessary and vital, but without further explanation lead to a shallow faith and disillusioned followers. The dangers are reminiscent of the words of Dallas Willard: “One is ‘saved’ if one is now counted by God among those who will be admitted into His presence at death or some point thereafter.

¹⁷ N. T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus’s Crucifixion* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2016), 156.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 156–57.

¹⁹ Randal Bach, David Cole, and Andrea Johnson, eds., *We Believe: Core Truths for Christian Living* (Des Moines, IA: OBC Publishing, 2015), 193–94.

This usage of ‘salvation’ and ‘saved’ deprives the terminology of the general sense of *deliverance* that it bears in the Bible as a whole.”²⁰ These invitations miss the importance and blessings of life today. This is, after all, what Jesus’ point was: We can have new life now and for eternity.

We Believe goes on to say, “Simply stated, salvation is deliverance from sin and its consequences. But more than that, salvation is a glorious hope of *a future of abundant life and eternal life*” (italics added).²¹ All of the emphasis is placed on the future aspect of eternal life and abundant living. They go on to say, “In short, we have been saved from the *penalty* of sin.”²² While this is partially true, as we have been saved from the effects of sin and death, we have also been saved for something, which is new life now. We do not have to wait for death or Christ’s return to experience salvation and life abundantly.

Pastors get off course in the same way a bride can lose focus preparing for the wedding day, while missing the importance of marriage that will be for the rest of her life. While a raised hand or an aisle walked in acknowledgment that a person has accepted Christ as their Lord is not wrong in itself, it can be confusing to the person sitting in the congregation. What pastors can pay further attention to in their life and from the congregation is the lifetime and life-giving commitment one is making to Jesus: “The ‘goal’ is not ‘Heaven,’ but a renewed human vocation within God’s renewed creation.”²³ This new vocation is to “celebrate, worship, procreate, and take responsibility within the

²⁰ Willard, *Great Omission*, 110.

²¹ Bach, Cole, and Johnson, 183.

²² Bach, Cole, and Johnson, 184.

²³ Wright, *Day the Revolution Began*, 74.

rich, vivid developing life of creation.”²⁴ Abundant life is available now to the individual who has received life from the Creator. New creations in Christ, no longer lived as they previously did, but rather have a different way of living.

The commitment is to a lifelong connection with Christ in which, when taken seriously, fruit is produced. Jesus gives the example of a vine that is connected to the branch in John 15:5: “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” Just as a vine must be attached to the branch to bear fruit, so too must people stay in union with Christ to have life and bear fruit. As Korean-American pastor Joshua Choonmin Kang says, “Only when we become close friends with Jesus can we produce abundant spiritual fruit.”²⁵ Pastors that desire fruit from their lives make friendship with Jesus a priority.

South African teacher and pastor Andrew Murray writes in *Abide with Me*, “A fruit-bearing tree lives not for itself, but wholly for those to whom its fruit brings refreshment and life. As so the branch exists only and entirely for the sake of the fruit.”²⁶ A person connected to Christ bears fruit making a difference in the world around them. James Bryan Smith called this person a “virtuous person.” He says, “A virtuous person is light to everyone around them.”²⁷ Light is needed in this dark world. Christ’s disciples bring His light and it shines through them, marking a way to live that others can follow.

²⁴ Ibid., 76–77.

²⁵ Joshua Choonmin Kang, *Deep-Rooted in Christ: The Way of Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 125.

²⁶ Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2002), 157.

²⁷ Smith, *Good and Beautiful Life*, 25.

The Kingdom of God, the abundant life, is not of this world. It can be entered only through knowledge of Christ, which is a daily process and continues for the rest of life. It is an interactive life that involves more than just a profession of faith, but is seen in regular action that reveals the Spirit leading and directing His disciples. Far too often it is seen as something that begins at death, but Jesus intended it to begin now.

Theological Implications on the Dual Nature of Jesus

Jesus lived an abundant life. He lived abundantly despite being rejected—including by the religious leaders, His hometown, and His family—, persecuted, publically challenged, betrayed, arrested, and crucified. While this may not seem like abundant life from an earthly perspective, what Jesus reveals is that abundance is not the circumstance, but how one lives in the midst of the circumstance.

Scripture is full of instances in which Christ's followers are encouraged to imitate Him.²⁸ The goal of Christianity then becomes one of mimicking the life of Christ.²⁹

Psychologist Eric Johnson, however, gives a great warning about the danger of imitating Christ:

The imitation of Christ has often been considered to be the primary focus of the Christian life. However, this orientation by itself can easily become moralistic or depressing, depending on the evidence of one's psychospiritual maturity. Underlying the believer's imitation of the life of Christ in the Christian scheme of salvation is the believer's union with the life Christ by the bond of the Spirit. *Christ's* life of faith is to be understood, first and foremost, as the basis and

²⁸ John 13:34, Philippians 2:3–8, 2 Corinthians 3:8, and 1 Peter 2:21 are several examples of many in which we are told to follow Christ's example.

²⁹ Kyubo Kim, "The Power of Being Vulnerable in Christian Soul Care: Common Humanity and Humility," *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 1 (February 2017): 359.

substance of the believer's life of faith rather than the exalted model that we are to emulate by our own power.³⁰

The imitation of Christ's life is not done solely by one's own power, but is a God-given grace as we continue to be transformed into His image. When one simply tries to do what Jesus did without inviting the Spirit to guide, direct, nurture, and correct, imitating Christ can become moralistic, when imitating the life of Christ should actually bring abundant life and the fruit of the Spirit.

Since Jesus was able to live an abundant life in the midst of all of His circumstances, the way in which He lived His life needs examination to search for clues or patterns of His lifestyle that can be emulated. Although Hardin correctly says, "Scholarly discussion of Jesus' life and ministry has focused largely on His preaching and death, with little attention paid to the question of His spiritual development,"³¹ the Gospels are full of examples of how Jesus lived and ministered. What can often be lost in the study of Jesus' life is His humanity. Proper understanding to the personhood of Christ—His deity and His humanity—will help Christ-followers to experience abundant life.

The official belief statement of Open Bible says, "We believe in God the Son, co-Creator with the Father and Holy Spirit, who took upon Himself human form, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and given the name Jesus."³² This statement contains both aspects of Jesus' nature: divinity *and* humanity. Too often the

³⁰ Eric L. Johnson, *God and Soul Care: The Therapeutic Resources of the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 347–48.

³¹ Hardin, 218.

³² Bach, Cole, and Johnson, 51.

deity of Christ is emphasized to the neglect of His humanity. Pentecostal theologian J. Rodman Williams says, “That Christ was and is a real man has too often been neglected in the history of the church. Many an artist has depicted Christ in heavenly terms (halo and all!), but seldom has there been the portrayal *also* of His genuine humanity.”³³ When the humanity of Christ is not given the proper epistemological prominence, His life becomes less of one that can be emulated and more like a picture on a wall that is admired.

The Deity of Christ

The importance of the divinity of Christ cannot be understated. John claims that Jesus is God in the opening statements of his Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”³⁴ He makes clear from the start of his gospel that Jesus *is* God. Matthew also notes the divinity of Christ in his account of how Joseph learned that Mary would be giving birth to Jesus: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us).”³⁵ His claim is that Jesus is God among humanity.

Jesus declares Himself to be God throughout John’s Gospel. In John 10:30, Jesus says, “I and the Father are one.” This statement was understood to be a declaration of divinity as the Jews around Jesus then gathered stones to stone Him for blasphemy. In

³³ Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 334.

³⁴ John 1:1–3.

³⁵ Matthew 1:23.

John 8:58, Jesus declares that He was pre-existent before eternity when He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” Jesus also claimed a special relationship to the Father that would be absurd if He were not divine, as seen in John 15:26: “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”³⁶ Significantly, Jesus claimed to also have the authority to forgive sins. In Mark 2, Jesus healed the paralytic, but first He told the man, “Your sins are forgiven” (verse 5). When Jesus was challenged on His authority to forgive sins, He said that it was just as easy for Him to forgive sins as it was to heal the man. Then He told the man to rise up, pick up his bed and go home since He has the authority to bring both forgiveness and healing (2:9–11). The implication is that only God can do either, and since Jesus is able to heal, He is also able to bring forgiveness, and He is God.

Paul also asserted the divinity of Christ. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul says, “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”³⁷ Paul added in Philippians 2:6, “Who, though he (Jesus) was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.” Just a few verses later, Paul says, “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”³⁸ The significance of this is that no Jew would have believed that God was a

³⁶ Duffield and Van Cleave, 96–97.

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 8:6.

³⁸ Philippians 2:10–11.

man—and certainly not God and man—unless Jesus was divine. The core tenet of Judaism is the *Shema*, which states, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”³⁹ Jews firmly believed in one God to the point that they were ready to kill Jesus for suggesting another possibility, yet Paul considers Jesus to be equal with God and, therefore, God.

Millard Erickson suggests four implications for the deity of Christ in *Introducing Christian Doctrine*. The first is that through Christ “we can have real knowledge of God.”⁴⁰ Since Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15), Jesus makes God known to humanity. Second, the death of Christ makes possible redemption. Third, the great separation that occurred at the Fall between God and humanity has now been reconciled: “God and humanity have been reunited.”⁴¹ Finally, “Worship of Christ is appropriate.”⁴² The worship of a human would be blasphemous, but Christ is worthy of all praise because of His divinity. Christ’s deity is vital to the redemption plan of God, which seeks to restore life, hope, and joy to fallen world. Pastors need the deity of Christ in their life to experience reconciliation and redemption, which moves them to worship Him. These are necessary and helpful steps for pastors to remain spiritually healthy.

³⁹ Deuteronomy 6:4.

⁴⁰ Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, ed. L. Arnold Hustad, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 244.

⁴¹ Erickson, 244.

⁴² *Ibid.*

The Humanity of Christ

The Jesus that is worshipped by His followers is believed to be more than a divine being. Jesus is God, and He is also man. German theologian Jürgen Moltmann says, “God became man, so that men could partake of God. He took on transitory, mortal being, for that which is transitory and mortal to become intransitory and immortal.”⁴³ Jesus as God became a human to give the opportunity for humans to join Him in His Kingdom with eternal life.⁴⁴

The importance of Christ’s humanity is equally as important as His divinity. He certainly is our Savior and Redeemer, but He is also more. Canadian pastor and author Jon Thompson recently said in an interview, “Jesus isn’t just our Savior, and our leader and our Lord. He’s also our model. And Jesus didn’t grasp divinity, not just by taking on human flesh, but he was led by the Spirit exclusively. In other words, He never used his divinity when He was on Earth.”⁴⁵ Earlier Paul’s claim that Jesus was divine was mentioned from Philippians 2:6, but Paul continued his thought: “but (Jesus) emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,

⁴³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 122, <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4396258>.

⁴⁴ The church father, Athanasius, had a similar argument in the 4th century. He said, “[Jesus], indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God. He manifested Himself by means of a body in order that we might perceive the Mind of the unseen Father. He endured shame from men that we might inherit immortality.” Athanasius, *On the Incarnation: The Treatise De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998), 93.

⁴⁵ Carey Nieuwhof, “CNLP 231: Jon Thompson on How to Discover Your True Calling and Gifting and Why Operating Outside of Either Can Be Exhausting and Dangerous,” December 3, 2018, produced by Carey Nieuwhof, podcast, transcript, 6, 16:21, <https://careynieuwhof.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CNLP-231.pdf>.

even death on a cross.”⁴⁶ Jesus lived on earth as a human and did so fully embracing all that encompasses humanity.

The author of Hebrews particularly emphasized the humanity, especially the suffering, of Christ. He calls Jesus a brother to believers (Hebrews 2:11, 17) and claims that Jesus went through normal human existence experiencing pain, suffering, and temptation (2:14–18, 4:15–5:3).⁴⁷ He asserts that Jesus learned obedience primarily through suffering (5:8), which suggests that Jesus grew and matured.⁴⁸ Twentieth century theologian William L. Lane says,

In (Hebrews) 2:10 and 5:9 the emphasis falls on Jesus’ perfecting through sufferings. Read against this background, the perfect passive participle of (7:28) that a life-time of human experience punctuated by test, humiliation, and the affliction of death is now behind Jesus....The verb *teleioun*, “to perfect,” is accordingly best understood in a dynamic sense as referring to the whole process by which Jesus was personally prepared and vocationally qualified for his continuing ministry in the presence of God.⁴⁹

The human existence, including suffering, is what shaped and molded Jesus to live out the human aspect of His identity. His human experiences transformed Him into the image of God, just as our experiences shape and mold us into the image of God. He was not a superhuman who felt no pain. He was and is human.

Just as the author of Hebrews asserted that Jesus matured in all elements of humanity, Luke, too, emphasized the growth and humanity of Jesus. Throughout his

⁴⁶ Philippians 2:5–8.

⁴⁷ Hardin, 217.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 218.

⁴⁹ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, John D. W. Watts, Ralph P. Martin, vol. 47, A (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2009), 195–96.

gospel, he showed how Jesus “grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.”⁵⁰ Luke described the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1–20), as well as gave the only account of Jesus as a youth (2:41–52). All of the Gospels, though, show that He went through normal life experiences: He was hungry (Mark 11:12), He was thirsty (John 4:8), He went to parties (Luke 5:33), He got tired (Matthew 8:23), He slept (Mark 4:38), He experienced joy (Luke 10:21), and He even got frustrated (Matthew 8:26). The people He encountered thought nothing more of Him than that He was just a regular man with a normal family whom the people from the village of Nazareth knew (Matthew 13:55).

The process of growing, developing, suffering, and experiencing pain was therefore necessary for Christ to live through, both for His benefit and ours. His own life and development needed to go through the normal stages. His life, as is ours, was one of suffering and growth. The second-century church father Irenaeus said, “For the glory of God is a living man: and the life of man consists in beholding God.”⁵¹ The idea is that to truly live requires a person who is beholding God. One who is connected to God is bringing glory to God, and there is no one who personified this better than Jesus. His sufferings caused Him to rely both on His Father and the Holy Spirit.⁵² John’s Gospel in particular emphasizes Christ’s reliance on the Father. Jesus says in John 5:19, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father does, that the Son does likewise.” The claim is that only what Jesus sees His

⁵⁰ Luke 2:40, 52.

⁵¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, bk. 4, ed. Alexander Roberts, accessed December 2, 2019, <http://gnosis.org/library/advh4.htm>, chap. XX, para. 7.

⁵² Klaus Dieter Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 115.

Father do can Jesus then also do. This requires extraordinary connection between the two, which for Jesus took approximately thirty years of faithful obedience to His Father to develop.

Jesus also relied on the Holy Spirit to direct and guide Him. Matthew records that “Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”⁵³

Foursquare pastor and author Jack Hayford says about this passage, “In other words, the same Holy Spirit, who had overflowed His (Jesus) life now, to enable His ministry, begins to lead Him...It is that He was walking along from hour to hour in dependence upon the living God and in the direction of the Spirit and in the presence of the Spirit.”⁵⁴ Jesus’ life from “hour to hour” was guided and led by the Spirit. He was utterly dependent upon His Father and the Spirit for every area of His life at all times.

The Health of Jesus

Since Jesus primarily used His humanity on earth rather than His deity, how He actually lived matters significantly to the rest of us. He did not burnout out or become fatigued to the point of giving up while He ministered. When Jesus said, “Follow me,” He was not only speaking to the disciples in His presence, but to His future followers, inviting them into the life that He lived. He exhibited the ideal life, showing others how to live abundantly in His Kingdom. Pastors who seek to remain vibrant and healthy while in the midst of ministering to others can look to Jesus for an example of how to live.

⁵³ Matthew 4:1.

⁵⁴ Jack W. Hayford, “Now That You’ve Received the Baptism With the Holy Spirit,” *Jack Hayford Digital Library*, 3, accessed June 19, 2019, <https://www.jackhayfordlibrary.com/record/2224>.

The Gospel writers detail many stories of Jesus and from these accounts a clear pattern is formed of how Jesus lived. The primary area that Jesus lived from was His identity. He knew who He was. Second, Jesus had a sense of purpose that can only be derived from having a clear identity. Third, Jesus used His vulnerabilities and weaknesses as a means to grow in strength with His Father. Finally, He established regular practices that would shape Him into fulfilling His divine call. Such clarity of living allowed Jesus to live the abundant life that He tells His followers is available for them.

Identity

South African pastor Trevor Hudson says, “The starting point for fruitful and effective ministry involves a clear sense of identity. This was Jesus’ starting point.”⁵⁵ Jesus started His ministry only after He was baptized and had received the proclamation from God that He was God’s Son and loved by Him (Mark 1:10–12).⁵⁶

The questions that haunt each individual are “Who am I,” “Do I have a purpose to my life,” and “Is there any meaning to what I am going through?” These questions are significant. In chapter 1 Ernest Becker was quoted asking these questions, but then he pointed to a greater need—a need to be a hero, a need to matter significantly in the world. Even Jesus needed to know that He had an identity and was truly loved for who He was.

⁵⁵ Trevor Hudson and Jerry P. Haas, *Cycle of Grace: Living in Sacred Balance* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2012), 11–12.

⁵⁶ Trevor Hudson, “Cycle of Grace 1. Acceptance,” posted December 3, 2012, video of lecture, 9:36, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X6m_itTrsU.

In his book and YouTube lessons *The Cycle of Grace*, Trevor Hudson lists four necessary aspects of ministry: acceptance, sustenance, significance, and fruitfulness. He gathered his information from a British psychiatrist, Dr. Frank Lake, and noted theologian, Emil Brunner, who in the 1950s began noticing that missionaries to India were quickly burning out in their ministries. Lake and Brunner began to research why.⁵⁷

The acceptance aspect is the same idea as identity. In fact, Hudson uses the word interchangeably at times. He learned from Lake that “all ministry begins with a deep knowledge of our acceptance by God in Jesus Christ.”⁵⁸ He added that Lake said it was “very dangerous to move into ministry without the sense of knowing who you are.”⁵⁹ A sense of identity is necessary for a fruitful and healthy life.

The process to discover one’s identity involves a self-search of core values and principles. What characteristics are held most dear? In their book, *The Truth about Leadership*, leadership experts James Kouzes and Barry Posner, describe an interview with a woman in leadership in which she said,

Becoming a leader is a process of internal self-discovery. In order for me to become a leader and become an even better leader, it’s important that I first define my values and principles. If I don’t know what my own values are and determine expectations for myself, how can I set expectations for others? How will I convey confidence, strong will, and empathy? Without looking within myself, it’s not possible for me to look at others and to recognize their potential and help others become leaders.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Hudson and Haas, 98–101.

⁵⁸ Hudson, *Cycle of Grace*, 8:32.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 7:56.

⁶⁰ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Truth about Leadership: The No-Fads, Heart-of-the-Matter Facts You Need to Know* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 32.

Pastors who have a clear sense of self-discovery and identity are better able to help others. Jesus knew His identity and values. He revisited those core themes and demonstrated them throughout His ministry. It started, though, from knowing Himself and knowing God.

Knowing that He was in fact beloved and was the Son of God, Jesus went forward into His ministry. Jesus had a firm identity. Hudson says, “Knowing who he is, Jesus invests Himself single-mindedly in the realization of His Father’s Kingdom vision for our broken world.”⁶¹ Immediately following His baptism, the three Synoptic Gospels say that the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness (Matthew 4:1, Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1). With His sense of identity established, His sense of purpose begins to solidify.

The striking note here is that even Jesus, as He walked in His humanity, needed to have a clear sense of identity. Satan immediately challenged this identity. Satan’s hope seems to be that an unstable identity will not produce the fruit of abundant life that Jesus intends to bring. Again, all three Synoptics have Jesus in the wilderness being tested by Satan. The first test that Satan brings to Jesus is His actual identity. In Luke 4:3, Satan says to Jesus, “If then you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” Hudson says, “Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus finds His identity and confidence in His relationship with Abba Father. Little wonder that when the evil one attempts to thwart Jesus’ ministry, the starting point of attack is the casting of doubt upon His identity as the beloved.”⁶² A shaken identity can lead to an unhealthy life.

⁶¹ Trevor Hudson, *Discovering Our Spiritual Identity: Practices for God’s Beloved*, Combined and rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010), 27.

⁶² Hudson, *Discovering Our Spiritual Identity*, 26–27.

Secular psychologists agree that identity is necessary for the health of the individual. According to a recent study,

Individuals who have a clear sense of who they are and where they are going in their lives are more likely to feel positive about themselves and to engage in enjoyable and caring relationships with other people, and less likely to be distressed and worried or to engage in behavior that is harmful to others. On the other hand, a confused sense of identity is associated not only with internalizing symptoms, but also potentially with externalizing symptoms, illicit drug use, and sexual risk taking.⁶³

People who know who they are and what purpose they serve are more likely to have a positive effect on the environment around them than those who are not clear about their identity. In fact, those who do not have a strong sense of identity are more likely to experience pain that comes with poor decision-making, like drug use and sexual risk.⁶⁴

Jesus knows more than just who He is as the Son of God. He understands His purpose and meaning. Matthew says that when Jesus returned from His time in the wilderness, “Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”⁶⁵ Jesus has clarity of purpose and message. He says, “For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.”⁶⁶ He also came to serve. He says in Matthew 20:28, “The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” He came to heal the sick and preach the coming of the Kingdom of God.

More than knowing His identity, Jesus also had a clear mission and purpose to His life. He had a sense of meaning that was greater than His own life. In his iconic book

⁶³ Seth J. Schwartz et al., “Examining the Light and Dark Sides of Emerging Adults’ Identity: A Study of Identity Status Differences in Positive and Negative Psychosocial Functioning,” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 40, no. 7 (July 1, 2011): 840.

⁶⁴ Schwartz, “Examining the Light and Dark Sides of Emerging Adults’ Identity,” 840.

⁶⁵ Matthew 4:17.

⁶⁶ Luke 19:10.

on humanity as he reflected back on his time during the Holocaust in concentration camps, psychiatrist Victor Frankl says, “Man’s search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life.” He continues several sentences later: “Man, however, is willing to live and even to die for the sake of his ideals and values!”⁶⁷ This is exactly what Jesus did. He *lived* and *died* for the sake of His purpose.

The “What Would Jesus Do?” movement beginning the 1990s had plenty of merit. What could get lost in the midst of wondering what Jesus would do is the important revelation that each individual has her own unique purpose. Not everyone is intended to die for all of humanity. Again Frankl says, “One should not search for an abstract meaning of life. Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands fulfillment.”⁶⁸ Two things are significant here: the uniqueness of each calling is specific to the individual and so too is the clarity of that purpose. The point of life is not to simply “Be a good person,” whatever that means. Rather, the Creator has gifted each person, including pastors, for a specific task and ability. When a pastor finds her unique calling and purpose, she is then better able to lead a fulfilled and healthy life, which then greatly improves the life of those around her.

Jesus’ singular focus of purpose was able to guide Him through all adversity. This is seen especially just before His betrayal and arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane as He prayed to His Father, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”⁶⁹ The only way that He was able to surrender

⁶⁷ Viktor Emil Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Mini book ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 99.

⁶⁸ Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, 108–9.

⁶⁹ Matthew 26:39.

Himself to the coming persecution was because He was singularly focused on doing the will of His Father, which was to “give His life as a ransom for many.”⁷⁰

Also among Jesus’ identity is the reality that He as a human was vulnerable. This vulnerability is what enabled Him to be broken and to experience pain. In his book on burnout in ministry, *Leading on Empty*, Pastor Wayne Cordeiro says, “We don’t forget that we are Christians. We forget that we are human, and that oversight alone can debilitate the potential of our future.”⁷¹ His point is that all humans, every human, has limits and limitations. Everyone gets tired, hungry, cranky, and injured, and ultimately dies—including Jesus.

This ability that people have to be vulnerable is often seen as a weakness, but it is also an incredible strength. Vulnerability expert and professor Brené Brown defines vulnerability as “uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure.”⁷² For most people this sounds terrifying, but Brown says that it is necessary and good for people to experience vulnerability. Strength is found in vulnerability. Vulnerability allows people to connect with others at much deeper levels than we could imagine, especially if we are not vulnerable. Brown says in her book on vulnerability, *Daring Greatly*, “Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path.”⁷³ Jesus showed

⁷⁰ Matthew 20:28.

⁷¹ Cordeiro, 13.

⁷² Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* (New York: Gotham Books, 2012), 34.

⁷³ Brown, *Daring Greatly*, 34.

this path when He gave up His place on Earth, subjecting Himself to the rules of humanity, allowing Himself to be put in a place of acceptance or rejection to the point of the cross and death.

However, vulnerability, as explained by Brown, is the pathway to abundant life. In vulnerability and weakness, joy, hope, goodness, and relationships can be found. Jesus became broken; He took on weakness and shame for our sake. Isaiah 53 portrays Jesus as bruised, beaten, despised, filled with sorrow, and rejected. However, the result of this is seen in Isaiah 52:13, which is the opening for Isaiah's point: "Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted." The vulnerable, exposed, and broken servant will be exalted and esteemed. This is the way of vulnerability. This is the way of Christ.

Weakness is made into power. This dissertation will look further into the importance of how power is viewed in chapter 3, but power as seen in Christ is often vulnerable and broken. Kang says, "We too must experience the brokenness of Jesus. We too must be shattered. Only from that will come the great blessing, abundant fruit."⁷⁴ Abundant, fruit-filled life is found in brokenness and surrender to God. Jesus modeled this throughout His life and ministry and in His death. Pastors that expect dramatic experiences of transformation in their congregations can often feel disappointed that God is not doing a powerful work in their church. Jesus likely is showing power, just not in the traditionally Pentecostal way of healing and glossolalia. Pastors who are willing to be vulnerable, through surrender and service, rather than through power of demonstration, add an element of health to their life.

⁷⁴ Kang, 119.

The Practices of Jesus

The clarity of identity as a necessary component to a healthy and abundant life in ministry has been shown in the life of Jesus. What also needs to be addressed is the how He lived out His maturation process and ministered out of abundant life. The Gospel writers show Jesus living intentionally with specific practices that He did at regular intervals in His life, which allowed Him to stay connected to His Father, be led by the Spirit, and grow in maturity for an abundant and fruitful life. Christian philosophy professor James K. A. Smith says, “You are what you love because you live toward what you *want*.”⁷⁵ Jesus loved God and lived in such a way that His life reflected that love.

These practices are what allowed Jesus to be filled with the necessary life, energy, and training to sustain Him in ministry. Trevor Hudson, in his explanation of the “Cycle of Grace,” calls them “*sustaining practices* with a goal of staying close to God.”⁷⁶ The idea that these actions take practice and bring sustenance to people’s lives while pointing us to a desired goal of intimacy with Christ encapsulates the process well.

Spiritual practices also take repetition through trial and error for to develop into what Christians desire, which is Christlikeness. Pastor Kang says, “But (transformation) doesn’t happen overnight. Instead you may expect to spend long, arduous periods of practicing spiritual disciplines as you are developing an inward Christ-like character.”⁷⁷ This type of character even took Jesus time to develop.

⁷⁵ James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016), 13.

⁷⁶ Hudson and Haas, 28.

⁷⁷ Kang, 35.

Unfortunately, the practices themselves can easily become the goal. Author Richard Foster writes, “When the (practices) degenerate into law, they are used to manipulate and control people.”⁷⁸ This is one of the dangers of the practices. They become a means to measure spirituality producing a ranking order among people. One must be cautious to continue to use them as tools to help facilitate and train towards a life with Christ.

Traditionally, many call these practices “spiritual disciplines.” Dallas Willard defines spiritual disciplines as “disciplines designed to help us be active and effective in the spiritual realm of our own heart, now spiritually alive by grace, in relation to God and His Kingdom.”⁷⁹ Essentially, spiritual disciplines are activities that people use to intentionally cause them to stay in connection with the Father, which trains people to respond more in Christ-like ways. Rather than focusing on strict behavior modification to obey the rules that God has set before His people, spiritual practices help disciples transform their character “in such a way that conformity to His commands becomes the easy, routine, standard way the well-developed disciple comports himself or herself.”⁸⁰ The practices we keep will transform us into the person we become.

Jesus had specific practices that are noticeable throughout the Gospels. He regularly prayed (Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, 6:46, Luke 5:16), ate (Mark 2:15, 14:3), walked (Matthew 4:18, 9:35, 15:29, Mark 2:13), celebrated (Matthew 11:19, Luke 5:33),

⁷⁸ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 10.

⁷⁹ Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 353.

⁸⁰ Dallas Willard, “Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation,” in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 54–55.

rested (Matthew 8:23, 21:17), spent time with friends (Matthew 9:10, Mark 3:13), spent time in solitude (Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, 6:46, Luke 4:42), read Scripture (Luke 2:46-47, 4:4) and worshipped at the synagogue (Luke 4:16-17). In short, Jesus practiced behaviors that would form Him into the full image of God. Each area that He practiced encouraged specific behaviors that shaped who He was. Again, the default perspective is to be reminded that Jesus was the Son of God and as a deity was able to live in this way. However, Jesus set aside His divinity and lived on Earth as a human. He practiced these disciplines just as any human can.

For example, Jesus used silence and solitude as a means to prepare for the task when He would stand before scribes and elders under arrest. Matthew 26:62-63 says, “And the high priest stood up and said, ‘Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?’ But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, ‘I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.’” For all of Jesus’ life, He practiced silence and solitude. He developed the skill of being led by the Spirit to know when it was appropriate to speak and when it was appropriate to remain silent. Jesus practiced habits that shaped who He became.

Jesus was very intentional in the way in which He lived His life. He regularly ministered, then sought silence and solitude.⁸¹ He ate meals with friends and combatants alike, which became opportunities for important conversations to take place.⁸² He used commonplace activities as a training ground to prepare Him for His purpose and as a

⁸¹ An example of this is the feeding of the five thousand seen in Matthew 14. Jesus was in search of solitude, saw a crowd of people in need and ministered to them, then immediately sought solitude again.

⁸² Meals presented opportunities for important discussions for Jesus’ disciples, interested parties such as Zacchaeus (Luke 19), and combatants like the Pharisees (Luke 7:36-50).

means for His purpose; the ordinary moments matter. Jesus was the master at using ordinary for extraordinary purposes: food became miracles, moments of rest became times to share His identity with an outcast (John 4), images of a vine expressed the connection between God, Himself, and humanity (John 15). His intentionality with each activity prepared Him to fulfill His purpose. Living intentionally, with planned times of silence and solitude for pastors, reflects the life of Jesus. Pastors need time away, just as Jesus did. Connecting ordinary moments to the spiritual continues to ground pastors to the ordinary life, rather than regularly focusing on the ecstatic worship experiences. Reflecting on the ordinary grounds the pastors in humanity, which makes each moment both more precious and more life-giving.

Conclusion

Pastors have unintentionally strayed from the good news of the Gospel, which is that Jesus came to give life. The theological emphasis has been recently placed on the afterlife rather than life in the here-and-now. God intended and intends for this life to be lived abundantly, but unfortunately, the abundant life now is missed. Pastors that begin to have continual union with Christ are more likely to press beyond the difficulties of ministry. They know the Holy Spirit is with them and will help navigate them through every situation and crisis.

Pastors also know that Jesus, in His humanity, relied on the Spirit during His time on earth. Jesus lived just as every other human. He lived His life intentionally practicing disciplines that would mold Him into the person He became. Intentional habits and practices were regular and vital aspects of His life that Open Bible ministers can emulate today. Open Bible's history is relatively new and still in developmental stages, as will be

seen in the following chapter, but these practices are ancient and still serve pastors well today.

CHAPTER 3:
THE HISTORY OF OPEN BIBLE AND ITS SPIRITUAL HABITS

Open Bible Churches have a rich heritage of life, abundance, and power. Though Open Bible has officially existed for less than one hundred years it has spread across the globe affecting hundreds of thousands of lives. While the blessings from God are innumerable, to ensure that pastors remain on the correct course headed toward their desired destination, it is necessary to regularly evaluate the health of the organization. Too often pastors run through their life and ministry, negating the abundant life Jesus intends for them. Instead of experiencing hope, joy, patience, and goodness, isolation, loneliness, fatigue, frustration, and burnout are felt.

As a member of the Pentecostal movement, Open Bible, from its inception has emphasized power, the miraculous and effective move of the Holy Spirit. Two prominent verses have guided Open Bible throughout its history. The first is the Great Commission as seen in Matthew 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” This verse speaks to the necessity to spread the Gospel of Jesus to the world. Pentecostals and Open Bible have taken this passage quite seriously and have pursued at great lengths the evangelism of the world for Christ.

The second passage is found in Acts 1:8, which precedes Jesus’ ascent into Heaven: “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 end of the earth.” The traditional Pentecostal view uses Acts 1:8 as an example of the power of God to evangelize and spread the news of Jesus. Regarding this passage, Pentecostal

theologian J. Rodman Williams says, “From the words of Jesus...it is apparent that the *proclamation* of repentance and the forgiveness of sin is closely related to the gift of the Holy Spirit.”¹ Reception of the Holy Spirit brings power to evangelize. Thus, power for Pentecostals is most commonly referenced to lead people to Christ or to perform miracles, such as divine healing, so that those seeing the miracles might be saved.

Open Bible has seen great things occur and will continue to do so. For health to continue, Open Bible must stand on its heritage of prayer and power, while re-envisioning a future that includes holistic health in the lives of people rather making converts the primary goal, as referenced in chapter 2 and developed throughout this chapter. Conversion is necessary and vital to health, but Open Bible can expand its imagination to include not only more converts, but also healthier pastors who are transformed into the *Imago Dei*, walking more intimately with Christ, taking on His image, and becoming more like Him.²

Pentecostal Background

The roots of Pentecostalism run deep and have implications for the health of Open Bible ministers today. Certainly no major shift in theology occurs in a vacuum and neither do the beliefs of Pentecostals. Early developments such as John Wesley and Methodism, as well as the Holiness-movement of the 19th century emphasized a deep

¹ J. Rodman Williams, “Renewal Theology: God, the World, and Redemption,” in *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective-Three Volumes in One*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 413.

² *Imago Dei*, while Latin for “Image of God” signifies quite a deep purpose for humanity. Biblical exegesis professor Richard Middleton describes the *Imago Dei*: “Imaging God thus involves representing and perhaps extending in some way God’s rule on earth through ordinary communal practices of human sociocultural life” in J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 60. The *Imago Dei* gives purpose and meaning to all of humanity.

desire of people for the experience of God.³ Evangelists like Charles Finney and his revivalist style emphasized the individual experience, emotion, and the salvation of God, which eventually led the way for Pentecostals.⁴

From the Methodists, a group that was considered to be a leftwing group formed what soon was called the Holiness Movement.⁵ Their worship services included bodily expressions of worship such as shouting, singing, preaching, and instantaneous cleansing of sin.⁶ This group added the element of a second experience to the salvation of a believer, meaning that a person could be a converted follower of Christ, but still need a second experience of the “baptism in the Holy Spirit.”⁷

Other important figures like John Nelson, a premillennialist, and Alexander Dowie, who emphasized the importance of the physical well-being as a sign of following Christ, led to the Pentecostal movement. The atonement extended beyond just the soul to the healing of the physical body.⁸ Current Pentecostals still align themselves with these core doctrines, which arose in response to the rise in intellectualism in the late 1800s. As Darwinism, the Social Gospel, and higher criticism of the Bible began to take root and

³ Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness*, (1970; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 38.

⁴ Bruner, 41.

⁵ Robert Bryant Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons: The History of Open Bible Standard Churches* (Des Moines, IA: Open Bible Publishers, 1982), 25.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Bruner, 42.

⁸ Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1988), 2.

spread in intellectual circles many Methodists and Holiness pastors began to respond against these beliefs by emphasizing experience and Scripture.⁹

The anti-intellectual movement also created within the early Pentecostals an avoidance of creeds and systems. Steven Jack Land, president of the Church of God Theological Seminary, says, “There was an aversion to creeds which divide and thus hinder the mission of the Church. There was a suspicion of organizations which ran by mechanisms and political schemes instead of gifts of the Spirit.”¹⁰ The ideal was to allow the Spirit to guide the church into how to live and what to believe. The result, though, has been fragmented belief systems and structures, as will be seen later in this chapter.

Still to this day little academic background is required for Open Bible ministers, which affects the type of leaders Open Bible has in its ranks. While not all people need to have a scholastic experience, the academic training exposes pastors to more than their own personal experiences. An Open Bible College graduate in Des Moines, Iowa and son of an Open Bible pastor, Roger E. Olson, now a professor of theology at Baylor University, says, “Endemic to Pentecostalism is a profoundly anti-intellectual ethos. It is manifested in a deep suspicion of scholars and educators and especially biblical scholars and theologians...Too many Pentecostal leaders hold even their own scholars at arms’ length and view them with suspicion.”¹¹ Academia is viewed with suspicion, which hinders growth opportunities for pastors.

⁹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 47.

¹⁰ Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 7.

¹¹ Roger E. Olson, “Pentecostalism’s Dark Side,” *Christian Century* 123, no. 5 (March 7, 2006): 27–28.

A central figure in the foundation of Pentecostalism is Charles Parham. He was a pastor in the Methodist Church who in 1900 established Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas.¹² In January 1902, as he prepared to leave for itinerant work for a few days, Parham assigned the students to study the “Baptism in the Holy Ghost.” When he returned, a student, Agnes Ozman, asked him to lay his hands on her and pray that she might receive the Holy Spirit. Never having done this before, he agreed, and when he did, the “Holy Spirit fell upon her” and she began to speak in tongues.¹³ As her story spread, Parham began to teach on the “Pentecostal experience” wherever he went. He taught that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence that a person had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ He soon added another Bethel Bible School in Houston, Texas in 1905. While there, an African-American Holiness preacher named William Seymour began to attend. A woman visiting the school from California recommended to Parham that Seymour move to Los Angeles as the associate pastor of her church. Parham agreed to pay for the move and Seymour headed west to the Nazarene Mission.¹⁵

In Los Angeles, Seymour began to preach on repentance and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In April 1906, a group of people gathered for a ten-day prayer meeting during which the people in attendance reported that the Holy Spirit fell like in the days of the apostles. People began to speak in tongues and had power in the Spirit. Over the next few years a revival broke out, which is now called the Azusa Street Revival.¹⁶ Diversity

¹² Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980), 57.

¹⁵ Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

was a major component to the revival. Notably women and African-Americans were prominent figures in the early stages. Seymour, however, was their leader. Women like Florence Crawford, who eventually left Los Angeles for Portland, Oregon and started her own denomination called Apostolic Faith, were among the early participants.¹⁷

At an Apostolic Faith camp meeting in Portland, Oregon a young man named Fred Hornshuh received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and felt called to preach.¹⁸ He held services throughout Oregon and eventually, in 1919, due to several philosophical disputes with Crawford, founded his own group called the Bible Standard Mission.¹⁹ Bible Standard would later become the west coast group that amalgamated in 1935 with the Open Bible Evangelical Association in Iowa to become what is now called Open Bible Churches.²⁰

Throughout the next decade, Bible Standard grew significantly along the west coast, including being the home of Lighthouse Temple and Bible Standard Theological School, both of which were located in Eugene, Oregon.²¹ They also spread east through Nebraska and South Dakota. Open Bible leader, professor, and historian R. Bryant Mitchell observed a key attribute among these early leaders that can still be found today. He says these evangelists “were bold individualists. Although they had strong ties of

¹⁷ Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 27.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 41. Hornshuh had disputes with Crawford: exclusivity of the Apostolic Faith, which resisted fellowship with other groups; a rigid stance on divorce; a requirement to be in Portland, Oregon for camp meetings for three months during the summer, leaving the congregation unattended; and a “chafing under what they thought was feminine domination.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 165.

²¹ H. H. Hall, “Bible Standard Headquarters,” *Bible Standard* 6, no. 3 (February 1925): 1.

fellowship, they did not operate under programmed denominational control. In fact, the records read almost like a family history, the history of individuals, places, and circumstances, which God used to bring a spiritual awakening to these frontier areas.”²² Bold individuals who went where no evangelist had previously gone were championed. People who appeared to need little help and support from others, but relied on the power and leading of the Holy Spirit, were the ideal pastors.

Mitchell summed up Open Bible Standard during this period in Open Bible’s history book *Heritage and Horizon*:

The Bible Standard organization was like a huge family bound together by a loyalty to the gospel cause and a kindred spirit of love. The large revival meetings did not leave a group of warmed over Christians, but it left zealots, baptized converts, people whose bodies had been healed. The fact that believers had the baptism of the Holy Spirit made them members one of a great family. There was a sense of immediacy motivated by the strong preaching on the coming of the Lord.²³

Mitchell’s core comments here about the familial feel and emphasis on converts, healing, and the second coming still are felt today. So too exists the ideal of individualism, which includes seeking little help from others. While the early days of Open Bible may have necessitated pastors traversing uncharted territories across the country to share the news of Christ and plant churches, America has changed, while Open Bible has not. These traits have continued through the generations helping to create the current culture, which has caused pastoral burnout and fatigue. Asking for help is often viewed as a weakness. Strong, independent leaders are seen as pastoral, while more collaborative pastors can be neglected.

²² Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 95–96.

²³ *Ibid.*, 71.

Simultaneously, Iowa had its own unique Pentecostal group experiencing the move of God. The revivalist movement from Azusa Street began to spread across the country and eventually came to Iowa. Along with the Holiness movement, Pentecostalism began to sweep across the region. John Goblen who had been an Assemblies of God preacher left the group due to a difference of opinion and began revival meetings across America, eventually encountering the work of Aimee Semple McPherson and the Bible Standard group in Eugene, Oregon.²⁴ In 1927, Goblen arranged for McPherson to have revival meetings in Des Moines, Iowa. Following these meetings, the Foursquare Denomination based in Los Angeles and led by McPherson began to spread in the region.²⁵

In 1931, two issues began to divide the Iowa group with the rest of Foursquare. First, Iowa pastors became concerned that the denomination held control over the local church property. They believed that since they raised the funds they should have control over it. Second, McPherson, who was divorced, was remarried in 1931 and pastors in the area began to have concerns resulting with thirty-two pastors who voted to withdraw from McPherson's Foursquare organization to begin a new organization called "The Open Bible Evangelistic Association." Like the Oregon group, this also had a school for training people in ministry called "Open Bible Training School."²⁶

Significantly, Open Bible in Iowa had several tenets, which were emphasized from the inception of the movement. At their very first constitutional convention in 1932,

²⁴ Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 123–24.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 145–47.

prayer was at the forefront of the meeting. Additionally, Mitchell says, “It is interesting to note in this foundational convention that the fourfold message of the gospel was emphasized: SAVIOR (evangelism, soul winning); HEALER (prayer for the sick); BAPTIZER (tarrying meetings with people receiving the Holy Spirit); COMING KING (timely prophetic messages).”²⁷ This fourfold gospel has become a major part of the core doctrine of Open Bible. While these are helpful and correct images of Christ, they also leave out other necessary images, such as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 and the “Lamb who was slain” in Revelation 5. The emphasis on four dominant traits of Christ negates the subservient works of Christ, which then causes pastors to emphasize some and neglect other aspects of Jesus. Pastors will emulate what they teach. When they only teach the bold and overt, but neglect the subtle and submissive, pastors get off balance and unhealthy.

Also mentioned in an early meeting was missions or the sending of missionaries to other parts of the world. Mitchell says, “The minutes of the first organizational meeting in August 1932 had stated very definitely that missions was to be placed first on the program of the new organization.”²⁸ The purpose for this emphasis returns to the first phase of the fourfold gospel, which is evangelism and soul-winning.

With such similar beliefs and structures, both the Bible Standard group in Oregon and the Open Bible group in Iowa realized that that they could partner together to further advance their mission. In 1935, the two organizations amalgamated to form Open Bible

²⁷ Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 152–53.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

Standard Churches, Incorporated based out of Des Moines, Iowa.²⁹ Mitchell says, “It came from the desires of two evangelistic groups to perpetuate the spirit of evangelism without regimenting the groups into hard and fast denominational lines.”³⁰ The goal was not a bigger organization, but an affiliation to further the gospel of Christ.

Since 1935, Open Bible has spread across the United States into the east and south comprising five regions: Pacific, Mountain Plains, Central, East, and Southeast. Additionally, missionaries are spread throughout the world sharing the gospel of Christ. At the time of the merger, Open Bible had a total of 210 licensed pastors and 70 churches.³¹ As of July 2019, Open Bible has 760 licensed pastors in the United States with 250 churches nationally. Internationally, there are 1,772 known churches.³²

Open Bible’s stated mission is “to make disciples, develop leaders, and plant churches.”³³ Primarily this is done through empowering local churches to reach the community in which they are placed. The Open Bible manual states,

A unique Open Bible quality is relationships, as affirmed in our distinctive: “A balance of affiliation and freedom, providing accountability without undue control.” We exist to serve churches and pastors and to equip and empower them to fulfill their calling and purpose in the communities in which God has placed them. This relational commitment is finding growing favor with Spirit-filled churches and ministers looking for a covering and a fellowship home.³⁴

²⁹ Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 202–3.

³⁰ Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 165.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 168.

³² Nicole Kerr, email message to the author, May 15, 2019 and July 25, 2019.

³³ *Open Bible Churches Manual*, September 2018, 1.1, accessed July 25, 2019, <https://www.openbible.org/resources/open-bible-church-manual>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.1–1.2.

The phrase “affiliation and freedom...without undue control” is a significant and oft-quoted term used throughout the denomination.³⁵ Pastors desire the flexibility to lead as they see fit within their context. This value was seen in the individualism of the Nebraskan evangelists, the pioneer work of the Oregon pastors, and the concerns of the ecclesiastic polity related to property with the Iowa group. Individualism with limited control remains a passionate concern with the clergy of Open Bible. This culture has many benefits, such as the ability to discern the needs of the local setting, but also makes systemic change very difficult. Accountability and influence are difficult to implement. A pastor has the choice whether or not to participate in denomination events and even to receive counsel from the denomination. Very little can be done if pastors need help, but refuse or reject it.

The divisions that created Open Bible were quite common in the early stages of Pentecostalism according to Land: “Although...the people gathered to discuss matters in a Christian conference reminiscent of Acts 15 nevertheless the fact remained that the new movement, though strong on transforming experiences, lacked experience in adjudicating theological and interpersonal differences and moving toward a consensus.”³⁶ The result of these divisions is a lack of cohesion within Pentecostalism and even among churches within denominations. One church is free to emphasize certain theological stances while others can function and believe very differently within Open Bible. This is why “accountability...without undue control” features so prominently.

³⁵ Ibid., 1.1.

³⁶ Land, 184.

Pentecostal Distinctives

While great variety exists within the Pentecostal epistemology, core tenets exist throughout the movement and are evident in Open Bible Churches. Among the core beliefs of Pentecostal churches are an emphasis in power, the fourfold Gospel—which includes Jesus as Savior, Baptizer, Healer, and Soon and Coming King—love, and prayer. Each of these distinctives is necessary for pastors to understand so that pastors can begin to live a holistically healthy life in their context. For many, these distinctives make up what it means to live a Spirit-filled life.

Power

Perhaps no word is used as often by Pentecostals as the word “power.” Land says, “Pentecostalism’s reason for existence was the carrying out of a last-days, global, missionary mandate by those who were Christ-like witnesses in the power of the Holy Spirit.”³⁷ The reason for this belief is primarily from Jesus’ last words to His disciples before His ascension in Acts 1:8 when He explains that the Holy Spirit will soon be sent to them. Jesus says, “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 end of the earth.” The danger is the use of the word “power” to signify a primarily Western view of world dominance for the sake of Christ.

Too often “power” means simply evangelism or signs and wonders. Pentecostal theologian, Frank Macchia says,

³⁷ Land, 49.

There is no question but that Spirit baptism has often been interpreted throughout Pentecostalism with a heavy emphasis on the Spirit as the *power* of God for enhancing worship and service and overcoming the obstacles to the life of faith, especially with the aid of powerful manifestations and gifts of the Spirit.... Theologically, this emphasis on spiritual power is tied to the military metaphor for the Christian life favored by Pentecostals.... Pentecostalism does not recognize any ‘demilitarized zone’ but rather accents the battle for the victory of the Kingdom of God over the forces of sin and darkness.³⁸

Both strands of Open Bible, the Iowa group and the Oregon group, originate from militaristic female leaders. Foursquare founder Aimee Semple McPherson regularly used this military rhetoric. For example she wrote, “And humbly, under the precious blood of Jesus Christ, our battle-cry is ‘Onward Christian Soldiers.’”³⁹ Author and research fellow, Nigel Scotland noted that popular Pentecostal songs, especially in the 1980s, were songs that emphasized the triumph and authority of God. Examples such as “Exalt the Lord our God,” “For Thou O Lord Art High,” and “Majesty, Worship His Majesty” were regular aspects of the Pentecostal worship services.⁴⁰ Scotland goes on to say, “The strongly futurist eschatologically focused theology gave the early Charismatic Churches a powerful motivating vision which expressed itself in triumphalist warfare praise songs and prosperity teaching.”⁴¹ From the Oregon group, R. Bryant Mitchell described Florence Crawford of Apostolic Faith as a preacher who “preached a militant faith. She

³⁸ Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 82.

³⁹ Aimee Semple McPherson, *This Is That: Personal Experiences, Sermons, and Writings* (Los Angeles: Echo Park Evangelistic Association, 1923), 12.

⁴⁰ Nigel Scotland, “From the ‘Not Yet’ to the ‘Now and the Not Yet’: Charismatic Kingdom Theology 1960–2010,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no. 2 (2011): 277.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 281.

believed in a triumphant church.”⁴² Certainly elements of truth are throughout these messages and songs.

However, while pastors glorify God and look toward the fully redeemed future, they unwittingly encourage all Christians to look toward the human perspective of power and control, rather than being “empowered witnesses” in all of the believer’s daily life. The barrage of teaching and emphasis on spiritual warfare, conquering King, and empowered witness to spread the Gospel feeds into humanity’s propensity to want to control and dominate, rather than walk humbly, submitted to Christ in whatever way that may be. Evidence for this is seen in Pentecostal worship services according to Pentecostal theologian, Simon Chan: “Increasingly, we hear things like: praising God will bring down the presence of God. (Compare) the popular charismatic chorus; ‘And as we worship, build your throne.’ We fast and pray in order to get the anointing’ (Benny Hinn). Such a view of worship is diametrically opposed to the nature of worship.”⁴³ Later Chan explains the proper view in his mind: “The Pentecostal reality cannot properly function apart from the larger context of the ‘ordinary’ Christian life.”⁴⁴ Pentecostals focus so much attention on the extraordinary events and miss the important element of day-to-day worship and Christ-centered living.

Author James Davidson Hunter suggests that people in the church and, therefore, Pentecostals, have a “corrupt” view of power:⁴⁵ “...the basic intent and desire (of power

⁴² Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 30.

⁴³ Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 118.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁴⁵ James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 99.

when corrupt) is to dominate, control, or rule.”⁴⁶ Pentecostals view the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a means to empower people to spread the Gospel throughout the world, which is positive. However, power viewed as a means to dominate and control has produced Pentecostals seeking to rule through conversion rather than authentic Christ-followers seeking to serve, love, and submit. The “empowered witness” for Pentecostals currently has little to do with life transformation as a witness, but rather is primarily about having power to make converts. Macchia rightly says, “God’s kingdom is not an oppressive rule but the reign of divine love.”⁴⁷ Somehow Pentecostal pastors have lost their way.

Emphasis on evangelism is necessary, but becomes twisted when people are viewed as projects rather than loved for who they are. Pastors begin to focus on the numbers, or lack thereof, of converts and miss the blessing of helping current believers grow in their faith. The focus on numbers can become more important than the souls behind the numbers, which damages the soul of pastors and can become discouraging if no growth occurs.

The good news is that the Pentecostal view has seen the spread of the Gospel reached unparalleled heights. People groups that never heard the story of Jesus have now heard about Him. The problem is that the cost to make evangelism the goal has created a lack of concern about the “empowered witness” in local western settings and what that means for the daily life.

⁴⁶ Hunter, 106.

⁴⁷ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 17.

Macchia is particularly helpful in understanding the area of empowered to love. He views the power of the Holy Spirit in people's lives to not only transform the individual's personal life, but this divine power necessarily results in becoming a witness to those around because love so permeates the person. Macchia writes, "God's love is powerfully redemptive and liberating. It is also not confined to the inner transformation of the individual but propels people outward to bear witness to Christ."⁴⁸ The power of love transforms the individual to such an extent that others are positively impacted by the change.

This desire for Holy Spirit-inspired power exists today. The most recent National Convention for Open Bible had a theme of "Embrace." Open Bible's president, Randall Bach, says in his report, "May we stimulate and release faith to lunge forward, apprehend, and walk in the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit to such an extent that our churches are transformed by Him!"⁴⁹ We need the power of the Holy Spirit to infuse our being to have life. Without this power, we cannot have the Spirit-filled new life that Christ has promised.

Witness

Acts 1:8 says that power is given and those who receive the power will be witnesses. The important question then becomes what does the power to witness mean? The New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce writes in his commentary on Acts, "As Jesus had been anointed at His baptism with the Holy Spirit and power, so His followers were now

⁴⁸ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁹ Randall Bach, *President's Report: Open Bible National Convention 2019*, 2.

to be similarly anointed and enabled to carry on His work.”⁵⁰ Since Jesus is the example and also the One into whose image and likeness Christians desire transformation into, they recognize that even Jesus needed this empowerment of the Spirit to be a witness. Pentecostal pastors are in need of the Spirit just like Jesus was in need of the Spirit to guide, direct, and empower them to live a life connected to God.

New life in Jesus transforms to such an extent that testimonies of the renewed life are prevalent. Founder of the Pentecostal movement, William Seymour says in his periodical *Apostolic Faith*,

When we get the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we have something to tell, and it is that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. The baptism with that Holy Ghost gives us power to testify to a risen, resurrected Savior. Our affections are in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. How I worship Him today! How I praise Him for the all cleansing blood.”⁵¹

Testimonies become powerful tools and examples for the work Christ has done in the lives of people.

Witnessing is not just with words; it necessarily involves lives. Land writes,

The power of the Spirit forms a life for God as Christ was formed in Mary’s womb. This power is a person, the Holy Spirit who must then be existentially invoked, received, and welcomed. To receive the Spirit is to receive the Spirit’s witness and accede to the Spirit’s leading, fruit-production, and empowering for witness. The Spirit’s filling must be invoked daily because the point is to live out his fullness and by his direction and not that of the world, the flesh, or the devil.

This daily empowerment shapes the way congregants live. Pentecostals, and Open Bible specifically, need to reframe the view of power of witness to include the daily life, rather than just emphasizing the extraordinary. Most of life is lived in ordinary moments.

⁵⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed., New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 36.

⁵¹ William Seymour, “River of Living Water,” *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 3 (November 1906): 2.

Pastors can help others see the benefits of living moment by moment with Christ. This is what abundant life actually is. To limit the spiritual life to just moments of worship misses opportunities to see the blessing and power of walking with Christ each moment along the way.

To be clear, the dismissal of the importance of daily living does not seem intentional. Over the century, Open Bible pastors have insisted on holiness being a necessary aspect of salvation. However, a disconnect has occurred from power of witness to include the power of holiness. Donald Gee, an important early Pentecostal theologian even separated the difference: “Nevertheless the immediate divine purpose at Pentecost was power, not holiness.”⁵² His point is that power in witness is not through daily living, but through supernatural signs and wonders. Gee sees only the miraculous as power and neglects transformational power that occurs in the routine of life.

By separating the two, Gee missed the necessity of power of the Spirit needed for daily living. Working in the midst of difficult circumstances for Christ needs the power of the Spirit to be actively involved in a person’s life. A pastor who says no to a phone call as he plays catch with his son, or schedules a day away from the office to simply walk in the woods and be with Jesus—this is a daily witness. Land is right when he says, “But if the righteous path toward the kingdom is to be followed in love in the world, one must be empowered daily not only to will and to walk but also to wage war against the principalities and powers.”⁵³ The daily walk in the Kingdom of God requires the walk of the Spirit to be a transformed and daily witness with more than just our words.

⁵² Donald Gee, *The Fruit of the Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2010), 8, <http://www.freading.com/ebooks/details/r.download/OTc4MTYwNzMxMjI1Mw==>.

⁵³ Land, 204.

Gee is not the only Pentecostal to neglect the necessity of power for daily witness for power in demonstration. Many Open Bible pastors agree with Bill Johnson, pastor of Bethel Church in Redding, California, in his book *When Heaven Invades Earth*: “We will no longer make up excuses for powerlessness because powerlessness is inexcusable. Our mandate is simple: raise up a generation that can openly display the raw power of God.... *The Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.*”⁵⁴ Power for Johnson, though, is demonstrative through signs and wonders. He quotes 1 Corinthians 4:20 here, but conveniently stops short of quoting the next verse which says, “What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in the spirit of gentleness?” A rod is strong and demonstrative. A spirit of gentleness invokes a witness of power no matter the circumstance. Both aspects are needed, but too often the spirit of gentleness is neglected.

Power of witness reveals the transformative work of Christ in a disciple. Signs and wonders are significant—Jesus certainly performed them—but His power was not evident only in those moments. His power was also seen in Gethsemane as He prayed for God to remove the cup of death from Him. His power was seen as He resisted the temptations of Satan in the wilderness. His power was seen in His holy life that drew people to His Father. Pentecostal professor in the Church of God, R. Hollis Gause, says, “There can be no endowment of the power of the Holy Spirit that is not also an experience in righteousness and purity.”⁵⁵ Just as Jesus had the power of the Spirit in His

⁵⁴ Bill Johnson, *When Heaven Invades Earth: A Practical Guide to a Life of Miracles* (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 2003), 27–28.

⁵⁵ R. Hollis Gause, “Pentecostal Understanding of Sanctification from a Pentecostal Perspective,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, no. 1 (May 2009): 101.

daily life, so too do Open Bible pastors need the power of the Spirit to walk out their individual ministries.

If many Pentecostals have misunderstood power as a means to dominate, rule, and control, what then is true authentic power, especially in light of Acts 1:8, which states that Christ followers will receive power to be Christ's witnesses? In her book on leadership and influence, MaryKate Morse claims power is a resource with limits: "The stewardship of power, then is not consumption but hospitality toward the rest of the 'family.' The purpose of having power is not to enhance or secure one's personal influence but to enhance the influence and well-being of the group. Jesus used his power to invite others into his personal space."⁵⁶ Power is to be shared among people, to be used together for the sake of the common good, to invite into relationship, not compliant surrender.

Dr. Morse also says that power is used for the sake of love, which many Pentecostals would affirm. The view of love and power again is vastly different. While Aimee Semple McPherson cries "Onward Christian Soldier," Morse says, "(Christ's) kingdom power has to do with a love of all people and a desire to bring them under the protection and redemptive power of God's wing.... The King of the kingdom is identified not by a golden crown or flowing robes or an elegant throne, but by an ordinary-looking body, broken for our wholeness."⁵⁷ The difference is one of conquering king and slain servant; both are true and both need to be held simultaneously for our view of a powerful witness.

⁵⁶ MaryKate Morse, *Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space and Influence* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 136.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 28, 30.

“Fourfold Gospel”

While several core distinctives of Pentecostalism exist, the essential distinguishing characteristic of Pentecostalism and also, therefore, Open Bible, is the foursquare or fourfold doctrine.⁵⁸ The foursquare doctrine predates the Azusa Street Revival, existing at least in the 19th century. However, Aimee Semple McPherson, especially, made the case for an emphasis in Jesus’ ministry for a fourfold gospel, which proclaimed Jesus as “the Savior, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer and the Soon-coming King.”⁵⁹ These four points of emphasis have been accepted by the other Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God and Open Bible. How these four tenets are expressed illuminate how Open Bible pastors can remain holistically healthy while ministering.

Jesus as Savior. The first aspect of the Foursquare Gospel is that Jesus is the Savior. Since He is the Savior and since Jesus’ final command was to go into all of the world and make disciples (Matthew 28:19), Pentecostals take very seriously the call to evangelize the world. They love to talk and preach about salvation. This reinvigoration of the need for spreading the news for Christ was a needed component in the world.

⁵⁸ While the “Fourfold Gospel” has won the day in Open Bible Churches and numerous other Pentecostal denominations, there has been throughout the century a similar perspective called the “Full Gospel” or the “Fivefold Gospel.” According to Stephen Land in *Pentecostal Spirituality*, the full gospel is comprised of five elements: Justification in faith by Christ; sanctification of faith as a second definitive work of grace; healing for the body as provided by all in the atonement; the premillennial return of Christ; and the baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues (page 6). Throughout the past century the full gospel and fourfold gospel has gone back and forth prominence, but sadly “Fourfold Gospel” seems to be the direction most churches and organizations lean. The problem with this is that the fourfold gospel leaves out the importance of sanctification, which this dissertation in part hopes to rectify. One wonders what the result would have been throughout recent history if sanctification was stressed along with the other four elements of the Gospel message.

⁵⁹ Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *The Vine and the Branches: A History of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel*, ed. Ronald D. Williams (Los Angeles: The Church, 1992), 75.

Pentecostals deserve much credit for making salvation an important element in the life of a person. Jesus is the Savior.

Pentecostal ministers have a passion to see lost souls won for Christ. Jay P. Taylor, the director of spiritual formation at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, says, “Our own DNA as a denomination is found in two scriptures passages, “Go and make disciples,’ and Acts 1:8.... Thus our ministries are mostly outward directed; we’re all about evangelism and mission, about doing work in the world.”⁶⁰ The early Open Bible periodicals were filled with stories of salvation and sermons regarding the need for repentance. One early article was titled “Promote A Revival.” The author, William Black, wrote, “Revivals! Revivals are of God! We must have them. Revivals are God’s way to save the lost and restore backsliders. The day of revivals is not past. Revivals are the result of the operation of the Holy Ghost—and prayer, faith and push will secure this operation to an unlimited extent.”⁶¹ The spread of the news of Jesus is truly Good News. Jesus did come to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

The question that must guide Open Bible pastors in their ministry is “What are the lost being saved from?” This is often not very clear in the messaging. As seen in chapter 2, salvation lacks clarity within Open Bible. Their own statement of faith says, “Simply stated, salvation is deliverance from sin and its consequences. But more than that,

⁶⁰ Rich Heffern, “The Pentecostals and the Monks,” *National Catholic Reporter* 43, no. 8 (December 15, 2006): 9.

⁶¹ William Black, “Promote a Revival,” *The Overcomer* (September 1927): 7.

salvation is a glorious *hope of a future* of abundant and eternal life” (emphasis added).⁶² The emphasis here is on the future, but Jesus is the Savior now as well.

Dallas Willard writes, “The problem we are addressing then arises from a soteriology that equates being saved with having your sins forgiven.... The background assumption is that justification is the entirety of salvation. If you are justified—your sins are forgiven—then you are saved and you will be ‘okay’ after your death.”⁶³ Jesus does save, but He saves us for something greater than just “getting into Heaven.” He saves us to have a life, abundant life, with Him, now *and* into the future. This is the Gospel message of salvation that Open Bible pastors need to preach.

Jesus as Baptizer. The second core tenet of the foursquare gospel is that Jesus is the Baptizer. Foursquare theologians and historians, Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave, say in the Pentecostal theology book, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*,

(Baptism in the Holy Spirit by Jesus) is of the most vital importance in connection with the spiritual life and service of every believer. The Baptism with the Holy Ghost is the secret of the Church’s power. It is the greatest need in every sphere of Christian activity, that the message of salvation might be proclaimed with the Divine unction, which alone can insure its success.”⁶⁴

This baptism, according to most Pentecostals, is seen and affirmed by the presence of speaking in tongues.

⁶² Randal Bach, David Cole, and Andrea Johnson, *We Believe: Core Truths for Christian Living*, 185.

⁶³ Willard, “Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation,” in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 47–48.

⁶⁴ Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: Foursquare Media, 1987), 304.

Open Bible, at its inception, believed that *glossolalia*, the term used for speaking in tongues, was the evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Open Bible Fred Hornshuh wrote, “Our attention has been called forcibly to the fact there is being preached the notion that not all who are baptized in the Holy Spirit speak with other tongues. Bible Standard stands flatfootedly for the teaching that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is according to the pattern in Acts 2:4.”⁶⁵ He was concerned that some were teaching that glossolalia was not being seen as the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Only in recent years has Open Bible changed its stance that speaking in tongues is necessarily the initial evidence, but rather highlights it as a point of emphasis. The official statement now reads, “Consistent with biblical accounts, believers should anticipate Spirit-baptism to be accompanied by speaking in tongues and other biblical manifestations.” Tongues is clearly highlighted, but what should be emphasized is the following sentence: “The baptism in the Holy Spirit is given to endue the believer with power from God, to offer an inspired witness for Christ, to lead the believer in a life of holiness, and to equip for a Spirit-filled life of service.” Unfortunately, the ecstatic nature of glossolalia can overshadow the point of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is to endue the believer with power to lead a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life just as Jesus did. What is missing is the emphasis on how to live “a life of holiness.” Holiness is expected, but what is not explained is how to see it actually lived out. Little discussion occurs regarding how to progress on the path of holiness.

⁶⁵ Fred Hornshuh, “Rightly Dividing the Word,” *The Overcomer*, December 1933, 9.

Another aspect to Jesus being the Baptizer is that, for many Pentecostals, this includes the work of sanctification. However, because of the lack of theological coherence and liberty that Pentecostals hold to in the epistemology, there is once again a lack of coherence in what Pentecostals actually subscribe to in regards to sanctification. While the scope of this work does not allow the time needed to explore the work of sanctification in Pentecostalism, the tension exists as to when the work of sanctification has taken place.

Because there has been tension as to when sanctification actually occurs—whether it is complete at the time of Spirit baptism or is a work in progress—the result is that sanctification has lost its significance among Pentecostals. This does not mean that it is not valued; it just is not explained, and overtime has not been theologically well-developed. Pastors expect the Holy Spirit to immediately change a person since they have become new in Christ. However, the old habits still remain. For example, in the Bible Standard periodical, *The Overcomer*, one anonymous author, in an article titled “How to Keep Your Healing,” which was about how to continue a relationship with Christ, says, “Don’t watch your feelings. Don’t superintend God. Don’t note the ups and downs of your case.... Get saved from your anatomy. God saved you from all your bad feelings. Keep out of yourself.”⁶⁶ The implication is that once one has received Christ as Savior then the emotions, will, and desires of a person are transformed by the power of the Spirit. The process of becoming sanctified is God’s and we are simply passive agents who receive it. This concept has neglected the work that is necessary on behalf of the

⁶⁶ Anonymous, “How to Keep Your Healing,” *The Overcomer*, October 1927, 10.

disciple. Even Christ, as seen in chapter 2, had mechanisms and habits that helped Him stay in union with His Father.

Jesus as Healer. The third core tenet of the foursquare gospel is Jesus is the Healer. Open Bible historian R. Bryant Mitchell says in his book, *Heritage and Horizon*, “[The early pioneers] believed that salvation and healing worked together. The sick and the sinner were helped in every service.”⁶⁷ While salvation was of utmost importance, early Pentecostals expected physical healings to accompany their services. Van Cleave reported the success of Angelus Temple with eight highlighted points:

1. Thousands saved and baptized in water...
2. Strong presence of the Holy Spirit
3. Strong conviction of sin.
4. Thousands healed of bodily affliction.
5. Constant capacity crowds.
6. Believers worshipful and enthusiastic in service.
7. Believers in faith witness.
8. Lasting and progressively increasing results.⁶⁸

Van Cleave emphasized what many in the Pentecostal tradition also emphasize: the number of people “getting saved,” the number of healings that occurred, and some type of emotional environment.

According to Pentecostals, the physical healings that took place in the time of Christ and the apostles should also be seen today in the lives of Christ-followers. Duffield and Van Cleave write,

In the light of all that is revealed in the Scriptures, it is not to be thought unreasonable that the Lord should heal the physical afflictions of those who seek his aid.... The thought to be emphasized is that, based on the Word of God and what it reveals about God’s Will, His Purpose and His Power, it is wholly reasonable to believe that God is interested in the

⁶⁷ Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 48.

⁶⁸ Van Cleave, *The Vine and the Branches*, 8–9.

physical, human bodies of those who are His children through the New Birth.⁶⁹

The expectation is that, just as Jesus can bring salvation, He also provides healing.

Stephen Jack Land says, “The early Pentecostals saw themselves as recovering and reentering that Pentecostal reality,”⁷⁰ which began with Peter and the early church. Physical healings have become a part of the Pentecostal landscape since the early stages of Azusa Street. In many reports, the pastors of local Open Bible churches would highlight the number of people saved along with the number of healings.

While God cares for all elements of humanity and brings physical healing to people, it is important to note the emphasis given to healing in the Pentecostal environment. Most scholars list it as either second or third in their fourfold gospel explanation. The listed order is not a ranking system, but in many ways it reflects the amount of time devoted to its emphasis. Numerous aspects of the Kingdom of God could be emphasized in place of healing: life transformation, Christ-like suffering, or the fruits of the Spirit. However, the sensationalism of healing ministry has drawn the attention of the early Pentecostal world because it is visible, demonstrative, and remarkable. They highlighted the fascinating and intriguing rather than the quiet and consistent. Less attention is given to some of the practices of Jesus like silence and solitude, study, and friends. Jesus had great friends because He worked at developing them. Pastors can focus on the expressive aspects of worship and miss the daily activities that provide health and wholeness.

⁶⁹ Duffield and Van Cleave, 363–64.

⁷⁰ Land, 65.

The Pentecostals though saw healing as a step toward the culmination of Christ's return. Land says, "Healing was in anticipation of the final healing of all things. The material was meant for the spiritual and vice-versa. Healing anticipated a millennial restoration of all things: heaven come to earth and no more sickness or sorrow."⁷¹ Healing points towards Christ's imminent return.

Pentecostals firmly believed in Jesus' power to heal. R. Bryant Mitchell says, "It is God's will to heal His people." They saw signs and wonders on regular occurrences. Altars would be full of people that had some type of ailment, but would return home fully restored. A concern though is Mitchell's next two sentences: "Let us not blame Him for weak faith or human imperfection. He is glorified more in healing than in suffering."⁷² Their belief in healing was so strong that if a person was not healed, the problem lay with the person who lacked healing rather than with God.

Open Bible still fully embraces divine healing. Their statement of faith says, "We believe the power of God to heal the sick and afflicted is provided for in Christ's death on the cross. God is willing to and does heal today."⁷³ Healing certainly signifies the power of the Spirit. People need healing on a regular basis. However, the focus is almost always describing physical healing. It is now understood that people are made up of so many parts, including emotions and intellect. All parts of one's humanity need the power of the Spirit to bring healing. For too long the important work of holistic healing has been neglected in the lives of people. Pastors that have parts of their lives compartmentalized

⁷¹ Land, 45.

⁷² R. Bryant Mitchell, *They Shall Recover* (Des Moines, IA: Inspiration Press, 1966), 8.

⁷³ Bach, Cole, and Johnson, 225.

into separate categories such as their emotions, physical bodies, and home lives, keep them disintegrated, missing the wholeness and health God has available for them.

Jesus as Soon-and-coming King. The final aspect of the Fourfold Gospel is the second coming of Christ. Even though it is listed last, it influences every area of Pentecostalism. Professor of Church history at Wesley Theological Seminary, Donald Faupel, quotes noted early Pentecostal preacher, D. H. McDowell when he says, “Salvation, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Divine Healing, the ministrations of the Holy Spirit among us are features of a program.... The Second Coming of Lord Jesus Christ is not a feature of the program...it is THE program. The...others...are features of this program leading up to the grand and glorious fulfillment.”⁷⁴

Pentecostals believe that Christ’s return is imminent and He can return at any moment. Professor Efrain Agosto says of the first-century church, “Eschatological expectation marked this movement and fueled its lifestyle. That’s why they could be so disinterested in permanency, family, possessions, and protection. The end was near.”⁷⁵ This absolutely applies to the modern Pentecostal church as well. With Christ’s return possible at any time, the Pentecostals knew they must move quickly.

Their evangelistic passion is a direct result of an anticipation of the culmination of Christ’s return. The time is short to tell the world of Christ. They maintain a deep recognition of need for the power of the Holy Spirit because the work is great for such a short period of time. Land says, “The Latter Rain restoration of Pentecostal power was

⁷⁴ D. H. McDowell, “The Purpose of the Second Coming of the Lord,” *The Pentecostal Evangelical* (May 2, 1925): 2, quoted in David W. Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought*, Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 43.

⁷⁵ Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus and Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 21.

for last-days evangelization. Their mission was to warn the church to repent, consecrate, put on the robes of white, and get oil in the lamp before the Bridegroom appeared.”⁷⁶

They wanted to everyone to hear the story of Christ. Mitchell quotes Open Bible Founder Fred Hornshuh: “I preached every night as though it were my last sermon before the coming of the Lord.” Mitchell then noted, “Because some preachers were predicting that the Lord would be here within ten years, there was not much planning for the purchasing of church property, the perfecting of an organization, or the planning for Bible schools.”⁷⁷

This same mindset influences the Pentecostal movement today. For over one hundred years, the immediate expectation of Christ’s return has hindered Pentecostal churches from developing strategies that help believers participate fully in the Kingdom of God today. The focus has been, and continues to be, on the eminence of Christ’s second coming, which has inadvertently negated the importance of the present moment, causing pastors to miss the abundant life right available now. Since the Holy Spirit’s power is transformative, according to the Pentecostal view, not much work is required for the believer.

However, Whitworth University Church history professor Gerald Sittser says, “The Christian faith does in fact require serious practice.”⁷⁸ Dallas Willard echoed these sentiments: “Grace is not opposed to effort; grace is opposed to earning.”⁷⁹ God alone changes an individual, but each person must participate with Christ through the Spirit to

⁷⁶ Land, 44.

⁷⁷ Mitchell, *Heritage and Horizons*, 50.

⁷⁸ Gerald Lawson Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 282.

⁷⁹ Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*, Updated and expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 254.

become more Christ-like.⁸⁰ The time has come for Pentecostals to further develop the spiritual practices of their Christian siblings.

The Pentecostal eschatological perspective and the other three aspects of the Fourfold Gospel comprise four cornerstones to the local pastor's lifestyle and belief system. Each of these four elements are important and life changing. However, pastors still feel overwhelmed, burdened, and anxious. Having the wrong doctrine does not seem to be the issue as many are living full and abundant lives, but still struggle with anxiety, frustration, exhaustion, feelings of inferiority, and depression. A part of the problem in each of these areas is an emphasis on doing—evangelizing, healing, living purely, and working nonstop because the end is near. Constant activity is rewarded rather than discouraged in this Fourfold Gospel. Activity is seen as good and right. People do not have time for rest, listening, or fun. Who can participate in fun when Jesus could come any minute and another person needs Jesus?

Despite a robust theology, what is needed is a robust theology of practice. Turning from an ideology of “doing” and instead incorporating “being” will help the pastors. This will be examined in later chapters. The point is to draw attention to the problem in order to shed light on how these beliefs have led Open Bible pastors off course.

⁸⁰ Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, eds., *Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective: Classic Issues, Contemporary Challenges* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 26.

Unspecified Tenets

Foursquare Gospel, Open Bible, and other Pentecostal denominations have two other tenets that absolutely make up the core of their DNA: love and prayer. From Pentecostalism's origins both were foundational to its core identity. One cannot describe the Open Bible movement, nor attempt to help the health of its ministers, without describing the importance of these two characteristics.

Love. From the moment the Azusa Street Revival sprang, love was found in lavish amounts. The early pioneers shared all they had and gave what they could for the sake of others. Even their attempts at evangelism were birthed out of a love and concern for the well-being of others.

William Seymour in particular understood the importance of love to permeate the life of a Spirit-filled believer. In an article titled "Questions Answered" in the Pentecostal periodical *Apostolic Faith*, the question was posed, "What is the real evidence that a man or woman has received the baptism with the Holy Ghost?" The response was

Divine love, which is charity. Charity is the Spirit of Jesus. They will have the fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5.22. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, temperance; against such there is no law.... This is the real Bible evidence in their daily walk and conversation; and the outward manifestation; speaking in tongues and signs following: casting out devils, laying hands on the sick and the sick being healed, and the love of God for souls increasing in their hearts.⁸¹

Love is what holds all of the faith together. Love for God and love for others and Open Bible talks often of love.

⁸¹ William Seymour, "Questions Answered," *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 11 (October 1907): 2.

This love—Macchia calls it a “self-giving love”—is what has sent missionaries around the globe, abandoning their home for the sake of the lost. Macchia says, “The Kingdom is a reign of self-sacrificial love that comes to fulfillment through Christ and the Spirit.” Pentecostals have sacrificed comfortable lives at home to pursue the Spirit-led life of missionary work or ministry.

Open Bible pastors are men and women who love deeply. They care about their community. They desire people to be connected to God. Living a Spirit-led, Spirit-filled life requires the Holy Spirit to fill people with love.

Prayer. The final Open Bible distinctive is high value of prayer. Open Bible people are ones who believe in the power of prayer and spend time praying. Prayer is a way of knowing God and understanding what He desires His people to do. Land says, “For Pentecostals it is impossible to know God and the things of God without prayer, because in prayer one responds to the Spirit of truth.”⁸² Since they are not guided by creeds or traditions, it makes sense that Pentecostals have a deep intimate prayer time that helps the Spirit to guide them.

For Open Bible, prayer, along with Bible reading, are the primary ways of spiritual growth. These are the most common activities that Christ-followers can participate in alongside God for His Kingdom. Friend of Open Bible and Foursquare Pastor, Jack Hayford says, “The power is God’s, but the privilege and responsibility to pray is ours.... By His anointing we will find enablement to see God’s purposes being

⁸² Land, 24.

accomplished through us and our prayers.”⁸³ In prayer, Christ-followers, and specifically pastors, can discover God’s will for their life and they can then move in His leading.

In the early days of Pentecostalism, most services spent a significant time on prayer for the healing of the sick and baptism of the Holy Spirit. When revival services came to town, people gathered beforehand to pray. In every issue, the early Open Bible periodicals such as *The Overcomer*, *Bible Standard*, and *The Open Bible Messenger* contain reports of answered prayer. Prayer is at the heartbeat of Open Bible in their desire to connect with God.

Despite the prominence prayer is given, Open Bible continues to have pastors worn out and exhausted from life. Guilt-ridden for their lack of actual prayer time spent, pastors know that they should pray more. In the Open Bible Soul Care National Survey, pastor after pastor expressed their need for more prayer. When asked what would strengthen their daily walk with Christ, more time in prayer was among the top areas of need, along with rest, and relationships.⁸⁴ Prayer will be considered further in the following chapters, but while it ranks high in value structure of Open Bible pastors in principle, it seems that for many, the fulfillment level of prayer is low. Perhaps the reason pastors are so frustrated with prayer in their life is a lack of understanding about what it truly is and how it does not have to be intense time away locked in a quiet place. While this certainly is prayer other types of prayer can be followed as well.

⁸³ Jack W. Hayford, *Living the Spirit-Formed Life* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 211.

⁸⁴ Open Bible Churches, “National Survey on Soul Care,” April 10, 2019.

Conclusion

The Pentecostal stream of Christianity is relatively new, having begun just over one hundred years ago. Open Bible as a denomination is still less than one hundred years old and, in many ways, is still discovering its identity. However, in the midst of the discovery, some core distinctives inhabit Pentecostals. Pentecostals firmly believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. This power is used as a witness for Christ. How this power is viewed depends largely on the church or individual, and therein lies part of the problem. Many view the power as dominion and neglect the power needed to suffer well. Both aspects are needed, just as Jesus was seen as the conquering king and the suffering servant. Jesus is both the lion and the lamb. The Church, likewise, is to live in the tension of victorious and surrendered.

Open Bible and its pastors also hold to the Foursquare Gospel. This is made up of four components, which view Jesus as the Savior, Baptizer, Healer, and Soon-and-coming King. All of these components point toward a Christocentric faith in theory, but can often be overvalued and neglect the work of the others. When these get unbalanced, pastors get off course. The work begins to take precedence and the focus becomes the doing rather than being in the presence of God.

Love and prayer are also vital to Open Bible. Both are at the very core of what Christ-followers are all about. Love that originates in Christ flows through His followers to reach others. Prayer keeps His people connected to Him, and His Spirit guides and directs them.

The challenge, though, is how to incorporate this great history and belief structure into everyday life. The Spirit was given for power and witness, but often pastors feel

isolated, alone, dejected, and anxious. This could not be what Jesus meant when He said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”⁸⁵ Jesus did not live this way. So how can Open Bible pastors move from their ideal beliefs to really living them out?

⁸⁵ Acts 1:8.

CHAPTER 4:
AN ALTERNATIVE CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Abundant life can be seen through an alternative and ancient Christian Spirituality that flows from reflection and connection to the life of Jesus. A rooted identity in Christ, a growing awareness of self and God, and a cultivation of habit through spiritual practices all inform the Christian's participation in God's offering of abundant life. This chapter first seeks to answer the critics who misunderstand spiritual formation and therefore react with wholesale resistance and rejection. The second part of this chapter seeks to examine a stream in the ancient Christian family, Roman Catholicism, which provides positive aspects and potential dangers in efforts to remain spiritually healthy. Catholicism has existed for nearly two thousand years. During that time, many church fathers and mothers have offered insights into how one can live and minister while living an abundant life filled with the fruit of the Spirit flowing from the life of Jesus.

In his book on Ignatian Spirituality, an order within the Catholic Church that began in the 16th century and follows the instructions of Ignatius of Loyola, Jesuit priest and author James Martin uses the metaphor of a bridge to explain the role of spirituality in opening people to the transforming grace of God.¹ He says that each bridge does the same job: it allows passage from one place to another. However, each bridge can be very different based on the terrain, the landscape, and the supplies available. Some use steel, wood, rope, or bricks to construct the bridge. His point in the bridge metaphor is that

¹ James Martin says that Ignatian spirituality is “about freedom: the freedom to become the person you’re meant to be, to love and to accept love, to make good decisions, and to experience the beauty of creation and the mystery of God’s love.” James Martin, *Jesuit Guide to Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2011), 1.

“Every spirituality offers you a distinctive ‘passage’ to God.”² To be clear, he did not mean, “All paths lead to Heaven.” Rather, in the Christian faith, well within orthodoxy, there are many streams that can be navigated which will lead to the source of life—Christ. Pentecostals often have a difficult time looking beyond their own worldview to appreciate and learn from other Christ-centered spiritualities.

Open Bible has developed pastors throughout its history through the encouragement of prayer and Bible reading. Colleges and other discipleship programs have also been avenues that train ministers in their preparation for ministry and in spiritual development. However, in large part due to its recent entrance into the stream of faith, Pentecostals lack a spiritual formation process that transforms pastors into healthy pastors. Some resistance even stands against developing a spiritual formation plan at all. Rather, Open Bible pastors can look to the ancient Catholic stream for wisdom and insight as they have sought to emulate the life of Christ.

Many well-intentioned believers have significant concerns regarding the use of spiritual formation as a means to be united with Christ. Even early Open Bible ministers warned against the perils that are possible within spiritual formation. However, regarding ecumenical dialogue, Pope John Paul II says, “Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an ‘exchange of gifts.’”³ If this discussion were viewed as an “exchange of gifts,” perhaps Pentecostal pastors would discover that many of these concerns are misunderstandings and perhaps further dialogue would lessen the fear of following a plan to grow and develop as a disciple of Christ.

² Martin, 3.

³ John Paul II, “Ut Unum Sint,” 28, last modified May 25, 1995, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html.

The Catholic Church is an important and necessary stream of Christian faith for Open Bible pastors to investigate discerning which aspects of Catholicism's spirituality may provide lessons for the health of local pastors. The Catholic Church has been around for two millennia and, despite concerns of many in the Pentecostal ranks, is a valued and loved member of the body of Christ. Open Bible ministers can draw from their Catholic siblings how the foundational significance of a rooted identify in Christ, a growing awareness of God and self, and biblically grounded spiritual practices leads to a holistic health and therefore abundant life.

Concerns about Spiritual Formation's Ancient Catholic Roots

Pentecostalism, since its inception and in its nature, opposes creeds and tradition.⁴ The result, along with other theological differences, is a resistance to anything remotely Catholic, such as intentional spiritual formation. However, Pentecostal resistance to intentional activities for the development of the soul is not just because of an aversion to Catholic orthopraxy, but comes from the false belief that spiritual formation is also New Age and therefore, demonic in nature. Many Pentecostal pastors attribute the disciplines to eastern mysticism, Hinduism, or Buddhism and will not participate in activities that could draw them closer to Christ.

This confusion is seen in the early stages of Open Bible in one of its original publications, *Bible Standard*, written and edited by Open Bible founder Fred Hornshuh: "If spiritualism (properly called 'spiritism,') is a good thing and a benefit to humanity then the Bible is wrong. If the Bible is right than spiritualism is one of the most

⁴ Further development of this point is seen in chapter 3.

dangerous things in all the universe.... This being true then spiritualism is the work of masquerading devils. From this it follows that those who consort to spiritualism are getting into a most intimate and personal relationship with demons.”⁵ Hornshuh confuses two distinct terms, calling them the same. He says “spiritualism” is the same as “Spiritism,” and both are demonic. However, as previously discussed “spiritualism” is the means to access God. Certainly this can be twisted and perverted into something that is ungodly, but it is also a path to connect with God, which is very good.

In contrast, the “Spiritist movement is the worship of other ungodly spirits. Shortly before the Pentecostal movement began, the “Spiritist” movement began to spring up. Especially seen in France but having global impact, it “developed out of séances, and modern occult.”⁶ This movement sought otherworldly power and experiences and was what Hornshuh was concerned about. However, spiritualism and Spiritism are not the same, despite continuing to be joined together by many.

Perhaps the most ardent and vocal detractors of the spiritual formation discussion are the group at Lighthouse Trail.⁷ They claim that,

In essence, Spiritual Formation is carrying on the Hindu message of: God is in all things (panentheism), and God is all things (pantheism). If such a message is true then the Gospel message of Jesus Christ—that man is sinful, that he is heading for

⁵ Fred Hornshuh, ed., “Spiritualism: Is It Right or Wrong?” *Bible Standard* 1, no. 5 (November 15, 1920): 1.

⁶ Sofie Lachapelle, *Investigating the Supernatural: From Spiritism and Occultism to Psychical Research and Metapsychics in France, 1853–1931* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 5–6, ProQuest.

⁷ My thanks to Open Bible pastor Mike Allison who pointed out this group to me after having a large contingent of his congregation leave because he spoke on spiritual formation. The congregants shared their concerns with him based on the information they had read from the Lighthouse Trail. Lighthouse Trail information can be found at <https://www.lighthouse trails.com/>. In an effort to make people aware of the dangers and perils of the spiritual formation movement, Lighthouse Trail began publishing papers, books, and blogs.

eternal destruction because of sin, and that he needs a Savior—would become null and void.⁸

Their voiced concerns, while birthed from genuine affection and devotion to God, are felt throughout Open Bible churches and are misplaced. To be clear, in this writing there is no advocacy for God being in all things, nor is there advocacy for the worship of all things. Rather, what Christo-centric spirituality points towards is Jesus Himself. All aspects of spirituality discussed thus far have focused on drawing near the person of Christ.

The confusion over what spiritual formation actually is continues:

Oftentimes, Richard Foster has made favorable reference to the practice of *lectio divina*, which is being heralded in many Christian settings as a Christian, biblical practice. People are persuaded to believe that repeating words and short phrases of Scripture over and over again is a deeper way to know God. They believe that since it is Scripture being repeated (and not just any words), then this validates the practice and that this sacred reading is sacred because it is the Bible being used.⁹

The concern seems to be that in the practice known as *lectio divina* people simply chant words without engaging the mind or heart for God.

This is not the case at all. *Lectio divina*, rather, is a way in which to pray to God using Scripture. The Ignation priest James Martin says *lectio divina* “means ‘sacred reading’ Essentially *lectio divina* is the practice of encountering God through Scripture.”¹⁰ This style of prayer includes four steps for reading through Scripture and asking God to speak through the Scripture to the individual.¹¹ After selecting a passage of

⁸ Lighthouse Trail Editors, “Is Your Church Doing Spiritual Formation? (Important Reasons Why It Shouldn’t),” Lighthouse Trails, June 16, 2018, <https://www.lighthousetrailsresearch.com/blog/?p=28399>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Martin, *Jesuit Guide to Everything*, 155.

¹¹ The following four steps can be found in Martin’s *Jesuit Guide to Everything*, 156–60.

Scripture to read the first step is to *read* through the passage. The question to ask through this first step is “What does this text say?”¹² Begin to think about what transpires in the selected passage. *Meditation* is the second step. Meditation is not the eastern mysticism that groups such as Lighthouse Trail believe it to be—in fact the psalmists often said to meditate on the words of God. Rather, meditation is asking the question “What is God saying to me through the text?”¹³ The art of listening and silence is required in this step. Rushing through to the next phase will not allow God the time to speak. The third step is *prayer*. After hearing from God, the question is “What do I need to say to God about the text?”¹⁴ An area of life may need prayer. Perhaps fear or shame about a situation has been brought to the surface that can be taken to God. The final step is *action*: “What do you want to do based on your prayer?”¹⁵ Prayer often moves a person to action. Does a conversation need to take place? Perhaps forgiveness is necessary. *Lectio divina* helps individuals encounter God.

Even if the practice was found to be extra-biblical does this necessarily mean the practice is invalid? Professor of theology at Biola University Steve Porter asks, “But are there not some instances where a clearly non-Christian principle and/or practice is being utilized within a supposedly Christian spirituality?”¹⁶ He goes on to wonder about the use

¹² Martin, *Jesuit Guide to Everything*, 156.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹⁶ Steven L. Porter, “Sanctification in a New Key: Relieving Evangelical Anxieties over Spiritual Formation,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1, no. 2 (2008): 134.

of journaling, mentioned nowhere in the Bible.¹⁷ He says, “What should be our ultimate concern is not whether the principle or practice can be found within some non-Christian spirituality, but whether the principle or practice can be affirmed from God’s general and special revelation.”¹⁸ Thus the discipline that is practiced should be thought out and considered in order to determine whether or not it is affirmed by God to an individual’s benefit in the relationship with Christ. This is why using two millennia of church history is helpful. One does not have to invent ideas, but rather can look to spiritual giants of the past to discover how they stayed connected to Jesus and lived an abundant life, experiencing joy, hope, peace, and goodness during their time on Earth.

Lessons from the Ancient Catholic Stream

For over five hundred years, Protestants and Catholics have engaged in serious and often brutal and bloody disputes. The significance of their differences can be extreme. Yet, they also have much in common including the love and worship of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Pentecostals often have more difficulty than other Protestant brothers and sisters due to their lack of appreciation for creeds and tradition.¹⁹ The result is that Pentecostals have limited appreciation for Catholic spirituality and distance themselves from all things Catholic.

¹⁷ Ibid., 136.

¹⁸ Ibid., 138.

¹⁹ Further development and exploration of Pentecostal angst for creeds and tradition is found in chapter 3.

Little dialogue among Pentecostals and Catholics has occurred, especially in the ranks of the masses, leaving Pentecostals to mistrust their Catholic siblings.²⁰ Swiss theologian and Pentecostal expert Walter Hollenweger says, “Past relationships between [Catholics and Pentecostals] were characterized by much ignorance, polemic and sometimes persecution.”²¹ He continued, “Indeed, the tensions between us may have blinded us to important aspects of faith we have already long shared.”²² Rather than being “blinded to the important aspects of faith,” a necessary component for Open Bible ministers to remain healthy is to become more aware of the “aspects of faith we have already long shared” with our Catholic family.

Awareness of the Need for Spiritual Formation

The Catholic Church has taken seriously its responsibility to develop and train its followers in formation of the spiritual elements of humanity. Catechism and confirmation are two examples of the attempts in Catholicism to intentionally disciple the people, including ministers. Throughout its history, though, leaders have risen up to improve and restore necessary components to the faith in the hopes of reuniting people to God in a helpful and healthy way.

Religious orders have been established throughout the centuries and have spread across the globe impacting millions. These orders—which include the Franciscans,

²⁰ More information regarding attempts at dialogue between Pentecostals and the Catholic Church appears later in this chapter.

²¹ Walter J. Hollenweger, “Common Witness Between Catholics and Pentecostals,” *Pneuma* 18, no. 2 (1996): 185.

²² *Ibid.*, 191.

Jesuits, Carmelites, and Benedictines, among others—are intentional communities of discipleship to Jesus that one can join in order to aid the journey in the spiritual life. Each order is distinct as it follows the path its founder established. For example, the Jesuits are known to be educators and to take seriously the process of discerning the will of God. Franciscans are known to deeply love the poor and the environment, which has been passed down from their founder, St. Francis of Assisi. The Benedictines are known to be incredibly hospitable and kind.²³ Each order has its unique path to become more like Christ.

The intentionality and wisdom that each of these orders can bring to the life of a pastor is worth investigating. Presbyterian pastor and author David Robinson, from Cannon Beach, Oregon, has found following the Rule of Benedict so helpful that he has become a Benedictine Oblate. An Oblate is a person who has committed him or herself, including the family, to following and being associated with the Benedictine community for the entirety of life, and Robinson is not even Catholic. He wrote, “I was discouraged, weary of ministry, and looking for guidance in my vocation as a pastor Since I was on the verge of burnout and soon to leave my position as a pastor in Fairview, a week at a monastery was a welcomed gift for renewal and discernment.”²⁴ This was his first encounter at a monastery and he found it so life-giving that he continued to visit monasteries, eventually joining the Benedictine community. He continued, since that first encounter, “I’ve become much more intentional about Christian formation, seeking the best ways to grow together with Christ’s family, the church. Year after year, new habits

²³ Martin, *Jesuit Guide to Everything*, 3.

²⁴ David Robinson, *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010), vii.

have been birthed by putting monastic ways into practice in my own life and, with others, in the life of the local church.”²⁵ The monastic orders with their intentional plans to follow Jesus have much that Open Bible pastors can incorporate into their individual and corporate faith journeys.

The Catholic Church has also discovered that leadership is not just charisma or a certain skill set. A recent study by Catholic scholars and educators in Australia says that “The spiritual formation of leaders and teachers has been identified over many years as a priority issue in Catholic education in Australia and internationally.”²⁶ This recognition is significant. The Catholic Church recognizes the need for leadership in its area of education, but rather than just centering its priority on leadership development, they include the aspect of spiritual formation. The report continues, “The post-modern secular world has brought with it a sense of fragmentation, and there are those commentators who would say that fragmentation permeates everything.”²⁷ The claim is that individual people and the corporate world are dis-integrated. Rather than being integrated, whole parts, people are fragmented. Significantly, the report includes an aspect of this fragmentation in the lives of individuals and groups, which is “a lack of a shared sense of meaning or mythology.”²⁸ The indication is the Catholic Church recognizes spiritual formation as necessary component of the development of leaders as it will better integrate

²⁵ Robinson, viii.

²⁶ Tony Bracken, Andrea Dean, and Jill Gowdie, “Critical Leadership Challenge: Spiritual Formation in the Contemporary Context,” *Compass; Kensington* 50, no. 3 (Spring 2016): 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁸ Bracken, Dean, Gowdie, 8.

the individual, and it will give a sense of purpose and meaning, creating healthy people and organizations.

This is not to suggest that Open Bible does not care about spiritual formation. In each Open Bible sponsored discipleship program—which includes several schools of ministry, INSTE, and the Bible college—courses that include spiritual development are required. Pastors often speak on the necessity of praying and reading the Bible. Thus perhaps the ancient Catholic Church has deeper wells to draw water from as Pentecostalism is still in its childhood development stage. For example, the Reformed Church has existed for over five hundred years. Throughout its history, intellectual giants such as John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards have brought tremendous insight for the Reformed doctrine. Pentecostals are new and, as mentioned in chapter 3, have traditionally been anti-intellectual. Both the newness of the movement and the bias against scholasticism has stunted growth. As difficult as it is for Pentecostals to hear, perhaps the Catholic Church has additional tools to develop Christ-likeness beyond the standard “pray and read your Bible” mantra often prescribed. Four aspects of spiritual development will be discussed in this chapter: prayer, listening, liturgy, and community as each of these leads to a rootedness in identity in Christ, a growing awareness of self and God, and are spiritual practices that lead to abundant life.

Identity

An essential element to living an abundant life, as seen in chapter 2 with the life of Christ, is having clarity of identity. Jesus spent time in silence and solitude with His Father. At His baptism, His Father spoke to Him saying, “You are My beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11). Jesus had developed a clear sense of identity and

purpose. Pentecostals can learn from their Catholic siblings how to develop a Christ-centered identity through aspects of Ignatian spirituality.

Pentecostals love to pray. As seen in chapter 3, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street occurred in response to deep and intense times of prayer. When one attends prayer meetings in Pentecostal denominations, specifically Open Bible, the primary way prayer is done is through talking. Throughout the room people will be talking, as if to themselves, but it will be directed to God. The room is filled with voices lifted up in chaotic harmony to the God they seek. It is at once individual and simultaneously corporate. Each individual voice blends with the next, creating a cacophony of petitions to God.

Catholics, too, pray in deep and profound ways. Pentecostals often view the Catholic prayer as robotic and ritualistic, yet Pope Benedict XVI suggests that among the ritualistic prayers, Catholics also include a more personal type of prayer. The Pope said, “What matters most is that you develop your personal relationship with God. That relationship is expressed in prayer. God by His very nature speaks, hears, and replies. Indeed, Saint Paul reminds us: we can and should ‘pray constantly’ (1 Thessalonians 5:17).”²⁹ Pope Benedict XVI suggests that Catholics also pray in the tension of memorized prayers such as the Our Father and Hail Mary and also have the freedom to personalize and petition God for the needs that they experience.

²⁹ Pietro Rossotti, *Called to Holiness: On Love, Formation, and Vocation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 35, EBSCOhost.

Within the Catholic Church, there is an experience that began in the 1960s called the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.³⁰ This Charismatic Renewal “aims to bring spiritual renewal in the lives of the people. It seeks to integrate the renewal movement in the life of the Church through the parishes” through the baptism in the Holy Spirit similar to what Pentecostals and other Charismatics experience.³¹ One of the leading voices of this group was Catholic professor and charismatic Donald Gelpi. Regarding the distinction between Catholic Charismatic and Pentecostal prayer, he said,

My personal involvement as a teacher and theologian in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal convinced me that from the standpoint of traditional Catholic theology and piety, the integration of charismatic and sacramental prayer posed the most pressing doctrinal and pastoral challenge which with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal had to face. Classical Pentecostalism had generated its own kinds of rituals...but sacramentalism and sacramental theology do not in fact constitute one of the Pentecostal tradition’s long suits.

Moreover, my experiences of shared charismatic prayer convinced me of the fact that it and sacramental prayer both complement and need one another.³²

Gelpi expresses the benefit of sacraments and sacramental prayer of which many Open Bible ministers are simply unaware or neglect. Because Open Bible has no sacraments, but rather ordinances, the idea of sacramental prayer is totally lost.³³ Vital connections

³⁰ The Catholic Charismatic Renewal began in 1967 at Duquesne University when several students and staff gathered to pray. The movement is reminiscent of the beginnings of the Pentecostal movement in 1906 at Azusa Street. Consequently, millions of Catholics have experienced a personal Charismatic renewal similar to the Pentecostal experience. For a brief history of the movement, see Reginald Alva, “Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement and Transformation of Life,” *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 36, no. 2 (July 2, 2016): 145–58 and Michelle Moran, “The Spirituality at the Heart of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement,” *Transformation* 30, no. 4 (October 1, 2013): 287–91.

³¹ Reginald Alva, “Parish Renewal and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement,” *Gregorianum* 98, no. 1 (2017): 97.

³² Don Gelpi, “Discerning the Spirit among Catholic Charismatics,” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 41, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 30.

³³ Open Bible’s book on core truths by Open Bible’s president, Randall Bach, *We Believe*, says, “Water baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the only ordinances observed in Open Bible Churches because they are the only two explicitly commanded in Scripture.” Thus, Open Bible only subscribes to the two

that could be drawn and uncovered are abandoned to the detriment of the pastor and the people. Sacraments and sacramental prayers ground a person in the reality of life lived today. Tangible items, like prayer beads and candles, remind a person of the reality of Christ moment-by-moment. The emphasis among Open Bible pastors is placed on the ethereal and misses Jesus in the ordinary and everyday moments. These very earthy ways of praying remind the pastor of who they are in Christ- a beloved, human, and earthy child of God.

While this author is not advocating for Open Bible ministers to add sacraments to their theology, what can be further investigated within Open Bible ranks is how to take more seriously the physical realm, especially during times of worship and prayer. Light shows and fog machines are becoming commonplace in worship services, and certainly there is a place for this, but incorporating the intentionality, purpose, and holiness of the sacraments could aid pastors in their pursuit of God in a different way. The sacraments impact the senses of humanity.³⁴ They ground people in the common-place reality of Christ. Candles emanate light and heat. They remind people of the warmth of Christ's love and the light He brings in darkness. Incense reminds one of the prayers of the saints that offered to God. Reengaging the worship with all of the senses begins to bring wholeness back to pastors rather than keeping part of the self separated.

ordinances of water baptism and communion, while rejecting as sacraments such activities like marriage and confirmation that other streams follow. Bach, *We Believe*, 207.

³⁴ Sacraments, as seen by the Catholic Church, include seven activities: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, holy orders, matrimony, and anointing the sick. The sacraments can only be offered through the agency of a priest to the laity and is seen as sign of the power of the risen Christ. In Francis A. Sullivan, "Sacraments," ed. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1988), 765.

Additionally, throughout the years, the Catholic Church has recommended several different types and styles of prayers that can be beneficial for people and can be used based on needs, personalities, seasons of life, or even the mood of the individual. Priest and professor James Martin lists several of these different styles of prayer in his book *The Jesuit Guide to Everything: the Examen, lectio divina, centering prayer, communal prayer, rote prayer, journaling, and nature prayer*.³⁵ Each of these prayers at its heart primarily focuses on seeking God. The point is to find connection with Him and be attuned to what He is doing and saying. This helps the person praying to remember who they are and to whom they belong.

Conversely, Pentecostals primarily use prayer as a means to petition God for requests. One of the leading Pentecostal and Foursquare denomination's pastors, Jack Hayford, describes prayer as "person-to-Person communication—a combination of worship, fellowship, and intercession."³⁶ He defined these as

- *Worship* through adoration, praise, and thanksgiving to God;
- *Fellowship* through devotion, communion and conversation *with* God;
- *Intercession* through supplication, fasting and spiritual warfare *before* God.³⁷

What is noticeable is the emphasis on the believer's amount active of engagement. The pray-er is the active participant towards God. In Catholic spirituality much more emphasis is placed on the pray-er remaining passive while God is the active agent. Both elements are necessary, but especially in an active and chaotic world, the Pentecostals

³⁵ The description for the examen can be found in chapter 4, while the descriptions of the other prayers are explained in chapter 7 of Martin's *Jesuit Guide to Everything*.

³⁶ Jack W. Hayford, *Living the Spirit-Formed Life* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 194.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

can embrace less action on their part in order to make more space for God's action. This is a valuable lesson from their Catholic siblings. The pastoral vocation is often judged by doing the ministry and this becomes a reminder that God is also interested in the being aspect of humanity. Sitting silently stretches the aspects that want to return to doing, causing growth in becoming more like Christ. Relying upon God's grace for abundant life is a primary place of identity for the Christian.

Awareness

The second aspect is the emphasis Catholic Spirituality places on a growing awareness of self and God. In order to become aware, one must work at listening. Pope Benedict XVI says, "There is another aspect of prayer that we need to remember: silent contemplation. Saint John, for example, tells us that to embrace God's revelation we must first listen, then respond by proclaiming what we have heard and seen. Have we perhaps lost something of the art of listening?"³⁸ The Pope reminds us that in order to speak, people first must listen. The need for people who listen first to God is great.

The opening phrases of the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation called *Dei Verbum* in 1965 reveal the emphasis the Catholic Church intends to place on listening:

Hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it with faith, the sacred synod takes its direction from these words of St. John: "We announce to you the eternal life which dwelt with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we announce to you, so that you may have fellowship with us and our common fellowship be with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:2–3). Therefore, following in the footsteps of the Council of Trent and of the First Vatican Council, this present council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on, so that by hearing the message of

³⁸ Rossotti, 36.

salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love.³⁹

Throughout this first paragraph, the central point is listening to the direction and word of God. The title *Dei Verbum* means “word of God.”

Biblically, the idea of listening is considered important. The Israelite daily prayer of the *Shema* begins with the encouragement to listen: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deut. 6:4). The first word is to “hear.” The declaration that the god whom the Israelites serve is the One true God. Hearing is significant. Paul reminds the Romans, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). Faith in Christ first comes through listening to His word, not by incessantly speaking about it. Scripture places the emphasis on listening.

More will be discussed about the lack of emphasis on listening in Open Bible later in this chapter, but first consider the birth of Pentecostalism. The origin was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit seen primarily in speaking in tongues. What was seen as the initial evidence for being filled in the Holy Spirit was not *listening to* the Spirit, but was in *speaking for* and *to* the Spirit. In the years following the Pentecostal beginning, evangelism and praying for healing was the flame that propelled the young movement. Both are active and demonstrative. The nature of Pentecostalism is speaking and movement.

Pentecostals have difficulty grasping the importance of listening. The historical element of Pentecostalism’s emphasis on power as domination as seen in chapter 3

³⁹ Vatican II Council, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: *Dei Verbum*,” November 18, 1965, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

contributes to this dilemma. Presbyterian minister and author Adam McHugh writes in his book *The Listening Life*, “Listening surfaces our feelings of powerlessness, and so we marshal psychological and theological reasoning to restore our sense of strength.”⁴⁰ Pentecostals have a deep aversion to powerlessness. The primary verse of Pentecostals is Acts 1:8, which says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.” Activities such as listening that evoke powerlessness are likely to be held at arms’ length and to be theologically reasoned out of churches as McHugh claims. Without the ability to listen, pastors are not able to hear God, hear their congregation, hear the need of their family, or hear their own body crying out for help. Each area is one that the pastor strives to bring life to in their calling, but easily misses because of he or she is unable to hear what concerns need met.

The Catholic perspective adds a different element. It reminds the body of Christ of the need for contemplation, silence, and listening. In a world that is noisy and active, this can bring life to people. Ministers who are overworked, underpaid, and undervalued can find hope and joy in the space of listening. They can be reminded that God, in fact, loves them—no matter what is going on in the world around them.

The renowned author and Catholic contemplative Henri Nouwen reminds people of the need for a unique time and place to simply be in the presence of God without rushing to the next activity: “I want to invite you to create space for God in your life.... By creating sacred space, you reserve a part of yourself and prevent your life from

⁴⁰ Adam S. McHugh, *The Listening Life: Embracing Attentiveness in a World of Distraction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 58.

completely being filled up, occupied, or preoccupied.”⁴¹ Creating a regular and intentional time of silence and stillness before God is a necessary and often missing component in the Pentecostal world. People need to be saved, healings need to occur, and problems need to be solved that must be petitioned before God. These are necessary, but first, perhaps, listening to what God would say about those needs is even more important. This listening leads to a growing awareness of the internal longings and desires of people and how God may want to address them.

Awareness in Community

The emphasis and appreciation of the community within the Catholic Church also reflects the life of Christ and can be studied for the spiritual development of Pentecostal ministers. Pentecostalism primarily emphasizes the individual’s decision to follow Christ and the subsequent work of the Holy Spirit to baptize the individual. Individual gifts and callings are highlighted and taught. In contrast, Catholics include a communal nature, which emphasizes that individuals are important, but all are connected and bound together as the body of Christ, stretching through the millennia.

In 1969 and 1970, as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal began to grow, both the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal Church recognized the need for actual dialogue between the two groups. Three gatherings took place between 1969 and 1989 to determine what points of agreement and disagreements existed and to search for places of unity. From the third gathering called “The Third Quinquennium of the Dialogue

⁴¹ Henri J. M. Nouwen, Michael J. Christensen, and Rebecca Laird, *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith* (New York: Harper One, 2015), xiii.

between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church and some Classical Pentecostals Churches and Leaders 1989” a report, prepared by people from both groups, was released titled “Perspectives on *Koinonia*.”⁴² The report stated,

The difficulties of some Pentecostals with their ecclesial institutions stem in part from frequent emphasis on their direct relation to the Spirit. They forget that the Spirit is given not only to individual Christians, but also to the whole community. An individual Christian is not the only “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19). Roman Catholics have rightly challenged Pentecostals to think of the whole community, too, as a “temple of God” in which the Spirit dwells (1 Cor. 3:16). If Pentecostals were to take the indwelling of the Spirit in the community more seriously they would be less inclined to follow the personal “leadings of the Spirit” in disregard of the community. Rather they would strive to imitate the Apostles who, at the first church council, justified their decision with the following words: “... it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15:28).⁴³

The message being, as agreed to from both parties, that Pentecostals rely heavily on a “personal” connection with the Spirit, but can miss the important element of what the Spirit would do in a community.

Pentecostals value and appreciate the community; it is just done differently than the Catholic Church. Interestingly, this same tension exists within the Charismatic arm of the Catholic Church. Both the Pentecostals and Charismatic Catholics “encourage people to use the charisms of the Holy Spirit for the good of the community.”⁴⁴ The individual believer brings his or her own gift set to the larger church body for the benefit of others. This is needed and valuable. The contrast is noted by two Assemblies of God pastors and

⁴² “Perspectives on Koinonia,” *Pneuma* 12, no. 2 (1990): 117.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 132–33.

⁴⁴ Alva, “Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement,” 155.

noted theologians Cecil Robeck and Jerry Sandidge, both of whom participated in the third quinquennium:

What most Pentecostals fail to take as seriously as the witness to an individual's identification with Christ in this act is the testimony it contains to identification with the Christian *koinōnia*, to corporate identification, to the relationship between the person being baptized and all others who have been baptized and who share in their identification with Christ.”

Thus Pentecostals miss the benefit and blessing of viewing the participation of the larger Church. Pentecostals become so preoccupied with helping others that they neglect to see the benefit they receive in being a member of the body of Christ with all others—past, present, and future.

Throughout its history, the Catholic Church has long understood the blessing and benefit of the communal nature of following Christ. During the 4th and 5th centuries, a movement within the Church hit its peak. Men and women, now referred to as the “Desert Saints,” left city life for the deserts of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. Their intent was to reject the sin of the world around them and embrace a life of solitude and asceticism, hoping to find God in the midst of their daily struggle.⁴⁵ Despite their desire to find isolation from people, they took seriously the importance of having deep and lasting relationships that would aid in the discipleship process. Church historian, Gerald Sittser says, “Every desert saint came under the influence of a mentor or Abba.... Abbas introduced their spiritual apprentices to the rigors of discipleship and instructed them in Christian doctrine.”⁴⁶ The way of the disciple is communal, and the Catholic Church practices this discipline.

⁴⁵ Gerald Lawson Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 74.

⁴⁶ Sittser, 86–87.

One common way of developing people in their spiritual journey is through the use of spiritual directors, or as Sittser mentioned above, mentors. Author and Catholic priest Henri Nouwen wrote, “The goal of spiritual direction is spiritual formation—the ever increasing capacity to live a spiritual life from the heart. A spiritual life cannot be formed without discipline, practice, and accountability.”⁴⁷ The believer uses the community of other believers to find a person to walk alongside her as she grows in her relationship and union with Christ.

Pentecostals occasionally seek out mentors, but rarely spiritual directors; they rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and direction. For Pentecostal pastors, mentors are often seen as coaches who help develop pastoral skills. Author and organizational consultant Bobb Biehl says, “Mentoring is a lifelong relationship, in which a mentor helps a protégé reach her or his God-given potential.”⁴⁸ Biehl intends to mean more than just skill set development, but sadly this is where most people stop. Development of the heart, mind, and soul are painful and difficult. Skills are much easier to work on for people. Pentecostals stop short of heart development and focus on the God-given potential of the task at hand. Mentorship in the Pentecostal stream can look to the great thinkers in the Catholic Church to further develop this idea.

For example, the great Catholic mystic Thomas Merton says, “Though spiritual direction may not be necessary in the ordinary Christian life, and though a monk may be able to get along to some extent without it (many have to!), it becomes a moral necessity

⁴⁷ Nouwen, Christensen, and Laird, *Spiritual Direction*, xiii.

⁴⁸ Bobb Biehl, *Mentoring: Confidence in Finding a Mentor and Becoming One* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1996), 19.

for anyone who is trying to deepen his or her life of prayer.”⁴⁹ Merton’s claim that anyone who wants to deepen his or her life of prayer finds it necessary to have a spiritual director is paradigm-shifting for Open Bible pastors who often prefer the lonely road of self-taught prayer. Forgotten are the stories of Barnabas who walked with and taught Paul. Paul walked with and taught Timothy. Pastors benefit from a soul friend who has walked the path ahead of them and who is willing to accompany them on their journey.

The community of Catholicism is an incredible resource to continue the journey of spiritual development, especially for those in ministry. An exploration of those who have paved a path of spiritual health could benefit current Open Bible ministers who seek to continue grow in their faith and see the fruit of the Spirit in their life.

Spiritual Practices

The third aspect of Catholic Spirituality that Open Bible ministers can explore from their Catholic brothers and sisters is the importance of spiritual practices or habits that shape and form our lives in the manner of Jesus. A helpful spiritual practice within the ancient Catholic Church is liturgy which describes the structure of the service. However, the Catholic Church extends the idea of “liturgy” to the work of all members of the church in multiple areas of life. Pope Benedict XVI says, “The word ‘liturgy’ means the participation of God’s people in ‘the work of Christ the Priest and of His Body which is the Church.’”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Thomas Merton from *Contemplative Prayer* (New York: Doubleday/Image Books, 1971), quoted in Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith, eds., *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*, Rev. and expanded ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 67.

⁵⁰ Rossotti, 36.

When spiritual practices like liturgy are expanded beyond the walls of a church to include the lives of believers, important elements of Catholic Spirituality emerge.

Catholic professor of spirituality and author Ronald Rolheiser says,

In many of the spiritual classics of Christian literature, the writers, oftentimes saints themselves, suggest that we will make progress in the spiritual life only if we, daily, do an extended period of private prayer, and only if we practice a scrupulous vigilance in regards to all the moral areas within our private lives.⁵¹

Notice the connection he makes from the spiritual giants of one's faith between prayer and work. Intentional spiritual habits make possible greater growth on one's path with Christ. When all believers, but specifically in this instance Open Bible ministers, begin to expand beyond the normal prescribed methods of spiritual growth—Bible reading and prayer—to include other spiritual habits and work, the possibility for connection with Christ expands beyond the Open Bible norm. Pastors will be able to experience Jesus in more of their everyday moments, such as, meals, time with friends, on the job, and even at home with their families.

While Open Bible has limited itself to Bible reading and prayer, as discovered in chapter 3, for spiritual development, Catholic spirituality has discovered a host of viable and helpful means to continue to grow and develop. For example, Catholic practical theology professor Marc Henri Lavalley says Saint Ignatius developed his book *Spiritual Exercises*:

to aid persons in recognizing the action of the Holy Spirit in their lives and in being open to its influence in choosing and acting in accordance with God's vision for their lives. A central aspect of this was prayerful, honest, and

⁵¹ Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (New York: Image, 2014), 64.

collaborative attendance to the life, context, and ‘inner movements’ (‘thoughts, affective feelings, and affective acts’) of a person.⁵²

Open Bible strongly affirms the active role and participation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, but has limited training in what this actually means or how to better discern the Spirit’s role in their lives.⁵³

The purpose of intentional daily habits is to begin to train and develop a more Christ-like lifestyle, which includes both heart and actions. Author and Ignatian Spirituality expert Kevin O’Brien says, “Thus, the purpose of the Exercises is very practical; to grow in union with God, who frees us to make good decisions about our lives and to ‘help souls.’”⁵⁴ Structure and intentional planning is helpful even in the spiritual world. Having regular and daily activities that point back to Christ and cultivate the interior of one’s life will strengthen a pastor’s daily life, producing the fruit she so desperately wants to see. The habits can be any activity that intentionally points to Christ. Activities often include study, prayer, worship, communal worship, celebration, fasting, physical exercise, Sabbath keeping, and spiritual direction among others.

Unfortunately for Open Bible ministers, the emphasis has been on the freedom of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide the life of the believer. For example, Azusa Street Revival participator, leader, and key documenter Frank Bartleman wrote in his important work *Azusa Street: The Roots of Modern-day Pentecost*,

⁵² Marc Lavalley, “Practical Theology from the Perspective of Catholic Spirituality: A Hermeneutic of Discernment,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 20, no. 2 (2016): 213.

⁵³ Open Bible’s official statement on the Holy Spirit states, “We believe every Christian should walk and abide in daily fellowship with the Holy Spirit...” Randal Bach, David Cole, and Andrea Johnson, *We Believe: Core Truths for Christian Living* (Des Moines, IA: OBC Publishing, 2015), 225.

⁵⁴ Kevin F. O’Brien, *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2011), 14.

All (worship) was spontaneous. We did not even sing from hymn books. All the old well known hymns were sung from memory, quickened by the Spirit of God.... But they finally began to despise this ‘gift,’ when the human spirit asserted itself again. They drove it by hymn books, and selected songs by leaders. It was like murdering the Spirit, and most painful to some of us but the tide was too strong against us. Hymn books today are largely a commercial proposition, and we would not lose much without most of them.⁵⁵

Bartleman’s complaint is that the service began to become too regimented and planned.

He wanted the Holy Spirit to spontaneously direct the service. This desire to be led spontaneously by the Spirit is the desire in the lives of people today as well. The problem is that there is a need exists for both structure and spontaneity.

Open Bible ministers can look to and benefit from the structure of Catholic Spirituality development. Presbyterian pastor and Benedictine Oblate David Robinson says,

According to Benedict, ‘with no experience to guide them, no rule to try them *as gold is tried in a furnace* (Prov. 27:21)’ they find their life ruled by ‘whatever strikes their fancy’ (RB, 1.8). The Christian life involves both an inner and an outer aspect. There is a creative balance between structure and spirit—between law and grace in Christian formation.... Mere conformity to external laws and regulations, without regard for a personal relationship with God’s Spirit, leads to lifeless faith. On the other hand, when authority and laws are discarded, we too easily allow our own feelings to become our authority rather than the Word of God.⁵⁶

Adapting some of the intentional habits and spiritual practices from the Catholic tradition could also directly aid Open Bible ministers into a greater life of health and fruitfulness.

The Catholic Church has long embraced the idea of intentional habits and practices, often referred to as “spiritual disciplines” in its pursuit of a union with Christ. Lavalley says, “Each discipline attends to lived faith and its practices through

⁵⁵ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980), 57.

⁵⁶ Robinson, xiv–xv.

participative (that is, self-implicating), critical theological reflection directed toward the transformation of praxis.”⁵⁷ These habits are intentionally chosen in such a way to uncover and root out aspects of the believer to make them into the image of God.

Conclusion

The primary means of spiritual development and growth within the Open Bible denomination are through the encouragement of prayer, Bible reading, and for those who want to be pastors or missionaries, Bible college, these too are spiritual practices. They are great and effective ways to grow in our life with God. However, the Pentecostal church has access to an entire different stream of Christ-centered spirituality that it often neglects. These other streams have developed practices, which aid ministers to remain vibrant and fruitful in ministry, rather than burnt out and exhausted. These spiritual practices outside of the tradition can help the Open Bible pastor to experience abundant life.

Detractors of intentional spiritual formation do exist. One reason is because of a genuine misunderstanding of what spiritual formation actually is. Spiritual formation can be seen as another form of New Age thought or one of the eastern religions, but the reality is that it is an intentional process to connect with God.

The Catholic Church is the sibling of the Pentecostal Church. In fact, Pentecostals stand on the shoulders and heritage of the Catholic faith. Certainly, today, many differences exist between the two elements of faith, but at each of their cores is a stream of living water guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. Since this is so, pastors in the

⁵⁷ Lavalley, 208.

Open Bible denomination can study and learn from their Catholic brothers and sisters. Catholic spirituality has developed over two thousand years and offers helpful components that can assist Open Bible pastors in their daily walk with Christ.

The process starts with having a clear sense of identity rooted in being beloved by God and pointed toward one's life in union with Him. A person does not accidentally find himself closer to God, but rather, through intention and practice, develops a life of faith. Prayer is among the central activities that a pastor can begin to develop, but it can look different than what is often taught or seen. In the Open Bible family, primary among the types of prayer are intercession and petition. These are necessary and important, but from the Catholic spirituality, a life of prayerful listening can be cultivated as well.

The need for a growing awareness of self and God based in listening, contemplation, and silence is an important next step for Open Bible. For a denomination whose origin began with speaking in foreign tongues, the idea of listening can be difficult. Silence and solitude are uncomfortable. Open Bible prefers speaking and prophesying. Perhaps considering why is something Open Bible can reflect upon.

The importance of spiritual practices is also seen in Catholicism. The intention between every action and how it permeates all of life is a great reminder to Open Bible ministers. The development of specific activities and habits for the cultivation of a transformed life in Christ has been modeled exceptionally well by the great Catholics. The next chapter will begin to look at how Open Bible pastors can remain healthy and invigorated for a life of ministry in the midst of a world that seemingly seeks to drain the very soul that Christ came to save.

CHAPTER 5:
THE PATH TOWARDS MINISTERIAL HEALTH IN OPEN BIBLE

This chapter identifies how pastors in the Open Bible denomination can begin to live and minister out of the abundant life that Jesus promised in John 10:10. Pastors often give so much of themselves to others that they neglect to care for their own being. Ultimately, pastors end up isolated, alone, frustrated, exhausted, and ready to leave the ministry. Unhealthy pastors that remain in the ministry do so grudgingly, with little hope, joy, peace, or goodness. As discussed in chapter 2, the abundant life is available to all believers now, not just in the future. A way of life exists for pastors to begin to operate from a place of health.

The first step for pastors to begin to walk in health is to know their identity.¹ Pastors often find their identity in their vocation rather than in their personhood and relationship with Christ. Those who begin to identify as a child of God are more likely to operate out of health.² This identity also includes having a clear sense of purpose and calling. Knowing why exactly they are on earth and how they can help improve the world around them is a significant factor for people.

In order to understand one's identity, the pastor must be willing to do the arduous task of self-exploration. A self-aware person is able to lead at a healthier level.³ Those

¹ Trevor Hudson and Jerry P. Haas, *Cycle of Grace: Living in Sacred Balance* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2012), 11.

² Gary L. Harbaugh and Evan Rogers, "Pastoral Burnout: A View from the Seminary," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 38, no. 2 (June 1984): 106.

³ Gary McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 40.

who remain unaware do significant harm to their own life and to people around them. However, when a pastor regularly and honestly assesses her own life by asking questions and truly listening to others, she can become more aware of her strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge facilitates health and growth in individuals.

Third, a pastor who begins the process towards health has an intentional plan to help guide and direct her spiritual journey.⁴ This is not to say God is not active in the transformation process, but rather, a pastor has a responsibility to cultivate and tend to the soil of her own soul. A pastor who intends to grow has intentional steps and practices that shape and direct her life, and God uses these practices to bring transformation.⁵

Finally, a reimagining of success for Open Bible pastors is necessary for the health of their souls. When success is measured by numbers—both bodies in the church and money in the bank—the pastor’s motivation can become sick and unhealthy. However, when pastors operate out of their own Christ-centered identity and work in conjunction with the Spirit, success can look different than how many understand it. For example, success can begin to look like people that are filled with hope, rather than constantly critical. Success can be church members formerly scared to use new innovations, but now begin to take risk by adding lights or new technology. Success can be measured by a noticeable shift from thinking of one’s self to caring for others.

⁴ Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 21.

⁵ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 133.

The Importance of Identity

Chapter 1 discussed Open Bible pastor's problem with burnout, fatigue, and disillusionment. Among the major reasons for this is a loss of identity. Identity is a major component to the health of an individual. Noted American psychologist Erik Erikson says, "A healthy personality *actively masters his environment*, shows a certain *unity of personality*, and is able to *perceive the world and himself correctly*."⁶ A healthy person knows exactly who he is and what purpose he is put on earth to accomplish.

Who Are You?

Knowing who we are and understanding our identity is one of the most difficult parts of humanity. The reasons for this are numerous, but among them are a lack of willingness to invest the effort to discover one's identity, the misplaced areas identity can be found, and the spiritual component of Satan's attempt to distract from discovering a person's identity. The Catholic spirituality expert Henri Nouwen once said, "The greatest trap in life is not success, popularity, or power, but self-rejection, doubting who we truly are."⁷ Nouwen's comment highlights that often people draw their identity from what they have done (or not done) or accomplished, rather than who they are. Self-rejection stems from not being good enough, from not accomplishing enough.

⁶ Erik Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers*, Psychological Issues Monograph 1 (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), 51.

⁷ Henri J. M. Nouwen, Michael J. Christensen, and Rebecca Laird, *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith* (New York: Harper One, 2015), 30.

Misplaced identity is also revealed in the very vocation of ministry. Pastors often use the job as a means to find and establish their identity. South African pastor Trevor Hudson says,

Too often in my work as a pastor I have looked toward others to validate my own personal worth. This tendency renders me vulnerable to that hazardous temptation of trying to be all things to all people. Succumbing, as I frequently do, suffocates the spirit, thins the soul and wearies the body. I find myself disconnected from my depths, living from the outside in and breathlessly running around trying to meet impossible expectations.⁸

Rather than finding their identity in Christ, pastors look to others to bring validity to their existence.

Lest pastors begin to believe that they are alone in needing to have clarity of identity, Jesus Himself needed to be very clear on His identity and purpose. This is seen in all three Synoptic Gospel accounts when Jesus was baptized. Luke 3:22 records that once Jesus emerged from the water after being baptized, His Father in Heaven was heard to say, “You are my Beloved Son: with You I am well pleased.” God gave Jesus identity with those words. He claimed Him as His Son. Henri Nouwen believed this was the most important moment of Jesus’ earthly ministry: “I am firmly convinced that the decisive moment of Jesus’s public life was His baptism, when He heard the divine affirmation.... In this core experience, Jesus is reminded in a deep, deep way of who he really is.”⁹ God’s claim that Jesus was His Son and that He was pleased with Jesus gave Jesus the necessary clarity of identity for Jesus to begin and become effective at His earthly ministry.

⁸ Trevor Hudson, *Discovering Our Spiritual Identity: Practices for God’s Beloved*, Combines and rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010), 25.

⁹ Nouwen, Christensen, and Laird, 28.

Satan too recognized the importance of Jesus having a clear sense of identity. Hudson says, “Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus finds His identity and confidence in His relationship with Abba Father. Little wonder that when the evil one attempts to thwart Jesus’ ministry, the starting point of attack is the casting of doubt upon His identity as the beloved.”¹⁰ Despite the attempts by Satan to cause doubt into who He is, Jesus remained steadfast in the knowledge that He is the Son of God.

The understanding of identity for each person originates in Genesis 1:26: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image.’” Pentecostal scholar and theologian J. Rodman Williams explains the meaning, at least in part: “Man is God’s reflection on earth and in the cosmos.”¹¹ Each individual person has intrinsic value, not because of what she has done or might end up doing; rather it is because her very being reflects the glory and goodness of God. The fact that the pastor exists is enough to indicate that she is valued.

Additionally, just as God told Jesus that Jesus was the “Beloved,” each person is just as much “beloved” by God. Nouwen says, “Being the Beloved expresses the core truth of our existence.”¹² A pastor who understands that he is beloved by God no matter the size of his church does not have to strive for external success, but can rest in the knowledge that the God of the universe knows and loves him. Gary Harbaugh, Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Psychology, and Evan Rogers, say in an article

¹⁰ Hudson, *Discovering Our Spiritual Identity*, 26–27.

¹¹ J. Rodman Williams, “Renewal Theology: God, the World, and Redemption,” in *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective-Three Volumes in One*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 201.

¹² Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World* (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 33.

on pastors and burnout, “[A] truly *adequate* response to a stressful pace in learning and life requires that we attend not only to all the dimensions of our humanness, but also to the question of our identity in Christ, our personal integration as a child of God and our relational integration as Christ’s people, the church.”¹³ The knowledge of identity in Christ brings great strength and contentment.

Remember Your Calling

Healthy pastors not only know they are beloved by God—and this becomes their source of identity—but they also keep in mind the purpose of their life. To be sure, knowing the exact reason a person is on earth takes time and significant listening through trial and error. The process is one of discovery. However, over time the purpose in life continues to be whittled down from generalities to clear specifics. All fruitful leaders have a clear idea of purpose; if they do not, they are not healthy leaders. University of Baltimore economics professor Barry Brownstein says, “A leader must have a theory through which he or she sees the world clearly.”¹⁴ Clarity of purpose and clarity of calling is a necessity for a leader.

Especially in ministry, when people begin to complain that hours are long and salary is little, remembering the call of ministry is essential. Dr. Wayne Cordeiro, a licensed Open Bible pastor who experienced burnout says, “This is one of the keys to long-term ministerial success: know how God has gifted you, know where God has called

¹³ Harbaugh and Rogers, 106.

¹⁴ Barry Brownstein, “Leadership, Impermanence, and Navigating Business Cycles,” *Business Renaissance Quarterly; Pasadena* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 163.

you to be, and then function faithfully in that role.”¹⁵ When an individual knows why he is on earth, he is much more likely to experience joy, excitement, and passion in his vocation and in his life. He is also much less likely to experience burnout and fatigue.¹⁶ Cordeiro says, “I tell people that the two greatest days in your life are the day you were born and the day you discovered what you were born for.”¹⁷ He continued, “You may not know exactly what you are called to do, but you can have a pretty clear idea of who you are, your core identity.”¹⁸ People that have a clear sense of identity are more likely to live fruitful, healthy lives.

Know Your Personal Values

Beyond remembering the pastoral call, a pastor who has clarified his personal values is much more likely to remain healthy in ministry. Values are those principles that guide and direct all areas of life.¹⁹ Values determine what motivates and drives an individual or organization. They are different and unique to each individual, so it is necessary to reflect on the personal motivational aspects for each pastor.

Interestingly, pastors are well-schooled at developing values of their church. Much has been written about the necessity of it. However, many pastors have not

¹⁵ Wayne Cordeiro, Francis Chan, and Larry W. Osborne, *Sifted: Pursuing Growth through Trials, Challenges, and Disappointments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 53.

¹⁶ Robin John Snelgar, Michelle Renard, and Stacy Shelton, “Preventing Compassion Fatigue amongst Pastors: The Influence of Spiritual Intelligence and Intrinsic Motivation,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 45, no. 4 (2017): 249–50.

¹⁷ Cordeiro, Chan, and Osborne, 48.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁹ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Wiley, 2007), 46.

internalized it or considered it necessary in their own life. In their book, *The Truth about Leadership*, leadership experts James Kouzes and Barry Posner, say,

Values represent the core of who you are. They influence every aspect of your life: your moral judgments, the people you trust, the appeals you respond to, the way you invest your time and your money. And in turbulent times they provide a source of direction amid all the depressing news and challenging personal adversities.²⁰

Taking the time to discover his or her own personal values helps clarify who the person is, as well what the organization is about. As mentioned above, much of the problem of burnout and fatigue arises from trying to please others. However, when values are clarified and followed, this becomes less of an issue.

The Need for Vulnerability

The final aspect of identity is not a popular one. As referenced in chapter 3 on the history of Open Bible, much of the denomination's focus is on power and dominion. Open Bible's core identity is often voiced by using the Acts 1:8 as a rallying cry: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." The idea that vulnerability can be helpful is foreign to Open Bible ministers, yet vulnerability is a necessary component of the identity of pastors who desire to operate in health.

Vulnerability is a requirement for healthy leadership. The problem is that vulnerability is often seen as a weakness, rather than a necessity.²¹ However, according to vulnerability expert, professor, and author Brené Brown, "They [Researchers] found that

²⁰ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Truth about Leadership: The No-Fads, Heart-of-the-Matter Facts You Need to Know* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 34.

²¹ Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* (New York: Gotham Books, 2012), 33–43.

the participants who thought they were not susceptible or vulnerable to deceptive advertising were, in fact, the most vulnerable.”²² She suggests that people who believe they are not susceptible to falling in sin, experiencing burnout, or losing passion for their job are actually the most likely to experience it. However, pastors who are aware of these possibilities are more likely to go through steps to protect themselves from it.

Being aware that human is his created way of being—this seeming limitation is God’s good gift to humanity. Limitation is not bad. Limits are a necessary component to pastoring. Humility is always found in vulnerability: “The practice of being vulnerable is a form of humility that accepts the limitations of humanity.”²³ Awareness of limitation provides the opportunity to take the necessary steps to guard against burnout. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary’s Kyubo Kim says,

When people fail to be vulnerable, however, they have to take a risk with potentially destructive results. Many researchers have found that concealing vulnerability because of shame is highly correlated with harmful behaviors, such as addiction, depression, eating disorders, bullying, suicide, and abuse.

Not admitting vulnerability is not strength; it is foolishness and provides a greater likelihood of failure. Wise pastors know their limits and limitations and seek to preserve their abundant life. This all starts with the next step: awareness.

The Importance of Awareness

In order to know the identity, purpose, and values of an individual, that individual must first have an awareness of the problem. Open Bible pastors who seek to become

²² Brown, *Daring Greatly*, 40.

²³ Kyubo Kim, “The Power of Being Vulnerable in Christian Soul Care: Common Humanity and Humility,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 1 (February 2017): 363.

healthy and live abundantly have their eyes opened to the possibility that maybe they are not as healthy as they originally believed. A period of recognition is necessary that reveals that while salvation has been received, transformation still needs to occur. Those that begin this journey towards health have three necessary steps in common; they ask, listen, and connect.

Ask

An important element to understanding awareness returns to the first question at the start of the chapter: Who am I? The pastor who continues to investigate the good and even the ugly of his humanity moves forward in his journey with Christ. The reason the good and bad of ourselves matters is because as Brown stated, “Self-awareness and self-love matter. Who we are is how we lead.”²⁴ Leaders bring their whole person—the good parts and the ugly parts—to every situation.

When a person carefully examines all areas of her life, including her “dark side” as Dr. Sam Rima calls it, then progress can be made to have Christ transform it. In his book, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, Rima says, “Leaders who face their dark side and redeem it accomplish the most over the long haul.”²⁵ Reflection is necessary to begin to understand what parts of a pastor’s life have remained hidden—consciously or unconsciously. One study revealed, “Successful leaders followed a surprisingly

²⁴ Brené Brown, *Dare to Lead: Brave Work, Tough Conversations, Whole Hearts* (New York: Random House, 2018), 11.

²⁵ McIntosh and Rima, 55.

consistent path when confronted with the disruption of adversity. Three stages of response or rebound emerged: disillusionment, reflection, and transformation.”²⁶

Many pastors have experienced burnout. For example, in a national survey among Open Bible pastors in 2019, when asked how often they feel lonely, one being “rarely” and ten meaning “all of the time,” the average response was 4.8.²⁷ Thus, approximately half of the time pastors feel lonely. Loneliness and isolation can be significant contributors to burnout.²⁸ Once this is recognized, the next step is reflection. Pastors who ask the difficult questions of themselves and from their friends take the necessary steps for growth. This process requires much risk and vulnerability. It can be painful.

Suggestions for how this step is done include such bold action items as seeking out a professional counselor and asking others their honest opinion of the pastor without retribution or defensiveness. Few people will actually give honest feedback because they do not want to be seen as cruel, so the pastor will need to find people he trusts and who are willing to share. However, the process starts by genuinely asking what potential dark sides are lurking underneath the surface.

Listen

After a pastor begins to ask himself, God, and others who he is and what potential blind spots he is missing, listening is required. For many pastors, the ability to listen is

²⁶ Charles R. Stoner and John F. Gilligan, “Leader Rebound: How Successful Managers Bounce Back from the Tests of Adversity,” *Business Horizons* 45, no. 6 (November 2002): 19.

²⁷ Open Bible Churches, “National Survey on Soul Care,” April 10, 2019.

²⁸ Diane J. Chandler, “The Impact of Pastor’s Spiritual Practices on Burnout,” *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 64, no. 2 (2010): 2, EBSCOhost.

not as intuitive as it may seem. Pentecostal history began on Azusa Street through usage of the mouth. The gift of speaking in tongues and the gift of prophecy are highly emphasized in Open Bible culture. Both gifts are primarily speaking gifts. Second, pastors are often solicited for information, advice, and counsel. Many pastors are gifted in wisdom and love to use this gift to the benefit of others. They often use their voices to preach sermons and in many ways are the voice of God to people. The commonality among these elements is the activity of speaking.

Pastors love to talk. In fact, this author owns a t-shirt that I often wear to pastor events that says, “Your secret is safe with me, I wasn’t even listening.” Azusa Pacific University professor and pastor Dennis Okholm says, “Listening. It’s not something for which Protestants are usually well known. In our activist piety we have tended toward the prophetic pronouncements rather than quiet listening.”²⁹ Pastors, especially Open Bible pastors, have the emphasis of their ministry placed on speaking, rather than listening.

The ability to listen is a great lesson that can be learned from Catholic spirituality and from the mystics as they take listening seriously. Jesuit priest and author James Martin says, “Listening is a lost art. We *want* to listen, we want to *think* we’re listening, but we are often so busy planning what we’re going to say in response or what advice we’re going to give, that we fail to pay attention.”³⁰ Listening requires tremendous humility because it requires one to be fully present and engaged to either God or to the person in front of them. It requires the ability to pay full attention to the other, rather than

²⁹ Dennis L. Okholm, *Monk Habits for Everyday People: Benedictine Spirituality for Protestants* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 38.

³⁰ James Martin, *Jesuit Guide to Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* (San Francisco: Harper One), 255.

thinking about what to say next that might sound important or helpful. Listening takes considerable effort.

Certainly much of the problem with listening is that the world is busy.

Distractions are everywhere. In a poem about walking in the woods, Wendell Berry wrote:

I walk on,
distracted by a letter accusing me
of distraction, which distracts me
only from the hundred things
that would otherwise distract me
from this whiteness, lightness,
sweetness in the air.³¹

His point is that he should be enjoying the wonder and beauty of creation around him but instead his focus and attention are on other matters. He is distant from his present moment. Most people are not unlike Berry, who—even though his body is in one place—has his mind, emotions, and will in another. The constant activity around grabs the attention of the unaware soul.

Listening requires the ability to pay attention to one's present moments. Author Ruth Haley Barton says, "Learning to pay attention and knowing what to pay attention to is a key discipline for leaders but one that rarely comes naturally to those of us who are barreling through life with our eyes fixed on a goal."³² Pastors can become so busy that often they are not even aware that they are not paying attention. Listening and attentiveness require work and the ability to focus and be present in the moment.

³¹ Wendell Berry, "I," in *This Day: Sabbath Poems Collected and New 1979—2013* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2013), 73.

³² Ruth Haley Barton, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 63.

Twentieth century missionary and mystic Frank Laubach made listening his goal. His audacious plan was to be consciously aware of God's presence for at least one second of every waking moment. He says, "But this year I have started out trying to live all my waking moments in conscious listening to the inner voice, asking without ceasing, 'What Father, do you desire said? What Father, do you desire done this minute?'"³³ Taking time to actually listen to God and to others is necessary for a healthy pastor. Periods of silence and solitude allow the practice of listening to develop over time.

Connect

The final aspect of awareness is connecting with others. US-American culture is very individualistic. Open Bible idealizes, as mentioned in chapter 3, the church-planting maverick who drops into a location and builds a church from scratch. The problem is that US-American culture and this Open Bible ideal often lead pastors to lonely and isolated lives. Christ designed people to be communal. People were made for community.

Pastors who have friends beyond the church are more likely to remain healthy and vibrant. Philosopher and Christian author Dallas Willard says, "As firmness of footing is a condition of walking and secure movement, so assurance of others being *for* us is the condition of stable, healthy living."³⁴ Friendships help keep people healthy. Pastors benefit from having meaningful friends inside and outside of their local church.

³³ Frank Charles Laubach, *Letters by a Modern Mystic: Excerpts from Letters Written to His Father* (Colorado Springs, CO: Purposeful Design Publications, 2007), 4.

³⁴ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 179.

Chapter 1 describes how the life of a pastor and his family can often become lonely. True friendship is often difficult to cultivate. The reality is that friendship does take work. The cost of not having a friend, however, is even more expensive. Seeking friendship is a risk and requires the aforementioned vulnerability. Some people will accept these attempts, while others will reject them. However, pursuits of friendships are worth the risk. Co-founder of Global Leadership Initiatives Dr. Robert Elkington says,

It [Community] may be that one of the ways in which pastors can be assisted in coping with situations of adversity in the ministry is to ensure that they take time to cultivate meaningful relationships with other pastors and with other people outside of the ministry. If these relationships are cultivated at the outset, they will serve as great bulwarks in the face of adversity in the ministry.³⁵

Friendships keep people in the ministry and keep them healthy along the way.

Today's society enables the ability to remain closely connected despite the distance if one is intentional. Asking a person to have regularly scheduled conversations requires vulnerability. Risk is necessary to continue to pick up the phone and call, video chat, or text, even when a person has not responded immediately. Friendship requires grace when people are slow to respond, but ultimately a healthy pastor has friends, both inside and outside of the church.

Another significant person to connect with is someone who can be a coach, mentor, or spiritual director. Proverbs 19:20 says, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future." A wise individual courageously seeks out someone to offer insight along the journey of ministry. Spiritual directors or coaches can point out blind spots to help keep the pastor healthy. The financial

³⁵ Robert Elkington, "Adversity in Pastoral Leadership: Are Pastors Leaving the Ministry in Record Numbers, and If So, Why?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34, no. 1 (August 12, 2013): 11.

investment of hiring a coach, spiritual director, or therapist might initially seem high, but in the end is worth the cost. The amount of time, energy, and pain that they can save often far exceeds the hourly rate, especially when considering alternative “fees” often include such issues as fatigue, burnout, isolation, or even moral failure.

Nouwen says, “A spiritual director...is not a counselor, a therapist, or an analyst, but a mature fellow Christian to whom we choose to be accountable for living our spiritual life and from whom we can expect prayerful support in our constant struggle to discern God’s activity.”³⁶ While not common among Open Bible ministers, perhaps spiritual direction, an intentional prayerful friend, can begin to aid pastors as they lead their congregations. After all, pastors would agree that their congregants use them as a spiritual guide, so would they too not benefit from such an individual?

The Importance of Practices

One aspect of the discipleship journey is to become aware of the areas of unhealth in a pastor’s life. To actually begin to change is a separate matter. A person does not often change simply because they desire to so. Even the apostle Paul had difficulty reconciling what he desired to do with what he actually did: “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.”³⁷ The process to begin to reconcile desire with action begins with an awareness for identity, moves to an intention to change, and necessarily requires

³⁶ Nouwen, Christensen, and Laird, 23.

³⁷ Rom. 7:18–19.

practice. The ultimate goal of this process is to practice activities that enable a person to, over time, consistently respond to each event throughout the day in a Christ-like manner. Since He is the Source of life, this would help pastors to consistently live a fruitful, abundant life in Christ.

Intention

Transformation requires more than desire; intentional steps are needed to bring about change. In order for a pastor to become a healthy, Christ-centered person living abundantly, there must first be an intention to do so. People become close followers of God only through purposeful actions.

Some concern may exist regarding the human control one has on becoming a disciple of Christ. This author is not asserting a works-based salvation plan. This process proceeds salvation—a discipleship plan. God is the giver of salvation, after which one must humbly submit to God's authority and will. In salvation God gives, we accept. In discipleship God transforms—we practice. Dallas Willard says, "Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning."³⁸ Willard goes on to say, "Our part in this transformation, in addition to constant faith and hope in Christ, is purposeful, strategic use of our bodies in ways that will retrain them, replacing the 'motions of sin in our members' with the motions of Christ."³⁹ While God does the transforming work of shaping people into His image, only people who intentionally work to become like Him

³⁸ Willard, *Great Omission*, 61.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

can accomplish it. The life of a Christ-follower has two aspects—God’s part and the individual’s part. The person’s responsibility is to take the necessary steps to obey Christ.

Pentecostals have a great awareness of the need for evangelism and for the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals. Chapter 3 details some of the successes and considerations of this Pentecostal aim. However, they have neglected two important aspects necessary for spiritual health—intention and practice. Pentecostal pastors, therefore, can take much more seriously the need for intention in their spiritual journey.

Kelly Kopic, professor of theological studies at Covenant College, says,

Justified saints who have received the infusion of God’s principle of life by the Spirit are still called to engage, respond and be full of activity. Those who neglect spiritual disciplines, and act as if human agency is irrelevant to holiness, misunderstand both God’s creation and re-creation. If we do not participate through the ‘exercise of grace,’ then we *risk finding ourselves ‘decaying’* [italics mine].⁴⁰

The work of Christ-followers is to intentionally practice habits that bring about the possibility of Christ-like transformation. The avoidance of intentional action steps risks decay.

Another important hurdle for Open Bible pastors to overcome within their framework for spiritual health is the perception that much of the transformation is immediate and expressive. Because of strongly held beliefs that healing is always available, which includes the healing in the spiritual life as well, a distinct plan of how to progress with Christ is not well developed.⁴¹ Additionally, due to the exuberance and enthusiasm of the worship experiences, as well as the often-supernatural testimonies,

⁴⁰ Kelly Kopic, “Evangelical Holiness: Assumptions in John Owen’s Theology of Christian Spirituality,” in *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 113–14.

⁴¹ The history of Open Bible in chapter 3 covers this material.

daily living and intentional progression is not emphasized. US-American pastor and author Eugene Peterson writes regarding his time growing up in the Pentecostal church,

I know many wonderful people in Pentecostalism but, in retrospect, not many pastors. There is a lot of energy in Pentecostalism, exuberance and praise and commitment—the *livability* in *real* life—firsthandedness, immediacy... I needed a context for developing patient attentiveness to the ways that holiness develops over a lifetime, which necessarily includes stretches of boredom and pain and suffering.⁴²

He asserts the blessings of his Pentecostal heritage while expressing the missing experience of ordinary daily planning and intention to grow and develop as a Christ-follower. Unfortunately, people do not naturally progress towards health. Intentional planning is essential for the health and development of pastors.

Integration

An important question is why intention and action are necessary in the development of a healthy soul. For example, why did the apostle Paul have such difficulty doing what he wanted or not doing what he did not want? The answer is that sin separates humanity. The sin discussion often emphasizes the separation of humanity from God and even from other people, but rarely mentioned is that sin has also caused separation within individuals.⁴³ This separation within each person has created different autonomous parts, which do not always act harmoniously with the others, as seen through Paul.

⁴² Eugene H. Peterson, *The Pastor: A Memoir* (New York: HarperOne, 2012), 217.

⁴³ James Bryan Smith, *The Magnificent Story: Uncovering a Gospel of Beauty, Goodness and Truth*, Apprentice Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2017), 76.

The different parts of a person have unique desires, needs, and uses. Richard Schwartz, a family therapist who developed the Internal Family Systems theory, defined the parts of an individual as “a discrete and autonomous mental system that has an idiosyncratic range of emotion, style of expression set of abilities, desires, and view of the world.”⁴⁴ Different components of a person’s humanity include a spirit, a mind, a body, relationships, and a soul.⁴⁵

The spirit of a person is what gives the person direction. Dallas Willard describes it as the core of a person’s being. It is the desire center for every individual. The mind aspect is made up of two different, but complimentary, components. It is the emotion and the thought of a person. Emotions and reasons are separate and distinct from the spirit. A pastor can desire to be a healthy pastor, doing what is best for the congregation, but out of fear of hurting people, can give great excuses why he is unwilling to not let an underperforming staff member go, ultimately losing credibility with other staff members, hurting the church, and damaging the other person.

The third component is the body. Every person has a body made of flesh and bones. This is where the action of an individual takes place. Every activity is done involving the body, which needs formed into the image of God. Yet bodies have habits that have been formed over a lifetime. Author Charles Duhigg says, “Habits are powerful, but delicate.... They shape our lives far more than we realize—they are so strong; in fact, that they cause our brains to cling to them at the exclusion of all else, including common

⁴⁴ Richard C. Schwartz, *Internal Family Systems Therapy* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), 34.

⁴⁵ This is developed from chapter 2 of Dallas Willard’s *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012).

sense.”⁴⁶ In order to change habits to be shaped into a more Christ-like image, intention and the body must be engaged. Willard says, “Spiritual formation is also and essentially a bodily process. It cannot succeed unless the body is also transformed.”⁴⁷ Intentional work of developing habits helps bring about the desired goal of Christ-centered transformation.

Fourth, relational components are an oft-forgotten aspect of humanity. A person is greatly impacted by the people around them. Their community affects their life. The final component is the soul. Willard says, “The deepest part of self...has the capacity to operate (and does, largely, operate) without conscious supervision.”⁴⁸ When it is aligned with Christ, the soul has the capacity to glue the separate aspects of the self back together. The soul begins to re-integrate what sin has dis-integrated.



Figure 1. An integrated person before sin⁴⁹ Figure 2. A disintegrated person after sin⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Charles Duhigg, *Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2014), 25.

⁴⁷ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 36.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁹ Figure is this author’s diagram based off of a session at The ReThink Conference in Atlanta, GA by Jimmy Mellado called “Strong Souls, Healthy Teams,” April 2016. Used with permission.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

The spiritual habits and practices discussed below begin to re-integrate the separated pieces of a person. The soul acts as an adhesive that brings the parts that once acted separately and chaotically within a person to into alignment with the desired result. The body is a necessary component to all human activities. This is why practicing, disciplining oneself is essential for an individual. Practices help develop the body to realign the other components of a person to one who is more Christ-like in behavior, attitude, and desire.⁵¹

As disciplines are practiced, God uses them to shape people into His image who will more and more be like Him. Aspects of humanity will continue to be transformed into who He is and what He is like. The natural outflow of life will be one that is filled with the fruit of the Spirit. Willard says, “As we increasingly integrate our life into the spiritual world of God, our life increasingly takes on the substance of the eternal.”⁵² Since pastors bring themselves—including the good and the bad—into every situation, becoming the most holistically healthy they can be is their best opportunity to see fruit produced in their lives. This is why intentional habits are so necessary. God uses habits to reintegrate the self again.

Habits

Once establishing the intention of a specific plan, the next aspect to put into place is the habits that will accomplish the intention. People are shaped by what they actually do. James K. A. Smith, a Christian philosophy professor and author, says, “Both the

⁵¹ The previously mentioned *Renovation of the Heart* by Dallas Willard has insightful comments about the necessity of the body being involved in the spiritual journey in chapter 9.

⁵² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 82.

philosophical tradition and recent cognitive psychology emphasize that our dispositions or automatic habits are acquired and shaped by practices. These are rituals and routines that train our bodies, as it were, to react automatically in certain situations and environments.”⁵³ The habits that we develop train our bodies to live as we intend. If a pastor intends to live a Spirit-filled, Christ-centered life, then she will put into place habits that will transform her actions.

Habits put into action are one’s intended result. Intention alone will not work. Well-intended people are well known for not accomplishing what they intend. Menlo Church pastor John Ortberg says it well: “Habits eat will power for breakfast.”⁵⁴ The habits one has, whether good or bad, will determine whether he reaches his desired results.

The question necessary to ask then is, what habits develop the soul, especially for pastors? The scope of this writing is not to consider or explain all of the possibilities, but rather, to discuss the need to develop spiritual habits that serve a pastor’s life with God.⁵⁵ However, for the sake of Open Bible pastors, several will be mentioned. Previously stated in chapter 3 is the primacy Open Bible pastors place on prayer and scripture reading. In chapter 4, Catholic spirituality was explored with a specific look at the importance of silence and solitude. Throughout its history, Open Bible has been known as people of

⁵³ James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 81–82.

⁵⁴ John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 150.

⁵⁵ Many great resources exist to discover spiritual exercises that will develop the soul. Some of the best include Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2009); Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth, rev. ed.* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988); and Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).

prayer. This is important and necessary. However, the style of prayer can continue to progress. Primarily, Open Bible prayer emphasizes petitions and supplications, asking God for needed items. If Open Bible ministers begin to add silence and solitude to their prayer life, as seen in Catholic spirituality, growth can be seen. Silence can be uncomfortable, but it is necessary for listening to God. Instead of being the primary speaker, Open Bible pastors can use silence to practice listening.

Silence and solitude also wage war against the perils of busyness in society today. Pastors are constantly on the move with demanding schedules. However, adding silence and solitude to life reminds a pastor that God is in control. It stills the chaos around and restores order to the soul. Silence and solitude allow a person to once again put Christ back on the throne of life, rather than rushing to yet another meeting—accomplishing much for Christ, but not being with Christ. Adding silence and solitude to prayer for Open Bible pastors will be transformational in how they view and live life.

Other examples are discussed in chapter 2 in the discussion of how Jesus lived His life. Significant habits for further exploration include, but are not limited to, celebration, study, worship, memorization of selected Bible passages, physical exercise, gathering with friends, and fasting.

Reimagined Success

A final but significant aspect to help pastors remain healthy in ministry is to reimagine the definition of success. For many pastors, the idea of success is a large church building filled with people expanding into several campuses. Too often, numbers—both dollars and people—define success for pastors. The mantra is often heard

“Growth is a sign of health.”⁵⁶ The emphasis is always on people coming into the church building. The result, however, is that pastors are left weary and frustrated that, they serve and give their life for the church, but it does not grow. The ideal of success in numbers is discouraging.

However, if success were reimagined to not be the amount of people in the church, but were instead defined as people making progress in their daily walk with God and becoming a witness in the community, perhaps the discouragement would become less frequent, improving the soul. Robert Elkington suggested,

If the goal of the church is to serve as God’s light in the world, sent into the world by the risen Saviour, perhaps it is essential to change the measurement of success and hence redefine the degree to which the church is serving as a missional community that seeks to make disciples and to shine as light in the darkness, and not the degree to which it attracts large crowds, the expectations upon the leadership of the church and especially the pastors will also change dramatically. This may then lead to a greater sense of satisfaction and health on the part of all the members who form the church body.⁵⁷

If numbers are no longer the goal, but rather transformation and making a difference, in many ways the pressure is significantly lessened. The outer performance goals create a heavy burden often unmanageable, but if the goal is transformation, Christ becomes the focus. He becomes responsible for transformation, not pastors. The role of pastors becomes one of providing opportunities to be transformed, teaching how to remain connected to Jesus, and experiencing abundant life in Him. This is far less stressful than trying to increase numbers in a church.

⁵⁶ Paul D. Borden, *Direct Hit: Aiming Real Leaders at the Mission Field* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 75.

⁵⁷ Elkington, 9.

Fruitfulness and abundant life will flow out of an individual who remains connected to Jesus. This is clearly seen in John 15 when Jesus says that He is the vine and His followers are the branches. A fruitful ministry is not necessarily a large church. A fruitful ministry is one that takes on the character of Jesus, and He is the One that produces the fruit. Rather than focusing on how large a congregation is, one can begin to assess how connected to Christ people are and help them draw ever closer to Him.

This is not to leave out evangelism. Healthy people will be a light to the dark world. Healthy people care about the needs and concerns of others, especially the need for Jesus. Professor Robert Mulholland says spiritual formation is “a process of being formed in the image of Christ for the *sake of others*” (italics mine).⁵⁸ As pastors become more like Christ, their passion for others, including those not connected to Christ, will grow. As a church body becomes healthier and connected to Christ, they too will desire to see more people come to know Him.

Conclusion

Open Bible pastors desire to grow ever closer to God. The problem is that many do not know how and are trapped in a lifestyle that is sucking the life from them. Rather than living an abundant life that Jesus promised is available, they are frustrated, lonely, and discouraged.

Jesus offers another way to live. He has given life. Once eternal life has been received, pastors can know their true identity as a child of God—chosen, called, and

⁵⁸ M. Robert Mulholland and Ruth Haley Barton, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, revised and expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 19.

created by God the Father. Knowing this identity, which includes knowing his gifts, calling, and abilities, as well as having a clearly defined purpose in life, helps him have hope and meaning. He is far more likely to experience the abundant life of Christ.

The healthy pastor eventually becomes aware of who she is. She begins to ask questions internally and externally about how she can grow and improve in her daily walk. It is a painful journey. Having weaknesses exposed is not for the faint of heart. Only pastors who bravely risk vulnerability move beyond awareness and seek to implement their discoveries.

The need to establish key practices from what has been learned is essential. To only become aware, but do nothing about it does not help the spiritual journey. Healthy pastors intentionally create habits that will help shape them into God's image.

Finally, as the pastor begins to experience health, the goals of ministry change. Instead of searching for more people to attend church, the goal becomes for people to be transformed into Christ's image. The benefit is that when pastors want to see people transformed, this too will help them reach more people, but the motivation has changed. Rather than a self-seeking motive, the reason for ministering becomes "for the sake of others."

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Just as I unintentionally lost my way as I ran through the unfamiliar streets of Vancouver, WA, Open Bible pastors have lived their ministerial life on the run, and many have gotten off course. Instead of living abundant, vibrant lives filled with the fruit of the Spirit, many pastors are trying to hold on to their churches, their families, and their hope. They are discouraged and lonely. They believe God can do great things, but the joy, peace, and hope of life is not present.

The path back to health is not an easy route. It, too, is unfamiliar to most Open Bible pastors. Most are simply not aware of the Open Bible heritage and identity that is a part of who they are as leaders and as a pastors. The church family they have been grafted into is uniquely placed by God for extraordinary purposes, but most are unfamiliar with the key elements that make Open Bible unique.

The Root of the Problem

Open Bible ministers face a problem that is common to society: the world is chaotic and demanding. A vocation such as ministry complicates matters because ideally a pastor is working for something beyond himself and even the world around him. He tries to connect people with God. The sacrifices required for this endeavor are many. Time away from family, decrease in pay compared to the secular and for-profit market place, expectation of parishioners, and competition among local and global churches all make pastoring a congregation difficult. These complications cause a pastor to feel

isolated, discouraged, lonely, and hopeless. Burnout begins to settle into the soul of the pastor.

A significant part of the problem of burnout is a loss of identity. Pastors have often not done the necessary work on their own individual person to discover who they are in relation to God's plan for their life. Self-deception, the idea that one is not truly aware of her own strengths, weaknesses, and especially blind spots, is pervasive and prevalent in ministry. Pastors simply do not know who they are and the effect they have on others. This lack of self-knowledge then leads pastors to engage in a myriad of activities that ultimately lead to burnout.

Pastors who have a strong sense of identity, which includes purpose and meaning of life, are significantly less likely to experience burnout. Roadblocks that arise in ministry do not crush the pastor, as his identity is not built on the success or failure of the church, but rather on who he is in relationship to God. The focus transitions from one of activity to one of identity. The healthy pastor knows the best gift she can provide for her congregation is for her to have a deep and meaningful relationship to Christ.

Jesus Showed the Way

Beyond the uncertainty of an identity, another problem that leads pastors to an unhealthy life is a misunderstanding of salvation. Open Bible pastors primarily adhere to the theological stance that focuses salvation on the events that happen after death, meaning that eternal life does not actually begin until one is in Heaven after they die. The focus is placed on the after-life and the hope that, once there, finally peace, healing, joy, and goodness can be experienced. One of the many blessings that Jesus provided for

humanity during His time on Earth is a recalibration of the opportunity to experience life as God intended today without the need to wait until death.

Scripture does spend significant time anticipating the culmination of all things when God ultimately restores creation to follow its Creator. Jesus, though, through His life and ministry reveals that the process can begin right away. He lived in such a way that Open Bible pastors can study and emulate so that they can have abundant lives while ministering. Jesus was fully divine, and He was also fully human. While He walked the desert lands of Israel, He functioned fully as a human. Paul wrote in Philippians that Jesus “emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man” (2:7). The relevance of this is that Jesus was human like everyone else. He grew tired, weary, frustrated, and hungry, and He experienced joy, love, and acceptance. He knew the benefits and problems of humanity—all while He lived a highly visible life of ministry for three years that was demanding on every aspect of His humanity.

Even though the emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual toll was high throughout His ministry years, Jesus lived a healthy life. As He grew and matured, Jesus relied on His Father in Heaven and on the Holy Spirit to guide His every thought, action, and step. He was able to live this way—not because He was God, although He is—but because He established rhythms and routines in His life that helped Him develop into the person that He desired to be. He established habits and specific practices that the Holy Spirit used to shape and mold Him.

The writers of the Gospels reveal that Jesus’ regular habits included eating, praying, attending worship, spending both time with friends and time in solitude, among others. These regular habits that He practiced throughout His life are what sustained Him

during His years of ministry and allowed Him to stay closely connected to the Father, which brought the fruit of abundant life. Open Bible pastors can begin to explore these habits and incorporate them into regular and daily activities. These activities are not solely for Jesus alone, but for all of His disciples to be shaped into His image.

The Blessings and Concerns of the Open Bible Heritage

Open Bible pastors are in a unique and divinely-placed church family and can begin to consider how to structure their life as Jesus did, so that they will be shaped and molded into His image. One of the many characteristics of Open Bible pastors is an emphasis on individualism—the importance of the individual for salvation, the unique gift and role the individual plays in the Church and community, and the responsibility of the individual to God. All of these components are necessary and true. So, too, is the reality that community is an important element to the life of the believer and that community extends to all of the Open Bible family—past and present. This church family still plays a significant role in each pastor and how they can continue to grow and develop in their spiritual journey.

The Open Bible denomination is a branch that originated from the 1906 Azusa Street Revival, which has since grown into a theological family commonly known as Pentecostalism. Primary among the distinctives of the Pentecostal belief structure is that Jesus is the Savior, Healer, Baptizer, and Soon-and-coming King. The results of these components are that Pentecostals, among whom Open Bible is considered one, place heavy emphasis on salvation of souls and evangelism. They also place importance on speaking in tongues and physical healing. Many of their expressions of worship are dramatic and experiential, meaning activity is imperative.

Positively, Pentecostalism has rapidly spread across the globe. The excitement and energy of Pentecostal worship, in many ways, has inserted life into the global Church. Their core distinctives are true—Jesus is each of those characteristics. People needed to be reminded in a fresh way that God still saves, heals, baptizes, and will come again.

Prayer is also extremely significant in the Open Bible denomination. From its inception, regular and fervent prayer with God has been central to what pastors have done. Few decisions have been made without prayer and the need to pray about it. Much of this is because of the strong belief that the Holy Spirit guides and directs every aspect of life. Seeking the Holy Spirit to act in every situation is a part of the culture and identity of Open Bible.

Negatively, though, the emphasis on “doing” ministry has created some of the problems with burnout. People now regularly expect supernatural healings, incredible worship services, and life-altering testimonies at services. When these do not occur with regularity, people wonder where God is. Also, these distinctives all place a heavy emphasis on speaking. The person is the one doing the work. One word of encouragement pastors typically do not need is to talk more. Pastors, especially Pentecostals, are known for being verbose and grandiose. Certainly, leadership needs communication skills and the ability to express ideas and opinions in well-formed ways. Additionally, pastors, by their very nature and calling according to 1 Timothy 3:2, are teachers. However, incorporating more activities that include listening, silence, and solitude help Open Bible pastors know what to say and when to say it.

Moreover, the idea of power for pastors can use further exploration. The Pentecostal perspective of power is predominantly militaristic and dominating. The expectation is that power always conquers. However, this simply is not always true. Jesus used His power for the sake of others by choosing to lower Himself by taking on the form of humanity and then allowing Himself to be killed by others. This use of power was not militaristic or dominating, but was surrender to the will of God. This surrender to the will of God, as well as to the forces of humanity around Him, allowed Him to die for the sake of all, ultimately accomplishing the greater good. Power was seen in His suffering. Open Bible pastors can explore further how suffering, vulnerability, and weakness can actually enhance their ministry and the fruit of the Spirit in their life.

The Ancient Catholic Blessings

From its inception, Pentecostalism has reacted strongly against the Catholic Church. The emphasis placed on traditions rather than on Scripture has created great angst for Pentecostals, who have traditionally opposed, or are at the very least wary, of creeds and church doctrine. However, now that over one hundred years have passed, perhaps now is the time to reevaluate some of the swing of the pendulum and find balance in the blessings of our Catholic brothers and sisters.

The Catholic Church has two thousand years of history that have been well thought out and developed in relation to how to remain fruitful in ministry. They have faithfully sought to live as Christ did. They have established several different orders or schools, each with their own unique system of spiritual development. Each order has its own area of emphasis to live as Christ, but they all place significant attention on core ideas for healthy living. These ideas include the importance of listening, prayer,

intentional habits, and community. All have been mentioned above as areas that Open Bible can continue to explore and develop.

Moving Forward

How does Open Bible move forward as a denomination? How can Open Bible begin to help its pastors live healthy, abundant lives that are full of the fruit of the Spirit? The process begins by bringing about an awareness of the need for health. Many pastors are so accustomed to being unhealthy that they truly and tragically know no other way. They have mistakenly believed that their lot in life is to continue to be unsatisfied, unfulfilled and lonely. God wants so much more for His people than this. A family member of mine believed himself to be in excellent shape, but upon a routine doctor's visit it was discovered his body was ravaged with cancer. He simply did not know that his body was deathly ill. He had mistaken pains for old age or normal soreness. Instead, he was dying. The souls of pastors can work in the same way. They can be dying internally, completely unaware-mistakenly misdiagnosing their pain.

The Open Bible denomination is aware that such problems exist and has just recently begun discussions of a national position for the purpose of soul care.¹ This author has sat in many meetings with local pastors who give their best advice, not from their strength or from clarity from God, but through their woundedness cloaked in wisdom. Pastors are skilled at making the natural sound godly. Part of my understanding of this is my own experience of thinking I was healthy. However, after attending

¹ I am aware of this through personal and confidential conversations with several denominational leaders.

seminary for one year, I was forced to deal with my own sickness that I did not even realize was there. I was simply unaware.

A contributing factor to my lack of awareness about my health was that I did not know who I truly was. Not knowing identity, as mentioned in chapter 1 and above, stunts the development of health. As Open Bible pastors gather together at conferences and as friends, regular discussion about personal identity is necessary. Rather than focusing the attention on the size of the church or the incredible programs, discussion about the unique gift set and calling and how those are being used for God's glory and Kingdom can begin.

Currently, Open Bible is in the early stages of developing a Soul Care initiative to aid pastors, spouses, and leaders discover their identity in Christ and help them along their journey. The hope is to bring clarity of their individual role in the Kingdom of God and to give them opportunities for growth. I will be partnering with each region to help them initiate a plan. Each region intends to appoint an individual within the region as the point person for growth among the pastors. They will then begin to provide trainings, retreats, and resources to those pastors desiring growth in this area.

Clarity of identity and purpose is accompanied by specific practices. These practices help shape and transform people into the image of God. Open Bible strongly encourages Bible reading and prayer. Less mentioned is silence and solitude. Other practices like physical exercise are completely neglected. Important options like counseling or spiritual direction have been downplayed for years, but just recently have begun to be discussed in a positive light. Including more intentional elements to the spiritual journey along with the aid of a spiritual director will greatly impact the health of

Open Bible leaders. They will discover which areas they once thought were healthy are actually deficient areas of health. They can begin to bring healing and wholeness to their souls.

The encouragement to use spiritual directors and counselors has just recently begun. The use of these spiritual practices was once considered taboo, but is now beginning to build momentum. In the next few years, Open Bible will regularly direct people to seek spiritual direction and counseling and even occasionally pay for it. This was once out of the question, but the realization that pastors need outside help is finally setting in.

As pastors remember who they are—children of God—and that they have unique blessings that they can provide in their local contexts, hope can be restored. Instead of worrying about success and failure, pastors can be encouraged to live faithfully in their calling regardless of the size of the crowd. Abundant life in Christ can be lived today by Open Bible pastors.

Conclusion

The movement towards health has begun. As more pastors begin to realize that God has another way for them to live rather than lost and lonely, questions and conversations begin to arise. Hope is being restored to Open Bible ministers. Excitement that God can use them in their present condition, and that the size of the ministry is not what God judges, brings hope. The power that has always accompanied the Pentecostal movement can continue with a fresher sense of the Holy Spirit guiding His people to an abundant life that this world so desperately needs to hear about.

A friend of mine in Open Bible oversees youth pastors. Now when he gathers them together over meals, he asks them about their soul. He inquires not how the ministry is going, although it comes up, but he first asks how their relationship with God and others are going. The youth pastors open up and share stories, some even cry because of the turmoil they are going through. These are powerful moments giving up to young leaders in Open Bible who leave the meeting feeling heard, cared for, and reinvigorated for the ministry life. My friend knows that the souls of the youth pastors matter and spent just a few minutes feeding that often-neglected area making a lasting impact.

Pastors can find hope, joy, peace, patience, and goodness while they minister in a world that wants to suck the life from them. They can find it in Christ and in close connection with Him. As John Ortberg, the pastor of Menlo Church says, “And how you live determines the destination of your soul.”² For those who intentionally plan to walk with Christ, the abundant life is possible.

To God be the glory.

² John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 97.

APPENDIX A

Between April 3, 2019 and April 10, 2019 Open Bible Churches released a survey to its pastors in an effort to ascertain the levels of health of individuals within the organization. At the time Open Bible currently had seven hundred seventy-two licensed ministers of which six hundred thirty-four received the survey via email from Open Bible President, Randall Bach.¹ One hundred sixty-eight responses were received by April 10, 2019. The following includes the survey and a summary of the results.

Open Bible Pastors Survey

What geographical region of Open Bible do you live?

- Eastern
- Southeastern
- Central
- Mountain Plains
- Pacific

What is your current position in the church?

- Senior Pastor
- Staff Pastor
- Volunteer
- Spouse

¹ Nicole Kerr, Executive Assistant to Open Bible President Randall Bach, personal conversation with author, April 8, 2019.

-Other _____

How old are you?

-Under 30

-Under 45

-Under 60

-Under 75

-75 or older

Please rank the following on a scale of 1-10.

How often do you engage in spiritual practices for your own life, not related to the ministry, such as prayer, study, silence, fasting, etc.? 1 being lowest and 10 being highest?

1. What is the current level of fulfillment of your life as a whole? 1 as very unfulfilled and 10 as passionately loving life?
2. What is the pace of your life? 1 as not enough to keep me engaged, 10 as my plate is very full with no margin.
3. How often do people tell you that you are a great listener? 1 being rarely, 10 being "I hear this almost daily."
4. How often do people tell you that you work well with others? 1 being rarely, 10 being "I hear this almost daily."
5. How often do you feel lonely? 1 being rarely, 10 being almost daily.
6. How often do you feel connected to God? 1 being "I often wonder if He even cares about me" and 10 being "I sense His presence all throughout my day."

7. To what degree do you feel physically healthy? 1 as extremely poor health and 10 as extremely fit and healthy.
8. To what degree would your family say you are attentive to them? 1 as in not at all and 10 as in completely supportive and engaged.
9. To what degree do financial concerns circle in your thinking? 1 as in I think about them all the time and 10 as in only when necessary.

Please give short answers to the following questions.

1. What three aspects of the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) do you wish were more evident in your life?
2. What areas of your life do you wish you had more self-control, (ie. spending habits, spoken words, sleep)?
3. What would help you strengthen your daily walk with Christ in such a way that the fruits of the Spirit would be more evident in your life?

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The objective of the survey was to understand how the pastors viewed their own health and determine if there were any links that provided keys to understanding the

² Nicole Kerr, Executive Assistant to Open Bible President Randall Bach, personal conversation with author, April 8, 2019.

health of the pastor. The questions sought a variety of different dimensions of each pastor's life to obtain an overall perspective of how the pastor felt and to determine if core issues were related. Additionally, it was determined that the fruit of the Spirit was to serve as the guide of the survey in relation to positive or negative health.

The results of survey indicated Open Bible pastors believed they were incredibly healthy. Numerous comments were made that indicated that the fruit of the Spirit was abundant in their life and they needed no further growth. Comments such as "I am satisfied with all the fruit of the Spirit being active in my life." This same pastor said that no areas of self-control were needed for improvement, and "My consistent, daily walk with Christ fulfills me." However, my personal knowledge of many Open Bible pastors, along with my personal experience of being an Open Bible pastor, helped me discover that self-deception is a significant issue within our pastors. So rather than this survey revealing a healthy organization, one wonders if pastors are unhealthy and are completely unaware. The results left me wondering if the overly optimistic responses pointed to a lack of self-awareness.

The second significant discovery of the of the study related to the question, "What is the current level of fulfillment in your life?". This question had the largest disparity between healthy responses (8+) versus unhealthy responses (7 and below). This seems to reveal that if pastors can find meaning, purpose, and significance in their life they are more likely to positively respond to other areas of their life. If they have a more negative view of their life or lack purpose and meaning they are more likely to respond negatively in other areas.

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