

11-2005

Start Well to Finish Well: A Holistic Formation Model for Emerging Christian Leaders

Guy Michael Chmielecki

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin>

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Chmielecki, Guy Michael, "Start Well to Finish Well: A Holistic Formation Model for Emerging Christian Leaders" (2005). *Doctor of Ministry*. 534.

<https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/534>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

START WELL TO FINISH WELL:
A HOLISTIC FORMATION MODEL FOR
EMERGING CHRISTIAN LEADERS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THE GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

GUY MICHAEL CHMIELESKI

NOVEMBER 2005

PORTLAND CENTER LIBRARY
GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY
PORTLAND, OR. 97223

Copyright © 2005

Guy Michael Chmielecki

All Rights Reserved

DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

GUY MICHAEL CHMIELESKI

PRESENTED: NOVEMBER 15, 2005

**TITLE:
STARTING WELL TO FINISH WELL:
A HOLISTIC MODEL FOR EMERGING CHRISTIAN LEADERS**

***WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ THIS
PROJECT AND APPROVE IT AS ADEQUATE IN SCOPE AND
QUALITY TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY IN
LEADERSHIP IN SPIRITUAL FORMATION DEGREE***

Keith R. Ah

SIGNATURE

12/2/2005

DATE

Thomas F. Johnson

SIGNATURE

12/18/2005

DATE



GEORGE FOX
EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my wife, Heather, for believing in me throughout this project.

Without your endless encouragement and constant belief in me it would have been easy to give up. You sacrificed a lot to help make this happen. From the bottom of my heart I say thank you! We celebrate together!

I would like to thank my son, Derek, for being a great source of inspiration! Daddy is now yours minus one big distraction.

I would also like to thank my friend, mentor and advisor, Keith. Thanks for being willing to walk this journey with me! May God richly bless you for all of your faithful efforts in this endeavor.

Sincerely, Guy M. Chmielewski

START WELL TO FINISH WELL:
A HOLISTIC FORMATION MODEL FOR
EMERGING CHRISTIAN LEADERS

ABSTRACT

by

Guy Michael Chmielewski

The ISSUE: How do we model, and help students to “*start well*” in life, and ministry, such that they can form *healthy patterns and habits* that will *promote growth and fruit* throughout their lives, as well as “*finish well*” without having to deal with issues of *burn-out or moral failure*?

In order to strategically equip our leaders of tomorrow I will create a holistic formation model for the emerging Christian leaders.

In section two of this project, I will make the claim that there are significant elements of a holistic spiritual formation model that can be found lives of Joseph and David in the Old Testament and Jesus and the disciples in the New Testament.

In section three, I will make the claim that the spiritual formation process of John Wesley, as well as his contributions of the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” Christian

Perfection, and accountable discipleship should play a significant influence in this holistic formation model.

In section four, I will make the claim that postmodernism should inform our approach to today's student and a holistic formation model.

In section five, I will make the claim that the Greatest Commandment - to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength – presents the avenues of heart, mind, soul and body as essential elements of a holistic formation model.

In section six I will make the claim that the Second Greatest Commandment – to love neighbor as self – presents the avenues of community and service as essential elements of a holistic formation model.

In the final section I will present my conclusion: a three year holistic formation model that will “begin the process” of spiritual formation for the leader and equip them with “tools” and “practices” that will enable them to continue in their holistic formation throughout their lives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
The Ministry Problem	1
Research Overview	5
CHAPTER 2. SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ...	10
The Old Testament: The Lives of Joseph and David	10
CHAPTER 3. SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	34
The Example of Jesus and the Disciples	34
CHAPTER 4. SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY	55
The Contributions of John Wesley	55
CHAPTER 5. SPIRITUAL FORMATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND THE POSTMODERN STUDENT	84
A look at Spiritual Formation in Today's College Student	84
CHAPTER 6. THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT:	109
Heart, Mind, Soul and Body as Avenues for Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development	109
CHAPTER 7. THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT:	139
Community and Service as avenues for Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development	139
CHAPTER 8. PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER:	159
A Holistic Model for Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development	159
Getting Started	163
The Journey Ahead	166
Year 1	169
Year 2	182
Year 3	192
A Menu of Options	203
Conclusions	226

APPENDIX 1 – A TOOL FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS’ READINESS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS KIND OF PROGRAM 227

APPENDIX 2 – SAMPLE RECRUITMENT LETTER TO FACULTY AND STAFF 228

APPENDIX 3 – A TOOL FOR PERIODIC (RE)ASSESSING AN INDIVIDUAL’S COMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS 229

BIBLIOGRAPHY 231

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry Problem

“Jim, how are you?” Ted asked as they clasped hands and pulled into a bear hug. The two hugged like brothers who hadn’t seen each other in years, and the reality was that it had been ten years since they parted ways on graduation day. They were just arriving back on campus to attend their ten year reunion and both had been looking forward to catching up with the one another. Jim and Ted had both been engaged in full-time ministry since they graduated and although they made many attempts to remain in contact, they were both consumed with the life of a full-time minister and lost touch.

Letting out a deep sigh, half comically – half seriously, Jim finally answered Ted’s question, “not too bad.” Not being someone to talk too quickly about himself, Jim fired back, “how ‘bout you?” Ted, already leaning forward, interested in hearing about what Jim had been up to, stared back at Jim with a paralyzed look in his eyes. Jim could see Ted’s answer before he even spoke it. “I’m fried,” Ted exclaimed, almost understanding his current state for the first time as the words left his mouth. “I’m exhausted physically, mentally, emotionally, and I feel spiritually empty; and it’s only October,” he lamented. The two exchanged a slow nodding half-hearted laugh, as if to say, “Boy is it good to be with you again.”

Jim and Ted, along with about a dozen others, had all been a part of a life changing discipleship group that radically shaped them during their college years. The two sat quietly for a moment before the conversation moved to more of a surface-level for the remaining moments together before they headed into the opening session. Jim and Ted both knew that there would be plenty of time to catch up.

At the conclusion of the session Jim and Ted met back in the lobby and opted to enjoy some coffee at the coffee shop just off campus that they had frequented so often during their academic years. They entered the establishment knowing they would only have an hour before things would be transitioning again at the reunion. The two placed their orders, got their coffee, and found a couple of over-stuffed chairs in the corner of the establishment and were once again off into focused dialogue.

“I feel like I’ve got nothing to give right now!” Ted blurted out. “O.K.,” Jim nodded. “I feel like I’m falling apart, and I’m starting to wonder if I’m any good for any of my students anymore,” Ted agonized. “What do you mean?” Jim asked, somewhat understanding, but wanting Ted to put some “meat on the bones” of what he was suggesting. “I am always tired anymore, and I feel like a candle that has been burning at both ends, as well as, from the middle.” Jim smirked at Ted’s description of his current state, as if to suggest it couldn’t possibly be “that bad.” Ted, however, just stared at the floor with the look of a man who was completely defeated. Without looking up, Ted said, “Last week I actually caught myself giving my students advice that I hadn’t intentionally practiced, let alone considered, in my own life for some time now. I felt like such a phony at that moment, and wondered how I had let myself get to that point.” The pain expressed in his eyes was now coming through loud and clear in his shaky

voice. “I don’t know what to do, and I have no clue how I can get out of feeling like this. What I do know is that something has to change!” Concerned, yet sensing a need for a break in the deep dialogue, Jim eased out of his intense position to allow Ted a moment to be.

The two men sipped their coffee and as Ted eased back into his chair, Jim lightly started in with another question. “So, how long have you been feeling like this Ted?” “I don’t know, I guess it’s been pretty bad the past year or so, but I feel like I can look back and see things changing from the day we left college.” Ted continued, “I just haven’t felt as close to God, or focused on him, as I did back when we were in college. I’m starting to wonder if maybe I was never supposed to go into ministry!?” Ted took another sip of his coffee and stared back at Jim. “Well,” Jim responded, “it can’t possibly be as bad as you’re suggesting... maybe you’re just in a ministry slump right now.”

Ted started in again, “All of this makes me feel like I clearly need to be spending more time with the Lord, because if I were spending a sufficient amount of time with him I’m sure I would be dealing with this better. But I don’t... I feel like he couldn’t possibly want anything to do with me when I’m like this. Besides, who’s got time?! I know that’s a lame excuse, but seriously, I’m so busy and it seems like even if I did feel like God would meet me in that time, I just don’t know when I could eke out the time. How’s that for a horrible confession of the campus minister kind?” Jim simply looked back into the eyes of Ted, not knowing exactly what to say, but wanting him to know that he was there for him.

“It probably wouldn’t surprise you then,” Ted started in again, “to know that when students approach me with personal needs now, I don’t feel like I have anything to

give them. I figure that I need to get a handle on my own life before they'd have any reason to listen to me... I mean seriously, I can't even help myself, so how can I be expected to help anyone else?" "What are you saying Ted?" Jim asked. "I don't know! I've got to believe that the Lord can't want me to keep working in such an influential position in the state that I'm in, but I don't know what I can do anymore. I feel like college, and even grad. school, had really set me up for some great success in ministry. But those days seem like such distant memories. I mean, the small group community that we had in college seems like it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. And I've had a few different mentors since college, but nothing that has 'stuck.'" Jim once again leaned back in his chair, his mind now racing through his own life, and ministry; wondering if he was doing as well as he thought he was.

Wanting to be there for Ted, Jim quickly snapped out of his personal reflection and asked, "Well, who have you talked to about all this?" Ted, shaking his head in disgust, said, "funny you should ask, because you're not the first person I've tried to talk to." "Who?" Jim prodded. "I've tried to bring it up with my current boss on a few different occasions a few years ago when I was first starting to notice some of these things going on in side of me." "What did he say?" Jim asked. "Nothing really," Ted said with a disbelieving look, "he simply stated that these were common stresses that accompanied most people in ministry and that I just need to 'learn to deal with it.' I'm not sure what exactly I was expecting from him... we've never really connected. But somehow I thought that if I needed him that he would be there for me. I wish that I was back in college again!" "What, really?!" Jim said in bewilderment, "Why is that?" "Well, it seemed so easy to connect with God and make him a priority in my life back

then; I had a great support group around me with the all my friends right there, not to mention I felt like I had a much better understanding of who I was and what God wanted me to do with my life. I literally felt like I could conquer the world for God, but now I feel so far from him, so much so, that I don't even know if I'm still doing what he wants me to do in life. If I could only 'recapture' the faith I had back then in a bottle and sip on it in times like this, I think I'd be a lot better off. Not only that, but if I could help my students to somehow maintain a healthy, growing relationship with God, so that they wouldn't have to go through this same kind of pain and agony after they leave campus, then I'd really feel like God had used me to accomplish some great things."

Knowing that bottling up such experiences was not really possible, but sensing that his own life and ministry could definitely benefit from a renewed intimacy and commitment to God as well, Jim pondered what it might take to tap into some of those elements that seemed so prevalent in their Christian college experiences. Engaging God with heart and mind; feeding the soul in numerous settings each day; caring for your body – as the temple in which God dwells; living in Christian community and all of the richness that it has to offer; and extending hands in service to others out of an overflow of what God was doing in me. "A powerful time, those college years, but not someplace we can live out our existence," Jim finally admitted. Ted shrugged his shoulders and nodded in agreement.

Research Overview

The ISSUE: How do we model, and help students to "*start well*" in life, and ministry, such that they can form *healthy patterns and habits* that will *promote growth and fruit*

throughout their lives, as well as, “*finish well*” without having to deal with issues of *burn-out or moral failure*?

As we continue on into the 21st Century, with all of the hopes, challenges, fears and unknowns that we live with, I believe it is essential that we (the Church), decide how we will grow and develop the future leaders of this ever-changing culture. More specifically, I am interested in discerning the direction we need to move as we model what it means to be a growing and transforming Christian leader of today and tomorrow.

What I propose is a holistic spiritual formation model for ministry leaders that will focus on the two Greatest Commandments as a framework for creating “holy” habits and patterns that will help us to “start well,” and “finish well.” More specifically, this model of discipleship will explore the essential growth components of the emerging leader that will enable them to love God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love their neighbor as themselves. This holistic spiritual formation model will enable our Christian leaders to live a life of health and balance, while leading a successful and fruitful ministry.

In order to strategically equip, and appropriately prepare our leaders of tomorrow I will create a three-year spiritual formation model for the emerging Christian leaders on Christian college and university campuses that takes seriously their holistic spiritual formation. The intention of this formational model is to complement the academic training, and experiential growth that our Christian leaders of tomorrow will receive in their Christian academic setting.

In section two of this project, I will present biblical evidence of the need for a holistic spiritual formation model for emerging Christian leaders. I will make the claim

that there are significant elements of a holistic spiritual formation model that can be found in both the Old and New Testaments. Academic education, and “on-site” training, is invaluable to the early development of Christian leaders, however, these two elements are not enough. Holistic spiritual formation is an essential part of the leader’s early development, life-long growth, and is biblically founded. In the Old Testament I will look specifically at the spiritual formation process that both Joseph, son of Jacob; and King David experienced. While Joseph had a rough start, he became an incredible instrument of God. David, although he was not a perfect man, or leader, was known as a man after God’s own heart. Both speak to the need for a holistic spiritual formation model. In the New Testament I will focus on the model of spiritual formation that Jesus had with the disciples. We find imperfect followers, a perfect leader, and elements of the process they went through which allowed them to become some of the first leaders of the Church.

In section three, I will present evidence from Christian history and thought that will further illustrate the need for a holistic spiritual formation model. Specifically, I will look at the spiritual formation process of John Wesley, as well as his contributions of the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” Christian Perfection, and accountable discipleship. These theologies of Wesley contain key elements of a holistic spiritual formation model. Although he presented us with a great model for discipleship, Wesley himself was a man who had many struggles and could have benefited from experiencing a more holistic spiritual formation process himself.

In section four, I will look at what it means to be a Christian leader in a postmodern context. I will explore the postmodern college student and how he/she

differs from previous generations. I will explore elements that today's culture is more aware of like family of origin issues and the dangers that face leaders. I will also explore the impact that culture has on spirituality and leadership.

In section five, I will make the claim that there are significant links between the Greatest Commandments and a solid holistic spiritual formation model. Using the Greatest Commandment [To love the Lord your God with all your mind, soul, heart, and strength] as a guide, I will give evidence that these different areas of mind, soul, heart, and strength play a significant role in the spiritual formation process of the Christian leader. Considering the **mind**, I will focus primarily on cognition and how what we think directly relates to how we act. Considering the **soul**, I will explore the inner urges we all have for significance, acceptance and to be apart of something bigger than ourselves. Considering the **heart**, I will look at how our emotions play into the spiritual formation process. Lastly, considering **strength**, I will explore the role that our bodies and our abilities play in the process. Understandably, there is no secret power that lies in any one of these elements as they stand alone. However, I will argue as they are brought together under the power and grace of God, there is significant space for health and growth to occur.

In section six, like section five, I will make the claim that there are significant links between the Greatest Commandments and a solid holistic spiritual formation model. This time, using the 2nd Greatest Commandment [To love your neighbor as yourself] I will give evidence as to the important role that both **community** and **service** play in the spiritual formation process. Specifically, I will look at the role the Church plays in the life of the individual. I will also look at the role a mentor can have in the spiritual

formation process. Peer groups and/or one-on-one accountability groups will also be a focus of this section. I believe that community service also plays an incredible role in the spiritual formation process and I will explore the ways this “outward expression” of faith significantly impacts the overall process. Again, there is no secret power that can be associated with either of these elements as they stand alone. However, when these elements are brought together under the power and grace of God, I will argue that there is significant space for health and growth to occur.

In the final section I will present my conclusion: a three year holistic formation model that will “begin the process” of spiritual formation for the emerging Christian leader and equip them with some “tools” and “practices” that will empower them to continue in their spiritual formation long after they leave their college or university setting. This growth process must be maintained and remain flexible for making the necessary changes to meet the ever-changing needs of the evolving Christian leader. It will be a model that in some ways is form-fitted to the individual while maintaining common and communal practices. Our goal during this three year process will be to not only grow, and equip, the Christian leaders of tomorrow, but also, establish within them solid habits, mind-sets, patterns and practices that will promote future health and growth in both their personal and professional lives. This model will be holistic in nature, and focus on the spiritual formation of the emerging Christian leader. This model, like any model involving human beings, will be subject to the individuals involved, and all that they bring to the process. I believe this model could be a process that God might use to bring about more healthy and growing Christian leaders at a time when the world is both needing and desiring them.

CHAPTER 2. SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Old Testament: The Lives of Joseph and David

There is much we can learn about spiritual formation and leadership development from the various leaders, and leadership styles, found in the Old Testament. In this chapter I will explore the paths of two different leaders, the roads that led to their leadership, as well as some of the successes and failures they experienced while in leadership. Looking first at the life of Joseph, son of Jacob, I will investigate the events of his life that led to his siblings selling him into slavery, his rise to power within the Pharaoh's regime, and finally the role that his trials within leadership had in shaping and molding him as a leader. In exploring the life of King David I will first look at his unlikely rise to leadership. I will also identify what made David such a successful leader. Finally, I will explore the redemptive process that David experienced after a series of morally poor decisions. In both instances I will identify some of the important characteristics of a leader, key elements that were a part of Joseph's and/or David's growth and development as a leader, and any particular lessons that would be important for us to glean in this study of spiritual formation and leadership development in Old Testament leaders.

Shaped at an Early Age

Joseph

The role that the family of origin plays in the development of any given individual is profound indeed. Whether for the good, or the bad, family units play the single greatest role in shaping the lives of its members. The role that they play in the early development of children, in regards to how they understand themselves, God and others, is no less true today then it was in the day of Joseph, son of Jacob. I wonder if Jacob and Rachel felt the same levels of anxiety and fear that is experienced by many parents today. I wonder if they understood the impact that sibling rivalry played in a child's development, as it was clearly a part of this familial experience. Joseph was not a likely candidate for leadership based on the unfortunate impact his family of origin had in his life.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.¹

Jacob's extreme love and favoritism of Joseph, at the expense of his other children, served to divide the family unit in two ways. First, the favoritism served to *misshape* Joseph's perception of himself. Second, the lavishing of gifts and extra attention caused for *misshapen* feelings and perceptions on the part of Joseph's brothers towards him as well. Consider the ornamented robe. According to Adam Clark, in his commentary on Genesis 37, "Such vestures as clothing of *distinction* are worn all over Persia, India, and China to the present day. It is no wonder that his brethren should envy him, when his

¹ Gen 37:3-4 NIV

father had thus made him such a distinguished object of his partial love.”² James Coffman notes in his commentary on Genesis 37 “How strange it is that Jacob, who himself had been brought up in a household of foolish parental preferences between their sons, and who thus had accurate knowledge of the foolishness of such parental preferences, should have, himself, foolishly indulged in the same wickedness.”³ Whether Jacob realized at the time what was happening, the dynamics within the sibling relationships were being warped.

The extra love and attention bestowed upon Joseph neglected to build within him any levels of sensitivity or humility. Joseph was a young man of seventeen when the Lord began to reveal to him what was in store for his future. It is not surprising that a young man who has received so much special attention from his father, could so easily get swept up into the grandeur of the visions he was having about how God would use his life.

Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.” His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.⁴

² Adam Clarke, “Commentary on Genesis 37,” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*. <http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=037.html> (accessed September 18, 2004).

³ James Burton Coffman, “Commentary on Genesis 37,” *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*. <http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=037.html> (accessed August 9, 2005).

⁴ Gen 37:5-11 NIV

Based on Joseph's privileged upbringing, his response to his dreams is not surprising. Equally predictable, however, should have been his brothers' reaction to his dream and his seemingly *charmed* life.

Jacob may have done Joseph, as well as his family, a large disservice by doting on Joseph the way he did throughout his early years of life. The fact that Jacob was even taken aback by Joseph's dream should have revealed two things at the time. First, Joseph's over-inflated sense of self had gone unchecked for so long that he lacked an appropriate mental filter that could have allowed him to approach his family in a more humble and sensitive manner. And second, the hostility that Jacob and Joseph's other siblings visibly and verbally expressed, should have served as a warning that Joseph's life may have been in danger. Would Joseph's understanding of his dreams, and approach towards his family, been different had his parents taken a different approach in how they raised him? Or his siblings? Joseph may have handled things differently had his parents used their influence to shape his understanding of self, God and others in a humble and self-aware manner from early on in his life. Similarly, Joseph's siblings may have taken a different approach with him had he also been privileged to a different kind of upbringing and familial experience.

The nature of leadership, a position of influence and vision that places a person in the spotlight, provides a stage for glaring deficiencies in a person to be exposed. Lacking important characteristics of humility and self-awareness, Joseph's immediate future, and the fruition of his dreams, was now in jeopardy.

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams." When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. "Don't

shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the desert, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe-the richly ornamented robe he was wearing- and they took him and threw him into the cistern. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it. Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed. So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.⁵

Before Joseph ever had a chance to exercise any kind of *power* over his siblings, they revoked his leadership license and sold him off, thinking that he would be out of their lives forever. There were a number of familial influencers that led this family down this destructive path. Although we do not have any decision in what family we biologically belong to, there are things that we do control within this context. This situation speaks clearly to the important role that parents have in the development and formation of their children. The important characteristics that Joseph's parents should have instilled in him, and his siblings, as their children would now have to be learned and shaped in a different setting.

Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.⁶

David

God chooses his leaders for different reasons than most of the world chooses theirs. If asked to describe the characteristics of a strong leader, most people would use words like: powerful, commanding, charismatic, fearless and courageous. And if asked to describe the typical physical appearance of a strong leader many would probably use words like: muscular, tall, together, well-groomed and beautiful. Many of these

⁵ Gen 37:19-24,26-28 NIV

⁶ Gen 37:34 NIV

descriptors fit the “stereotype” of what we believe leaders should be. This causes us to pigeonhole leaders based on particular personal characteristics. It would appear that in the time of David, the characteristics that men used to describe, or identify a leader were not much different than they are today. Similarly, God has not changed, and we see in the identification of David as King Saul’s future successor that God has a different set of criteria in selecting those who will be his anointed leaders.

The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered, “but he is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.” So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; he is the one.” So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.⁷

In choosing who would replace Saul as King, God did not look at the same list of characteristics that the people of that day would have. Instead, God looked at the interior or heart of a man and found the future leader of Israel out in a field tending sheep. The Lord took what was on the inside, as well as some of his previous experiences and manifested it in the outer actions of this new young leader. It was these character qualities that brought David to stand up to the giant Goliath when no one else was willing.

David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”

⁷ I Sam 16:1, 7, 11-13 NIV

Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you.”

As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.⁸

David’s story should serve notice to those who believe that leadership is a quality that can be viewed on the exterior of an individual. It is true that there are individuals who will have the interior life that matches the favorable exterior characteristics that we all desire in the leaders of our programs. However, when the two do not match up we must be willing to choose inner character over external characteristics.

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father’s house. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt. Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people and Saul’s officers as well. When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and flutes.⁹

As leadership is chosen by the character of the individual and the evidence of the Lord’s favor and work in the life of the individual, the decision to select leadership according to these parameters should become much easier, as the *risks* become dwarfed by the *rewards*. However, this kind of anointed leadership can be viewed as a threat to other leadership that is not in the same intimate relationship with God.

⁸ I Sam 17:32, 34, 37, 48-50 NIV

⁹ I Sam 18:1-6 NIV

When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days. The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known.¹⁰

Developed within Leadership Roles

Joseph – Within Pharaoh's Regime

God often chooses to use challenging situations and scenarios in life to shape us and mold us into the kind of people he wants us to be. At this point in Joseph's life it is probably not hard to imagine that his sense of self and calling were questionable at best. Joseph had been brutalized by his siblings and sold into slavery. The course that Joseph's life had taken would easily be enough for even the godliest of leaders to be crushed, yet somehow God kept Joseph from being trampled. God was not done with Joseph, and superseded his circumstances in order to use him and shape him for his purposes.

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.¹¹

Joseph experienced what can only be described as one of the largest contextual turnarounds in history in a very short span of time. He went from fearing for his life to needing to only concern himself with the food he would eat and nothing else. This is another lesson for leaders to learn: no matter what your circumstances, God is still at

¹⁰ I Samuel 18: 28-30 NIV

¹¹ Gen 39:1-6 NIV

work shaping you and preparing you for his use. It is important to note, however, that God's hand upon us is no guarantee that we will be exempt from temptation and further tribulation.

David – God's Special Anointing

One of the dangers that we face as Christian leaders is passing judgment on the leadership of others. This is a very real temptation when we experience leadership of others that does not seem to line up with what we believe Christian leadership is supposed to look like. When we find ourselves under, or up against, leadership that does not appear to have God at the center, nor God's interests at heart, we may be tempted to disregard that leadership all together. The example of David and Saul points directly to this challenge:

Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah. Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, and you will feel better." So Saul said to his attendants, "find someone who plays well and bring him to me." One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the Lord is with him." Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul. David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, "Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him." Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.¹²

Before long, however, Saul's love for David turns to fear and David's secure position in Saul's guard is replaced by David's name atop the King's hit list. David's

¹² I Sam 16:12b-23 NIV

very life was at stake, and in the midst of Saul's pursuit of him, David's character was being shaped and refined. As God's newly anointed, David could have taken a prideful and combative attitude with Saul, but he understood the importance of remaining within the leadership the Lord provides and attempted to maintain a patient and humble posture as he waited on God's timing and action.

After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crag of the Wild Goats. He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. The men said, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" "Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD." With these words David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

"Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? May the LORD be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand." When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud. "You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands."¹³

"However unworthily Saul was now acting, he had been appointed to his high office by God himself, and he could only be removed by the authority which placed him on the throne. Even David, who knew he was appointed to reign in his stead, and whose life Saul had often sought to destroy, did not conceive that he had any right to take away

¹³ I Sam 24:1-7, 14-20 NIV

his life.”¹⁴ The kind of restraint shown by David, and the overwhelming sense of reverence that David had for God and his chosen leader, speaks to the kind of character and heart God was growing inside of him. No one would have blamed him for taking Saul’s life, for Saul was trying to kill him and David had been anointed as his successor, but David remained open and obedient to God’s leading and timing. David’s gracious restraint, especially within the cave, was only enough to suppress Saul’s fears for a short time. Before long Saul’s lack of connection with God gave way to more fear and a greater pursuit of David, God’s newly anointed one.

Saul recognized David’s voice and said, “Is that your voice, David my son?” David replied, “Yes it is, my lord the king.” And he added, “Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of? Now let my lord the king listen to his servant’s words. If the LORD has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, men have done it, may they be cursed before the LORD! They have now driven me from my share in the LORD’s inheritance and have said, ‘Go, serve other gods.’ Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the LORD. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea-as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.” Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have erred greatly.” “Here is the king’s spear,” David answered. “Let one of your young men come over and get it. The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed. As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all trouble.” Then Saul said to David, “May you be blessed, my son David; you will do great things and surely triumph.”¹⁵

Only a leader who is in tune with God, and truly trusts in his plan and provision, could be as patient and gracious as David continued to be. “There is a vast deal of dignity in this speech of David, arising from a consciousness of his own innocence. He neither begs his life from Saul, nor offers one argument to prevail upon him to desist

¹⁴ Adam Clarke, “Commentary on I Samuel 24,” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=1sa&chapter=024.html> (accessed September 28, 2004).

¹⁵ I Sam 26:17-25 NIV

from his felonious attempts, but refers the whole matter to God, as the judge and vindicator of oppressed innocence.”¹⁶ As is shown in the patience and perseverance of David, the Lord has a way of lifting up those who trust in him and wait on his timing.

Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. When David was told that it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul, he sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead to say to them, ““The LORD bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him. May the LORD now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I too will show you the same favor because you have done this. Now then, be strong and brave, for Saul your master is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.”¹⁷

David’s patience and integrity displayed in *waiting his turn* only endeared him to the people of Israel more and more. Clark points out that “[David] was anointed before by Samuel, by which he acquired *jus ad regnum*, a right *TO the kingdom*; by the present anointing he had *jus in regno*, authority *OVER the kingdom*. The other parts of the kingdom were, as yet, attached to the family of Saul.”¹⁸

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, ‘You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.’” When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years.¹⁹

Clark states, “This was the third time that David was anointed, having now taken possession of the whole kingdom.”²⁰ Coffman goes on to further note, “The expression before the Lord indicates that solemn religious ceremonies accompanied the making of

¹⁶ Adam Clarke, “Commentary on I Samuel 26,” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=1sa&chapter=026.html> (accessed September 28, 2004).

¹⁷ II Sam 2:4-7 NIV

¹⁸ Adam Clarke, “Commentary on II Samuel 2,” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=02.html> (accessed September 28, 2004).

¹⁹ II Sam 5:1-4 NIV

²⁰ Adam Clarke, “Commentary on II Samuel 5,” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=05.html> (accessed September 28, 2004).

the covenant between David and the elders of Israel.”²¹ Many promises of the Lord were fulfilled on David’s journey to the throne, and the Lord goes on to further promise David success in the name of the Lord.

“Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. “The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:

...your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”²²

We will see later in David’s leadership, however, that the anointing of God upon a leader, and the Spirit of God within a leader, does not exempt a leader from trials and tribulations that often present themselves in the midst of leadership opportunities.

Dealing with the Challenges of Leadership

Joseph - The Trials of Leadership

One of the biggest issues that Christian leaders have faced throughout history is keeping God first, above all else. Joseph’s story, much like any godly leader who will struggle to keep God first, speaks to the fact that we will experience challenges in the midst of leadership success. In the case of Joseph, false accusations were made against him because he was trying to do the right thing. The Pharaoh’s wife made sexual advances at Joseph, but he was unwilling to compromise the integrity and trust that God

²¹ James Burton Coffman, “Commentary on 2 Samuel 5,” *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*. <http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=005.html> (accessed August 9, 2005).

²² II Sam 7:8-11, 16 NIV

had grown in him during his service to Pharaoh. Doing the right thing, however, does not ensure that we will always avoid trouble.

When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.²³

Once again, in unthinkable circumstances, Joseph is tested and he does not waiver.

Could anyone have blamed him had he decided to just toss his hands up in the air and say, “I’m done with it!?” But he did not, because he had been in such lowly circumstances before and experienced how God had grown him and cared for him during those times, only to raise him up as God’s leader when the time was right. And so Joseph remained faithful.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.²⁴

What can we learn from him? The scriptures are clear that the Lord was with him as he continued to put his trust in the Lord. “It is but of little consequence where the lot of a servant of God may be cast; like Joseph he is ever employed for his master, and God honors him and prospers his work.”²⁵ Joseph was quickly raised within the prison system to a high position of trust and responsibility with the warden because the Lord’s favor was so evident in Joseph. In situations like this, as uncommon as they may appear to be, the Lord has a way of redeeming the falsely accused and continuing to use those who remain in him.

²³ Gen 39:19-20a NIV

²⁴ Gen 39:20b-23 NIV

²⁵ Adam Clarke, “Commentary on Genesis 39,” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*.

<http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=039.html> (accessed September 22, 2004).

Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.”²⁶

Because of Joseph’s relationship with the Lord and how the Lord’s favor was manifested in Joseph’s life, the Pharaoh once again called on his servant. Joseph displays a humble spirit and a willingness to serve and lead no matter where he is placed. Humility that was not learned at a young age, but was grown while in forced servitude to the Pharaoh, has come handily into play in Joseph’s later circumstances. It is important for today’s leaders to learn this same lesson not knowing how the Lord maybe preparing to use them later in life.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, “Make way!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.” Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt.²⁷

It is critical for today’s Christian leaders to understand that God wants to use us while using our circumstances to mold us more into the type of leader God wants us to be. Some times this will involve not just one, but multiple trials over the course of one’s life. Struggles and challenges do not imply that the Lord has somehow left us to lead without him, and in fact, often calls us to an even greater level of humility and dependence upon him.

²⁶ Gen 41:15 NIV

²⁷ Gen 41:39-46 NIV

God has a way of changing people through the challenges of life, but it would be ill-advised for us to go looking for trouble. The case could be argued that it would seem as though the greater the struggle one experiences in life, the greater the change in the life of the individual. And this would be true, because pain can be a great motivator. Even though God uses these unfortunate circumstances to shape us and mold us in important ways, they are not the kind of scenarios we should hope to find ourselves in. Joseph is someone who experienced incredible suffering at the hands of his siblings, and God molded him through those painful experiences. In a redemptive act of the grandest proportions, God enabled Joseph to be reunited with his estranged family and serve as the way for them to live an abundant life in a time of despair.

When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.' You are also directed to tell them, 'Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.'"²⁸

The Lord's faithfulness in the life of Joseph, as he devotedly served Pharaoh, was now reaping a harvest that included Joseph's extended family members, a group that had earlier caused him so much pain and heartache.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you, and the land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. And if you know of any among them with special ability, put them in charge of my own livestock."²⁹

Here we see that the trust that Pharaoh had previously only extended to Joseph was now being extended to Joseph's family through him, with the blessing of Pharaoh, based on

²⁸ Gen 45:16-20 NIV

²⁹ Gen 47:5-6 NIV

Joseph's judgment. The family of Jacob was being lavished solely based on their relation to Joseph. Joseph was now seeing the fruition of his dreams of many years earlier. The power was his, and if he wanted he could have hurt his family as much as they had hurt him in a grand act of vengeance. God, however, had changed Joseph throughout the years and experiences since he was estranged from his family. How humbling this must have been for his siblings to now be in a position of complete dependence on Joseph, especially based on their prior treatment of him.

So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh directed. Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children.³⁰

The road to redemption and family reunion was a long and painful one for Joseph. His journey did, however, serve to shape him and form him into the kind of leader that God could use. Let us now focus on another leader that God used in mighty ways during Old Testament times.

David - The Fall of a Leader

What seems to be a growing epidemic in Christian leadership today is really an issue that dates back to the days of Old Testament leadership and that is the lack of connection that too many Christian leaders have between what they say and what they do. There are too many Christians in positions of influence who are either misusing or misrepresenting what it means to be a leader empowered by God. Let us look again to David, the man after God's own heart, to see if we can better understand how or why leaders can overstep what God has called them to be.

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and

³⁰ Gen 47:11-12 NIV

besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “Isn’t this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, “I am pregnant.”³¹

The first noticeable issue is that David was not where he was supposed to be. For reasons not known to us, King David decided to stay back from war when normally he would have accompanied his men on their mission. In not being where he was “supposed” to be, David did not have any of his usual comrades with him to serve as a line of accountability. Separated from his close community, and sitting idle when he would typically be leading his troops, David had a moral lapse of judgment and allowed himself to misuse his power and authority in calling for Bathsheba.

When we take our eyes off God, our leadership can be one of the first things that is attacked. We open the door for sinful situations much like the one that David found himself a part of, and we rarely retain enough common sense to turn from our sin, confess and seek redemption. Instead, many times because of our leadership roles, we attempt to cover up what we have done. In the absence of an accountable community, this perpetuation of sinful act to sinful act(s) is an unfortunate path that far too many leaders choose in attempting to hide from their mistakes. Like any leader who has ever made a mistake, David had the chance to own his sin and begin the redemptive process, but the “Man after God’s own heart” chose to attempt to cover up his sin.

So David sent this word to Joab: “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent him to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the

³¹ II Sam 11:1-5 NIV

king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?" Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. Joab sent David a full account of the battle. He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall? Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.'" The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate. Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead." David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab."³²

Clark notes that "Uriah had come off a journey, and needed this refreshment; but David's design was that he should go and lie with his wife, that the child now conceived should pass for his, the honor of Bath-sheba be screened, and his own crime concealed."³³ David knew he had done wrong, but was unwilling to take responsibility for his actions. He had sinned against God, others and even his own self. Even after he found out the consequences of his original act of sin (the pregnant wife of one of his

³² II Sam 11:6-25 NIV

³³ Adam Clarke, "Commentary on II Samuel 11," *The Adam Clarke Commentary*.

<http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=011.html> (accessed September 28, 2004).

soldiers) his only thought was on how he could get himself out of the *mess* that he had created without taking blame or accepting responsibility for his actions. This is no less common today than it was when David committed this elaborate scheme to save his reputation as a leader.

What painful irony it must have been as David watched his servant Uriah forgo his own desires for the sake of remaining mentally engaged with the mission in which his fellow soldiers were still fully involved in. “This was the answer of a brave, generous and disinterested man. I will not indulge myself while all my fellow soldiers are exposed to hardships, and even the ark of the Lord in danger.”³⁴ In a vacuum of integrity and character left completely void by David, his servant Uriah reflects the highest of levels of both. I wonder if David saw remnants of himself at a younger age in the soldier Uriah. The man who carried the title of *Man after God’s own heart* was now faced with the fact that his efforts to cover-up his sinful activities were being unintentionally thwarted because of the integrity and honor that the King’s servant felt for the battle in which his friends were still entrenched. David once again had the opportunity to take ownership of his wrongdoing, but chose to take his sinful cover-up to a whole new level while adding murder to the list of sinful acts he was committing. Yet, in spite of all that David had done, the Lord was not done using him. However, his life and leadership would never look the same again.

The best model for spiritual formation and leadership development will not make leaders bullet-proof and free of the temptation of sin. The life of the leader is NOT over after a sinful fall. Equally true, however, is the fact that life for a leader becomes incredibly challenging after moral failure and abuse of power.

³⁴ Clarke, “Commentary on II Samuel 11,” (accessed September 28, 2004).

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD. The LORD sent Nathan to David.³⁵

Coffman notes that "All of David's efforts to maneuver Uriah into resuming his relations with Bathsheba bear eloquent testimony to the fact that David really had no intention whatever, at first, of marrying Bathsheba; but there was no way to avoid it. She was already pregnant with David's child, and the situation required, absolutely, that David marry her."³⁶ Clark postulates that "It was necessary to add this, lest the splendor of David's former virtues should induce any to suppose his crimes were passed over, or looked on with an indulgent eye, by the God of purity and justice. Sorely he sinned, and sorely did he suffer for it; he sowed one *grain* of sweet, and reaped a long *harvest* of calamity and woe."³⁷ The Lord could have completely disregarded David after all he had done, but instead, he sends to him his dearest friend to begin the redemption process and share with him the challenges that he would now face.

This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own." This is what the LORD says: "Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel."³⁸

³⁵ II Sam 11:26-12:1a NIV

³⁶ James Burton Coffman, "Commentary on 2 Samuel 11," *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*. <http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=011.html> (accessed August 9, 2005).

³⁷ Clarke, "Commentary on II Samuel 11," (accessed September 28, 2004).

³⁸ II Sam 12:7b-12 NIV

Coffman remarks that, “This blunt, overwhelming indictment of David’s conduct by an honored prophet of God must have come as a profound shock to the king. It is a miracle of David’s faith in God that he did not order his bodyguard to slay Nathan in the midst of this interview.”³⁹ David went from having God’s favor and anointing upon everything he was involved in, to not being able to control matters within his own home and watching his family implode without being able to do a thing about it. The sin that David entered into when he called to have Bathsheba brought to him did not only effect those that were directly involved (David, Bathsheba, and Uriah), but we see here that the ramifications of David’s sin spilled over into his family and his ability to lead.

Clark postulates that “The sword and calamity did not depart from his house, from the murder of wretched *Amnon* by his brother to the slaughter of the sons of *Zedekiah*, before their father’s eyes, by the king of Babylon. His *daughter* was dishonored by her own brother, and his *wives* contaminated publicly by his own son! How dreadfully, then, was David punished for his sin! Who would repeat his transgression to share in its penalty? Can his conduct ever be an inducement to, or an encouragement in, sin? Surely, No. It must ever fill the reader and the hearer with horror. Behold the goodness and severity of God!”⁴⁰ David may have had further success as the King of Israel and Judah, but the damage that took place within his relationship with God, as well as his family, caused David much pain and anguish in his remaining years.

³⁹ James Burton Coffman, “Commentary on 2 Samuel 12,” *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*. <http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=012.html> (accessed August 9, 2005).

⁴⁰ Adam Clarke, “Commentary on II Samuel 12,” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*. <http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=012.html> (accessed September 28, 2004).

Conclusion

There is much we can learn about spiritual formation and leadership development from various leaders, and leadership styles, found in the Old Testament. In this chapter we explored the paths of two different leaders, the unique roads that led to their leadership, as well as some of the successes and failures of their leadership. Looking first at the life of Joseph, I uncovered the important role that the familial unit plays in the development of their children; I also discovered how God can use the most unusual of circumstances to grow and refine leadership abilities within individuals who are open to Him, and finally I explored the role that trials within leadership had in shaping and molding Joseph as a leader.

In exploring the life and leadership of David, I first looked at how he did not have the outward appearance of what man considers in identifying potential leaders. In that we viewed how God and man have different sets of criteria in considering who, or what, makes a good leader. I also explored the importance of God's anointing on David's leadership and how God's hand upon a leader can create opportunities beyond man's limitations. I also examined the fall of David's leadership and how taking our eyes off of God can attack our leadership capacities. Finally, I explored the redemptive process that David experienced after a series of morally poor decisions. Even in redemption, however, leadership that has been misused is rarely ever the same again.

In both instances I identified some of the important characteristics of a leader, key elements that were a part of their growth and development as a leader, and any particular lessons that would be important for us to glean in this study of spiritual formation and

leadership development in Old Testament leaders. Let us now consider the leaders and leadership styles found in the New Testament.

CHAPTER 3. SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Example of Jesus and the Disciples

The time that Jesus spent with his disciples and the training that he did with them in the context of everyday life shaped and formed them to become the first leaders of the Church. The gospels tell the story of Jesus' life and ministry with the disciples. He chose to live with them day and night, teaching them through his words and actions, and calling upon them to follow in his footsteps. He modeled for them how people who love God live and invest their time, energy, and efforts.

I believe that there are three compelling elements of Jesus' time with the disciples that we must consider in this chapter. First, we will look at the modes, or methods, through which Jesus chose to shape and mold his disciples. Second, we must look at the content of what Jesus instilled in his disciples which would inform their ministry after he was gone. Lastly, we will look at the paradigm Jesus infused into his disciples as they followed him and considered the ministry they would have upon his departure. In all of this, I will argue there are important tenets that we should glean from the model Jesus has set forth with his disciples as we consider spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st Century.

Modes

Jesus was intentional in how he shaped and molded his disciples. He did not leave it up to them to plan the curriculum, but used a multitude of approaches that were meant to teach and guide the disciples on different senses and levels.

“Follow me”

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers; Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.¹

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.²

Jesus’ call, “follow me,” was simple in nature, but had profound ramifications.

Jesus sought out men who would follow him, open themselves to being shaped and prepared by him, and would later carry-on his ministry after his earthly departure. Notice that Jesus did not ask these disciples if they wanted to follow him as an alternative to what they were presently doing, but profoundly proclaimed: “follow me.” Jan David Hettinga, in his book *Follow Me: Experience the Loving Leadership of Jesus*, states that “The ultimate issue in the universe is leadership. Who you follow and what directs your life is the single most important thing about you.”³ Jesus knew what it would take for each of these men to follow him. To follow insists that we render leadership to someone/thing other than ourselves. This is precisely where Jesus started. According to

¹ Matt 4:18-22 NIV

² Matt 9:9 NIV

³ Jan David Hettinga, *Follow Me: Experience the Loving Leadership of Jesus* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1996), 17.

Hettinga, “The purpose of Jesus was to underline for all His disciples, then and now, the surpassing priority of followership.”⁴

Community

After Jesus called the disciples to him, he created a community with them. This community was a living and learning community of the purest kind. These men lived together day and night while sitting at the feet of Jesus and taking in every word, every action, and every experience. This band of men would serve each other through the questions they asked Jesus and opportunities they took to process what they were experiencing with him. Jesus would also use this collection of men to explore the important role of relationships. Through his own self-disclosure he modeled for them the importance of sharing one’s life with others. For approximately three years they lived in community with one another. The years the disciples spent in community with Jesus were what equipped them to be the first leaders of the Church.

Seeing & Hearing

As the disciples lived day and night with Jesus they were privileged to see the miraculous in Jesus. From the miracles of healing and bringing back the dead, to the looks on the faces of those that Jesus touched physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually, Jesus’ disciples were significantly influenced by what they saw as they watched Jesus. They saw how he treated those he encountered with compassion and love, often extending grace to those who sought him out. This principle is often overlooked: we learn by observing what Jesus did and how he did it.

In the same way, the disciples were formed and transformed through what they heard come out of Jesus’ mouth. His approach was straight forward: speak the truth in

⁴ Ibid., 131.

love. Yet, Jesus often spoke in parables that seemed to be beyond comprehension in order to sift for those who “have ears to hear.” To everyone from the woman at the well to the demon possessed, Jesus words were intentional, passionate, and powerful. The disciples, who often opened their mouths before thinking, heard in Jesus a man who was thoughtful in his choice of words. Jesus knew the power that words held in the culture of which he was a part and with that knowledge he modeled how to use them. A.B. Bruce, in his book *The Training of the Twelve: Timeless Principles for Leadership Development*, stated that for the disciples, this kind of, “eye and ear witnessing of the facts of an unparalleled life was an indispensable preparation for [their] future witness-bearing.”⁵

Public & Private Teaching

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.⁶

The disciples benefited from Jesus’ teaching on two different levels. First, the disciples were usually in the mix of the crowd during Jesus’ public teachings. They had the chance to witness first hand how Jesus lived his life in private with them, and saw that it directly paralleled what he preached to the crowds. Whether they realized what they were experiencing at the time, or not, the disciples witnessed firsthand true integrity in Jesus.

The disciples also had access to Jesus at a private level that most others did not. In this setting the disciples received personal teaching, as well as clarification on some of the more challenging teachings and parables. They had *unlimited access* to the God of the universe in the person of Jesus the Christ and had the privilege to walk with him

⁵ A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve: Timeless Principles for Leadership Development* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1988), 41.

⁶ Matt 5:1-2 NIV

throughout his public ministry. Within the context of community, Jesus was able to teach his disciples at a very personal level, resembling what we would today define as a mentoring-type relationship.

Service as Leadership

The form that Jesus leadership took with his disciples is an important factor in need of consideration. Contrary to the leadership style of Jesus' day, he chose not to lead with power, but through service. C. Gene Wilkes defines a servant leader as someone who, "serves the mission and leads by serving those on mission with him."⁷ Jesus was the prime example of this kind of leadership as He served his Father's mission while serving His disciples in order to equip them to join him in mission. Jesus shared with the disciples these words,

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.⁸

The disciples were served by the Lord of the universe and had modeled for them what it meant to be a servant leader. Take for example the instance when Jesus began to wash his disciples' feet (John 13). First, Peter told Jesus that he would never allow him to wash his feet (because it was the job saved for servants), but when Jesus insisted, Peter then requested Jesus wash his entire body. Peter clearly did not understand the kind of love and service that Jesus was trying to model to them. This kind of leadership so countered what these men believed to be "leadership" that Peter challenged Jesus. It would not be until after Jesus' death and resurrection that his disciples would truly understand what Jesus meant in choosing love, and not power, through which to lead.

⁷ C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, INC., 1998), 18.

⁸ Mk 10:45 NIV

Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.⁹

And,

Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.¹⁰

The role of suffering

Through the example of his own life, Jesus taught the disciples that suffering would be a part of anyone's life that would choose to follow him. A.B. Bruce postulates that, "In this great law of discipleship the cross signifies not merely the external penalty of death, but all troubles that come on those who earnestly endeavor to live as Jesus lived in this world, and in consequence of that endeavor."¹¹ Through his suffering, Jesus conveyed that suffering could be received as a part of living a life devoted to God. Sharing in the suffering of Christ, as well as encountering various difficulties of their own, the disciples experienced suffering as a tool for their growth and formation as emerging leaders of a culture. This was yet another difficult lesson for the disciples that was counter to their cultural understanding.

He empowered them

Jesus empowered his disciples to carry on the mission in which they had joined him. This was an essential step in the disciples' spiritual formation and leadership development process.

⁹ Acts 2:22-24 NIV

¹⁰ Acts 2:36 NIV

¹¹ Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 183-4.

He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. As you go, preach this message: “The kingdom of heaven is near.” Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.¹²

Empowering leaders is a potent means through which growth not only happened, but was realized by the disciple.

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”¹³

And again,

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.¹⁴

Without this essential step of empowerment, the disciples could have fallen apart and disbanded after Christ’s death.

The Holy Spirit

Jesus even went a step beyond empowerment and sent another helper to guide the disciples.

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.¹⁵

Robert E. Coleman states, in *The Master Plan of Discipleship*, that “Jesus knew that His work on earth could never be done by human striving, however determined the

¹² Matt 10:1, 7-8 NIV

¹³ Matt 28:18-20 NIV

¹⁴ Jn 14:12-14 NIV

¹⁵ Lk 24:49 NIV

effort. Power to be His witnesses could only come through the Spirit of God.”¹⁶ The Holy Spirit was a part of Jesus’ parting promise that he would not leave them alone in this world. He further taught them they would not be alone in carrying out the mission to which they had been called. We cannot underestimate the role and work of the Holy Spirit in the lives and ministry of the disciples.

No “formula”

Jesus did not have a “standard” or “universal model” through which he taught his disciples, or anyone else for that matter, but always took different approaches based on the individuals with whom he was dealing. The fact that Jesus varied his approaches to people speaks to his preeminence, as well as his ability to be both personal and creative. Hettinga notes, “If you don’t factor in Christ’s preoccupation with the kingdom [of heaven], His lack of standardized approach is puzzling. But when His way of framing the issue as a God’s-kingdom-versus-our-kingdom confrontation is understood, each distinctly individualized conversation begins to fall into a discernible pattern.”¹⁷ This personalized approach of Jesus calls into question many of our past and current attempts to discern a *formula* for spiritual formation and leadership development. With every individual there will need to be a fresh approach considered based on the particular needs and circumstances of the person.

Content for Spiritual Formation

Jesus was not only intentional with the modes through which he formed the disciples, but was equally intentional in the content, or “meat,” that he chose to make a

¹⁶ Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1987, 1998), 101.

¹⁷ Hettinga, *Follow Me*, 156-7.

regular part of the disciple's diet. Wanting to make sure that they did not miss his main ideas, he summed it up for them in these words:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.¹⁸

These commands seemed simple in description, yet proved to be complex in life and practice. In this section we will explore some of the essential elements that make up these two commands as played out in the disciples' spiritual formation and leadership development.

Love the Lord your God

As we explore what it meant to Jesus for the disciples to love God, let us look at what he taught them on this matter. Note that the categories listed below that were a part of Jesus regular curriculum with his disciples have transcended time and are today considered to be some of the most essential ways of both knowing, and loving, God.

KNOWING THE FATHER

Jesus lived in intimate relationship with His Father. He modeled this for His disciples in a variety of ways, but He was always quick to point out that knowing His Father, and doing His will, was far greater than any singular means through which one could seek to know the Father. Be it through prayer, fasting, meditating on the scriptures, or any other mode; to know the Father was far greater than any of these things.

According to Michael J. Wilkins, “The crux of biblical discipleship – this is, of forming the spirit of the believer – lies in the balance between God's operation in the disciple's

¹⁸ Matt 22:37-40 NIV

life and the disciple's response in obedience to God's operation."¹⁹ This is a pedagogy of word and response, of participative learning, and a spirituality which starts properly with God's initiative. God speaks and acts and the disciples listen and respond. It always starts with God. While Jesus walked with the disciples, he often suggested that in order to know the Father people need only look at him (John 8). Jesus was clear that he was not only a perfect reflection of the Father, but that he also did nothing apart from the leading of the Father (John 10).

PRAYER

Essential to loving God is knowing how to communicate with him. Just as they were walking and talking with Jesus in his earthly presence, it would be of even greater importance for the disciples to intentionally take every opportunity to talk with, listen to, and draw from the Father after Jesus' earthly departure. Jesus frequently modeled this form of communication with the Father in intimate and proximate settings, as well as taught them how and what to pray to Him for.

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"²⁰

Not only did Jesus instruct his disciples that they should be committed to ongoing communication with the Father; he also charged them to pray with great confidence as the Father gives freely to those who ask of him.

¹⁹ Michael J. Wilkins, *In His Image: Reflection Christ in Everyday Life* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1997), 59.

²⁰ Lk 11:1-4 NIV

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”²¹

He taught them varying ways of praying based on their situations and circumstances.

Whether prayers of thanksgiving, lamentation, petition or silence, God would listen to them when they cried out to him.

FASTING

Although we have no record that fasting was a practice that Jesus used in the presence of his disciples, we know that he experienced a forty day fast prior to the start of his ministry. We also know that Jesus had expectations of his disciples upon his earthly departure.

Then John’s disciples came and asked him, “How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.”²²

It was not a matter of whether or not the disciples would fast, but instead, a matter of when it was appropriate. Timing, as well as attitude, always accompanied Jesus teaching on what we would refer today to as spiritual disciplines.

SABBATH

Dallas Willard categorizes all spiritual disciplines in one of two categories: disciplines of abstinence or engagement. Observance of the Sabbath would fall under the first category of abstinence. Willard states, “In the discipline of abstinence, we abstain to some degree and for some time from the satisfaction of what we generally regard as

²¹ Lk 11:9-10 NIV

²² Matt 9:14-15 NIV

normal and legitimate desires.”²³ We *stop* in order that God’s presence might be more apparent, and that we might dwell with Him. Jesus and the religious leaders of his day went round after round on what it meant to reside in God in the observance of the Sabbath. To “stop” was not to stop doing good. Author Marva Dawn, in her book *Keeping Sabbath Wholly*, suggests that in setting aside a day to “cease,” we create space for God to replenish us and experience Him in new or different ways.

Love Your Neighbor

The content that Jesus taught the disciples, when not focused on loving God, was focused on loving other people. Jesus taught his disciples that this command of neighbor-love had the same significance to the command to love God. In essence, to love other people was indeed to love God. But who are these other people? What does it mean to love them? I believe Jesus challenged his disciples to be “others” focused as they sought to answer this question. Jesus had some specific ideas in mind in teaching his disciples about loving other people.

THE SICK

The sick, paralyzed, leprous, and demon-possessed were among those Jesus taught his disciples to love.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”²⁴

²³ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 159.

²⁴ Matt 9:35-38 NIV

The need was evident and the action of the compassionate was love. Jesus modeled this for his disciples, while also helping them to understand that if they did not love these people, no one else would. In essence, those defined as “sick” were alone in the world and were in need of someone to come around them and extend a loving heart to assist them in their place of deep need.

THE “LEAST OF THESE”

In Jesus’ command to love other people, he seemed to focus on orphans and widows as some of the people most in need of hearts extended in love. In so doing he reaches deep into Jewish practice of compassion. Consider what is written in the book of Deuteronomy,

Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.²⁵

Quite purposefully, Jesus stated that to ignore the needs of the “least of these” is to have done it to him. Depending upon whether we choose to extend love to our neighbor, Jesus says, we will likely hear the following from our heavenly Father,

I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.²⁶

²⁵ Duet 24:17-22 NIV

²⁶ Matt 25:40 NIV

And

I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.²⁷

To love one of these is the equivalent of loving God. The Father's identification with "the least of these" should suggest to us an appropriate level of attention that we should give to this often forgotten group or individual.

THE ENEMY

Jesus knew that to love certain kinds of people would be easier for some than for others. Jesus was also aware that all would struggle to love, let alone forgive, the enemy.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."²⁸

Jesus was aware that what he was suggesting not only went against the "law of the culture," but that it also goes against every fiber of a human being. This is a calling of the greatest magnitude... to love those that seem utterly unlovable. Unlike the sick, widowed and orphaned, the enemy was someone who was opposed to you personally. It was not that no one was extending love to this person, but instead, that this person was extending, and intending, the opposite of love to you. Yet Jesus' command does not change; the call is still to extend love.

FORGIVENESS UNLIMITED

One of the major difficulties for loving the neighbor is the human difficulty to extend forgiveness. When we continue to harbor negative feelings against people who

²⁷ Matt 25:45 NIV

²⁸ Matt 5:43-48 NIV

have wronged us, we cannot love them as Jesus desires for us to. So Peter, one of the disciples, asked Jesus,

“Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”²⁹

The logic is clear: people will always hurt us and we will always need to be able extend forgiveness to them so that we are able to love them. Unlimited forgiveness sounds like a hard path to walk, but it was the path the Jesus modeled for the disciples as he lived his life, including the days leading to his death.

SALT AND LIGHT

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”³⁰

Jesus expected that those who followed him should, and would, “shine” because they were different. He did not want them to be afraid of appearing different, and went so far as to say that to *look different* would be a way for them to bring glory to the Father. Extending love to “the neighbor” was one of the ways that Jesus followers would unmistakably stand out in a world that was very focused on the self.

Although no one could be considered to fall outside the reach of this command of Jesus to love others, it seems apparent that there was an intentional focus on those who could be targeted for abuse by others or could not as easily care for themselves.

²⁹ Matt 18:21-22 NIV

³⁰ Matt 5:13-16 NIV

Danger Ahead

Although the teachings of Jesus were simple and straightforward in nature, He warned that following Him would not be easy.

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” He said to another man, “Follow me.” But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good bye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”³¹

It seems that there are a number of stumbling blocks that impede the will of the disciple who longs to follow Jesus yet struggles to give up worldly possessions and/or ideas. The way that a disciple *thinks* about things, or their mentality, will be considered a little later in this chapter. However, there are a couple of stumbling blocks that are linked to ideas, or ways of thinking, that we will consider here. Money and pride are two of the larger dangers that Jesus’ followers encountered.

MONEY

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.³²

Jesus wanted his disciples to know that money is one of the biggest potential stumbling blocks to loving God. He made it clear that it was impossible to chase after money and still pursue him with all of their hearts. The heart is only able to hold a candle for one of these two... and there could be no competition. The mission that Jesus challenged his followers to join him on was not one that would lead to wealth and prosperity. It was a mission that called followers to relinquish everything and follow

³¹ Lk 9:57-62 NIV

³² Matt 6:24 NIV

him, trusting that he would provide everything that they would need. To further illustrate this point we look to Jesus' conversation with the rich young ruler.

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"³³

Jesus uses the example of this rich young man, to show how powerful the allure of money can be and how far it can lead you astray.

PRIDE

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest."³⁴

The human desire to feel important is one that will directly interfere with a disciple's ability to follow Jesus. In the scenario above we have individuals who had been sitting at the feet of Jesus, observing him day and night, and still they miss the point of taking a "low position." To be concerned with title, position, status, or anything of the sort is to take focus off of Jesus, and serving others, and put the focus squarely on self.

Not only would pride take the focus off of Jesus, but it would also jeopardize the centrality of the mission and the cohesion of co-laborers. This was not something that Jesus modeled, nor was it anything he wanted any of his followers to struggle with. Jesus

³³ Mk 10:17-23 NIV

³⁴ Lk 9:46-48 NIV

desire for his disciples was that they would be united in truth and spirit. He understood that in order for this to be possible, he must change the way that his followers would think about everything.

Mentality

Jesus was intentional to teach his disciples *what* to think and *how* to think and live. Jesus knew that his ministry to the disciples would go deeper and further if he instructed them how to live, and also how to think as well. He initiated a paradigm shift in the disciples that was meant to reshape how they looked at the world around them and their ministry within it. Below are a few examples of how Jesus was challenging his disciples to think differently.

Counter-cultural

Jesus started by teaching his disciples to think differently than the world around them. Richard Niebuhr's book entitled *Christ and Culture*, looks at several different paradigms of how followers of Jesus might approach the world in which they live. Niebuhr's paradigm that suggests Jesus' followers would be "in" the world, but not "of" the world comes the closest to what I understand Jesus' call to his followers to be.³⁵ While ministering throughout the land, Jesus modeled to his disciples a way of thinking that was completely different than the culture of the day. His call to his disciples was to think differently, outside of the proverbial "box," in order that they might truly help to bring about change for the sake of the Kingdom of God. It was not different for the sake of being different; it was different because the world was not thinking or living, like the Lord desired for them to live. In order to reach this world, Jesus knew that he must teach his disciples to look at the world in a whole new way.

³⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publish, Inc., 1951), 190-229.

Love, not power

One of the hardest ideas for the disciples to grasp, even after the death of Jesus, was the idea of choosing love, not power, as a way to lead change and carry-on Jesus' mission. This was obviously a counter-cultural way of thinking. Consider the example of Jesus Barabbas who lived during the same time as Jesus of Nazareth. According to Tony Campolo, in his book *Which Jesus?* "The fame of Jesus Barabbas [had] spread everywhere throughout the surrounding countryside and up through the far reaches of the Golan Heights. This young guerilla fighter and his followers, known as Zealots, became notorious for their hit-and-run attacks on the Roman legions that were supposed to keep the Jews in line. They struck fear in the heart of any person who dared to have dealings with the Romans – especially the tax collectors, who were despised collaborators with the occupying army."³⁶ The two men, who shared the same name, took two very different approaches in dealing with the governing leadership of their day. To choose love over power was to choose a completely different way of thinking about and approaching any given situation. Jesus was the ultimate model of this kind of selfless, powerless love. In his book *In the Name of Jesus*, Henri Nouwen points out, however, that "his [Jesus] message of love was rejected by a world in search of power, efficiency, and control."³⁷

For the sake of the Kingdom

Jesus was intentional to challenge his disciples to think outside of themselves, and even outside of their own little world, and to develop a Kingdom perspective.

³⁶ Tony Campolo, *Which Jesus?: Choosing Between Love and Power* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2002), 10-11.

³⁷ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York, NY: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1989), 36-37.

“The time has come,” [Jesus] said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”³⁸

This was the message he gave to his disciples. It was a message not only meant for them, but for the disciples to share with the world. This was also meant to create a sense of urgency as they approached their mission.

Not only was Jesus trying to establish a sense of urgency in His followers, but also a sense of priority.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”³⁹

Out of all of the things that we could give our attention to, Jesus says to put the Kingdom first, and as we do this everything else would fall into its rightful place. This is extremely difficult for the naturally self-centered human being. Jesus wants His followers to be “Kingdom thinkers.”

I am with you always

One of the last ways in which Jesus challenged his disciples was to understand that when he did finally leave the earthly life, he would not leave them alone. In fact, he was going to the Father and would be their direct connection to him.

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.⁴⁰

This direct connection would serve the disciples to not only continue on in Jesus’ mission, but to do ever greater works in his name.

³⁸ Mk 1:15 NIV

³⁹ Matt 6:33 NIV

⁴⁰ Jn 14:12-14 NIV

Conclusion

Jesus and the disciples had a unique relationship and the access that we have to the details of this relationship directly speaks to how we must approach spiritual formation and leadership development for Christians today. I have shown how the modes Jesus intentionally chose through which to shape and mold his disciples resulted in well-trained, albeit imperfect, leaders to continue on in His footsteps. I also examined the content that Jesus instilled in his disciples which informed their ministry, as well as equipped them to continue to grow in relationship with the Father. Finally, I explored how the paradigm that Jesus infused in his disciples would cause them to reconsider how they think. In all of this, we have seen that the relationship that Jesus had with his disciples should inform how we approach spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st Century.

CHAPTER 4. SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

The Contributions of John Wesley

John Wesley is one of the important figures in the history of Christian theology. Wesley played an instrumental role in the formation of the Methodist denomination and served as an influential voice in how believers across denominational lines approach Christian spirituality. Not only were Wesley's practices and teachings influential in the 18th and 19th centuries, but they continue to be equally important and relevant as we continue into the 21st century. There is still much that practitioners involved in spiritual formation can, and should, learn from the life and teachings of John Wesley. In this chapter we will first explore some of the factors that were influential in the spiritual formation and leadership development of John Wesley to gain insight into how such an influential Christian leader was formed, as well as how his formation process informed his church-based spiritual development plan. Then, we will investigate the elements of Wesley's church-based spiritual development plan based on small groups, accountability and the balances of the quadrilateral. It is my belief that these same elements transcend the movement culturally from modernism to postmodernism and, in fact, draw on many of the cultural values of postmodernism and thus provide a valuable paradigm for our continuing work with students.

The Spiritual Journey of John Wesley

In the upbringing of John Wesley, we can identify key elements of the developmental process that should inform our approach to spiritual formation and leadership development today. His personal spiritual formation process played a considerable role in the formation of his theology and praxis. Many of Wesley's significant contributions in the area of spiritual formation and Christian theology can be tied directly to his upbringing. It is my belief that key factors in John Wesley's earlier years – the influence of his parents, his formation and participation in the “Holy Club,” efforts in social services and missionary works, interaction with the Moravians, his Aldersgate experience, and later the development of the Methodist Church – were all significant elements that played into Wesley's personal spiritual formation and development as a leader.

Influence of Parents

John Wesley was born in 1703 to Samuel and Susannah and lived for most of the eighteenth century, dying in 1791.¹ Not surprisingly, Wesley was deeply influenced by both of his parents for the first fifteen years of his life, as at an early age he took serious interest in religious affairs. Wesley's ability to think freely, outside of traditional boxes, was a trait that he probably inherited from his father Samuel. Wesley's grandfather and great grandfather had both been devout Puritans, but Samuel chose to deny this path as a young man to find his own way, which eventually did lead him to the Church of England. This strong, devoted, determined spirit and faith displayed in Samuel would eventually be a distinguishing characteristic in John Wesley as well.

¹ Howard A. Slaatte, *A Purview of Wesley's Theology* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000), 3.

The case can be made, though, that it was not Wesley's father who made the largest impact on his life. Susanna, Wesley's mother also played a significant role in his life, much of which could be contributed to her early development as well. Much like her husband Samuel, Susanna came from a dissenting home that had split from the Church of England within recent generations. Furthermore, "like Samuel, Susanna decided, as a youth, to make her way back to the Anglican Church to the chagrin of her family. And like Samuel, Susanna was both pious and disciplined, giving herself only 'as much time for recreation as [she] spent in private devotion.'"²

John Wesley was the fifteenth of nineteen children born to Samuel and Susanna, which meant that home life must either be strict and structured or chaotic and out-of-control. "With her husband gone at Convocation, and with several children clamoring for her attention, Susanna had many opportunities to exercise strong leadership in the family. Something of a disciplinarian, she cared for her children according to rule and method"³ No doubt, this type of structured and disciplined upbringing was influential in John's development, and later, his ideas about theology and spiritual formation. Not only that, but the faith exhibited in how Susanna nurtured her flock and led her family was equally influential in Wesley's life.

No matter what the circumstances, however, Susanna was committed to caring for her family the best way possible. Though resources were limited, she started a daily school for her children. She said her purpose was exclusively "the saving of their souls," so the rigorous academics never took priority over instruction in God's Word. Each day before class, she set aside an hour to herself for Scripture reading and prayer, and then led them all in singing psalms.⁴

² W.H. Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century: A Study in Spiritual Forces* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1906), 57.

³ Kenneth J. Collins, *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 11.

⁴ InTouch Ministries. "Susanna Wesley: A Mother Who Made a Difference," *Spiritual Journeys of Great Christians*. http://www.intouch.org/myintouch/mighty/portraits/susann_wesley_213595.html (accessed March 11, 2003).

Wesley himself would later exhibit similar patterns of devotion and praxis in his own spiritual life, and his mother's priority of scripture above academia would be reflected in the priorities of the quadrilateral.

Upon leaving home at a young age for schooling, Wesley experienced a newfound sense of freedom. This newfound freedom did not initially do much for Wesley's spiritual pilgrimage; in fact, being away from the structure and discipline within which he spent so many years of his life, John began to slip into a lack of focus and seriousness when it came to his attempts to follow Jesus. It was during these formative college years, however, that he would encounter a new friend who would help him "to alter the whole form of [his] conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life."⁵ This new life was one focused on inward holiness and fueled by *The Imitation of Christ* (Thomas 'a Kempis) and *Rule of Exercise of Holy Living and Holy Dying* (Jeremy Taylor). In many senses, this spiritually focused and disciplined life was renewed acceptance of the life and praxis modeled and instilled in young Wesley by his parents.

"The Holy Club"

The discipline that had been associated with Wesley's understanding of growing spiritually from an early age would once again become commonplace as Wesley joined his brother in The Holy Club. Slaatte notes that "The students who became active in this society were labeled Methodists, due to their disciplined manner of living associated with their methodical pursuit of holiness."⁶ It was this pursuit of knowing God more and living a life of complete devotion to him that was the focus of this Holy Club. David Lowes Watson explains that "The group had made a commitment to engage in the

⁵ W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *The Works of John Wesley, Journals and Diaries*, vol. 18 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 244.

⁶ Slaatte, *Wesley's Theology*, 3.

intentional disciplines of personal and corporate devotions, especially the study of the Scriptures and frequent Holy Communion, and to pursue an inquiry into the liturgical and devotional practices of the early church.”⁷ It was this Holy Club, made up of the Wesley brothers, friend William Morgan, and later Robert Kirkham, that has given to us an exemplary model for accountable, small group life. Also, exemplified by this group was the pursuit of a life more fully committed to the work of God and knowing him more. This Holy Club would later become the model for the *class meetings* that Wesley would later organize for local bands of Christians that wanted to live a more committed life to God.

Serving Others

Wesley was engaged in spiritual formation on two fronts: the first was the internal relationship with Jesus that he was daily growing in, “but he was also engaged in an active discipleship in the world, which was to have a profound effect on the spiritual leadership which he [later] exercised through the Methodist societies,” explains Watson.⁸ One of the key elements for spiritual growth and development for members of the Holy Club was the intentional service to others. As a group, Watson points out, “they were also committed to works of practical charity in the city of Oxford, among the poor, the illiterate, and the imprisoned.”⁹ Slaatte notes that “John Wesley saw that Christian salvation is both personal and social in meaning and ethical impact. Both soul and society are involved as important dimensions of the Gospel’s soteriological meaning and

⁷ David Lowes Watson, “Methodist Spirituality,” in *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader*, ed. Kenneth J. Collins (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 174.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

application.”¹⁰ Under strong conviction, Wesley knew that he must make social outreach an unmistakable part of his faith, as it was one of the purest forms of expressing the love of God to others. In fact, he was so strongly convinced of the importance of service to others that he personally modeled this practice as Christian responsibility, caring for those who could not care for themselves, as well as making the topic of social outreach and Christian responsibility a regular theme in his preaching. This important concept of service would later inform the “experience” element of Wesley’s quadrilateral.

The Moravians

Wesley and his brother Charles were later led to missionary endeavors through this same expression of an inward faith, focused outward, to all who needed it. It was during their excursion to Georgia that Wesley first encountered the Moravians and was impacted immediately by the “courage and serenity in the face of great danger,”¹¹ that he was compelled to enquire what they had within them that allowed them to be this way. Wesley learned German so that he might converse with them more freely, and they brought him to see that “perfectionism of right intent and right endeavor lacked the Augustinian dimension of grace. While William Law’s mysticism could instruct in the spiritual self-discipline through which a person could find God, it did little to foster an expectancy of the divine initiative,” notes Watson.¹² While in Georgia, Wesley continued in conversation with the Moravians even though he was not permitted to join their community.¹³ According to Collins, “Shortly after he arrived in Georgia in February 1736, Wesley sought advice regarding his moral and spiritual conduct from

¹⁰ Slaatte, *Wesley’s Theology*, 21.

¹¹ Collins, *A Real Christian*, 41.

¹² Watson, “*Methodist Spirituality*,” 174.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 175.

August Spangenberg, a Moravian pastor. Before he would answer, Spangenberg posed two questions to Wesley: first, ‘have you the witness within yourself?’ and second, ‘does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?’”¹⁴ He further notes that it was this time with Spangenberg that revealed to Wesley the absence of the witness of the Holy Spirit in his life.¹⁵ Over the course of the two years and three months that followed these piercing questions, Wesley continued to minister in Georgia to the Indians, but found himself laden by the questions Spangenberg had posed him. His personal journal over the course of that time was riddled with questions, self-doubt, and personal anguish. It is hard to say if Wesley would have had this same “crisis of faith” had he not had this experience with the Moravians. What is important to note here is the new levels of faith development that are experienced through the process of crisis, questioning, and introspection. The Moravians’ insight into the area of perfectionism would later serve to help Wesley shape his own thoughts and theology on the idea. It was the intense self-reflection and introspection, brought on by Spangenberg’s questions, which would set the stage for a “heart-warming experience” for Wesley at Aldersgate.

Aldersgate Experience - Assurance

Slaatte records that “Upon his return to England after a couple of years, Wesley was quite insecure spiritually. He met a Moravian leader, Peter Bohler, who said to him, ‘Preach faith until you have it.’”¹⁶ So preach he did, recalls Watson, and soon “Wesley came to know this assurance on May 24, 1738, at a religious society meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, where he records that his heart was ‘strangely warmed.’”¹⁷

¹⁴ Collins, *A Real Christian*, 42.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Slaatte, *Wesley’s Theology*, 4.

¹⁷ Watson, “*Methodist Spirituality*,” 176.

Slaatte states that “[Wesley] had come to where he realized the personal relevance of justification by faith with an assurance of God’s acceptance of him, not on his terms, but God’s.”¹⁸ In his own words, Wesley describes what happened on that faithful night in May:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.¹⁹

From that time on Wesley was different. God’s grace had taken a priority that gave him a new outlook, quality and dimension to his life and ministry. There was a new sense of connection with Christ, no longer as servant, but as son. It is important paradigm shifts like this one that can free us up to be the people that God truly desires us to become. I believe that the importance of Wesley’s encounters with the Moravians is expressed in the experiential component of the quadrilateral.

Development of the Methodist Church

As Wesley continued in his own spiritual formation, he eventually understood that there was more he had to offer his fellow believers. Slaatte notes that “As an evangelist and teacher Wesley was also bent on organizing Methodist classes in every community.”²⁰ Although he was further along in his spiritual journey by the time he began to formally establish these religious communities, the process of such was very formational for Wesley. His growth was now coming as a leader and organizer of a spiritual movement that was methodical and intentional. In his book *A Religious History*

¹⁸ Slaatte, *Wesley’s Theology*, 4.

¹⁹ Ward and Heitzenrater, *Journals and Diaries*, 18:249-50.

²⁰ Slaatte, *Wesley’s Theology*, 16.

of America, Edwin Scott Gaustad states that “Launched by the brothers John and Charles Wesley, Methodism in England began as an effort to revive the languishing Church of England, to improve personal piety, and to reach the working classes who seemed to be abandoning the National Church in ever larger numbers.”²¹ Wesley was now beginning put into practice on a large scale many of the things that he had learned about spiritual formation. This is such an important step for leaders today to remember – a growth and development should never end in ourselves, but should inform how we can better serve and lead others towards God.

Although Wesley’s upbringing is probably not something that can be easily replicated, based on the various elements and personal opportunities, there are definitely components that we should consider in our current pursuits. Wesley’s significant contributions in the area of spiritual formation and Christian theology are directly tied to his own spiritual formation process. The key factors in John Wesley’s earlier years mentioned above – parental influence, accountable small groups, serving others, interaction with members of a different faith community, his crisis of faith (Aldersgate experience), and putting it all into practice (in the formation of the Methodist Church) – were all significant elements that played into Wesley’s personal spiritual formation and development as a leader. Wesley’s developmental process is one that speaks to the powerful impact that the early, formational years can play in the lives of young believers.

We must now explore how through his own spiritual development Wesley came to some significant conclusions that he set as foundational in his own spiritual formation and challenged those who engaged in the spiritual journey to consider. Wesley clearly

²¹ Edwin Scott Gaustad, *A Religious History of America*, New Revised Edition (New York, NY: Harper San Francisco, 1990), 49.

defined theologically-backed practices which he believed would encourage believers in living as fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ: the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, Christian Perfection, and accountable discipleship. To this day, these different practices continue to be staples of the Methodist Church, as well as key elements to spiritual formation as a whole.

The “Wesleyan Quadrilateral”

What is it?

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is a proven paradigm for spiritual formation and is as relevant to the process today as it was back in the 18th century. “As John Wesley emerged as a principal leader of the Evangelical Revival of England in the seventeenth century, his hopes for revival extended beyond evangelism and discipleship. He wanted to blend what he called ‘heart-religion’ with a firm theological grounding in scriptural Christianity,”²² states Donald Thorsen in his book *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology*. “Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed in reason,”²³ according to *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. The term *Wesleyan quadrilateral* is not something that Wesley coined, nor used; but was the paradigm, or model, of how Wesley conceived of the task of theology. Instead, the term was fashioned in the late 1960s by Albert Outler, “as a paradigm for the four-fold guidelines

²² Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 15.

²³ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (1966), 74.

of authority in Wesleyan theology,”²⁴ states Vic Reasoner in his article *Spiritual*

Geometry: Evaluating the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. In his own words, Outler states:

It was intended as a metaphor for a four-element syndrome, including the four-fold guidelines of authority in Wesley’s theological method. In such a quaternity Holy Scripture is clearly unique. But this in turn is illuminated by the collective Christian wisdom of other ages and cultures between the Apostolic Age and our own. It also allows for the rescue of the Gospel from obscurantism by means of the disciplines of critical reason. But always, Biblical revelation must be received in the heart by faith: this is the requirement of “experience.”²⁵

These four elements: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience were central in Wesley’s pursuit of following Christ. Each element played a crucial role, yet each had its own place and function.

SCRIPTURE

“Any accurate understanding of Wesley’s view of the Bible must first start here, with a strong statement that Scripture alone is the authority for Christian faith and practice. On this point Wesley is definite. It is the Bible that serves as the final court of appeal.”²⁶ Well before his Aldersgate experience, Wesley committed himself to making the Bible the primary source of authority for his life.²⁷ Outler notes that “His appeal to Scripture goes far deeper than the use of texts in support of his own views. His larger concern was to let each part of Scripture be pondered in the light of the whole, obscure texts in the light of the more lucid ones – and all of them, always, in the spirit of prayer, *coram Deo*.”²⁸ This was true for his personal life, the life of the “Holy Club” – within

²⁴ Vic Reasoner. “Spiritual Geometry: Evaluating the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.” *The Armenian Magazine* 14, no. 2 (Fall 1996), http://wesley.nnu.edu/arminianism/arminianmag/14-2_96.html. (accessed March 12, 2003).

²⁵ Albert C. Outler, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in John Wesley,” in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage*, ed. Thomas C. Oden & Leicester R. Longden (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), 28.

²⁶ Stephen W. Gunter, Scott J. Jones, Ted A. Campbell, Rebekah L. Miles, Randy L. Maddox, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 41.

²⁷ Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 130.

²⁸ Outler, “*The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*,” 31.

which he first began to pursue Christ through the scriptures with a renewed sense of earnestness – and also in the “societies” and “bands” that he established throughout his itinerant. Wesley’s faith in the Scriptures stems straight from his faith in God. The authority that Wesley deemed it with was tied directly to his belief in its complete inspiration. The Scriptures were the source of wisdom that led to salvation. They were also the main source for living a holy life.

Although Wesley was clear on the authority of Scripture, he was not willing to leave it at that. Although he was strongly influenced by Luther’s belief of *sola scriptura*, Wesley preferred to think of himself as *homo unius libri* – a man of one book. Thus, he intentionally left the door open for the influence of other factors upon the interpretation of Scripture. According to Thorsen, it was “Because Scripture applies both to theology and the whole of life, [that] Wesley considered tradition, reason, and experience viable resources in helping to understand and communicate the truths of Scripture.”²⁹

TRADITION

Christian tradition was held in a special light for Wesley in formulating his theological and practical writings. For Wesley, tradition could be broken down into two different elements: Christian Antiquity and the Early Church of England. “By ‘Christian antiquity’ Wesley referred primarily to ‘the *religion of the primitive church*, of the whole church in the purest ages,’”³⁰ notes Thorsen. He goes on to state that “[Wesley] deemed learning church history helpful in the process of understanding, appreciating, and – finally – realizing scriptural truth in life.”³¹ Wesley often drew eclectically from other

²⁹ Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 128.

³⁰ Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 151. {“On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel” (1777, sermon 112), II.3, Works (Bicentennial ed.), 3:586.}

³¹ *Ibid.*, 152.

sources, as long as they met his general principle of biblical orthodoxy, believing that any writer or any religious tradition that gave insight to one's theological understanding and Christian lifestyle had relevance and unique perspective. Although he had a special fondness for the Fathers of the early centuries, Wesley read voraciously and in all genres. "Since God loves all Christians, Wesley reasoned that we should love one another as well by accepting and tolerating differing opinions while working to promote and communicate the essential truths of the gospel message contained in Scripture,"³² states Thorsen. He notes further, that "Wesley considered tradition second only to Scripture as a source of religious authority, to the degree that it reflected both the intellectual content and the spiritual vitality of Christian faith."³³

REASON

Wesley also set a high value on the role of reason in religion. In defining what exactly reason meant; he kept it simple: "reason means a motive or an argument,"³⁴ says Gunter. According to Thorsen, "Wesley's confidence in the powers of reason was strongest in his early years. He tempered that confidence later on in writing about the powers of reason in contrast to the powers of God's grace; but he still maintained that religious belief is capable of rational assessment and rational justification."³⁵ Wesley firmly believed in the compatibility of scripture and reason. He saw no inconsistencies between the two and believed that one should have both as a Christian. "Of course, [Wesley] saw the limitations of rational inquiry. Yet reason remained a trustworthy aid

³² Ibid., 167.

³³ Ibid., 168.

³⁴ Gunter et al., "Wesley and the Quadrilateral," 84.

³⁵ Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 197.

to interpreting Scripture and a reliable adviser for the searching pilgrim,”³⁶ states Thorsen.

EXPERIENCE

According to Outler, “It was Wesley’s special genius that he conceived of adding ‘experience’ to the traditional Anglican triad [Scripture, tradition, and reason], and thereby adding vitality without altering the substance.”³⁷ Thorsen suggests that Wesley’s insights into experience as a source of religious authority are considered by many to be one of his greatest contributions to the development of Christian theology.³⁸ He claims further that “While maintaining the primacy of Scripture, Wesley functioned with a dynamic interplay of sources in interpreting, illuminating, enriching, and communicating biblical truths. Wesley felt the theological freedom to seek truth pragmatically through understanding our experiences. But he did so without succumbing to the implications of a thoroughly pragmatic approach that reduces truth to what is relative to its practical value in our experiences of life.”³⁹ Wesley’s inclusion of experience was intentional in his theological method. His goal was to prevent all Christians from allowing their faith to become something that was solely rational and reducible to a formula. He believed that without experience a believer’s faith could become quenched of the vitality of the Holy Spirit.

Wesley continued to remain open to new insights that might be uncovered by integrating and then interacting with Scripture, tradition, reason and experience.⁴⁰

According to John Smith, in his article *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, “The idea of a

³⁶ Ibid., 171.

³⁷ Outler, “*The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*,” 26.

³⁸ Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 201.

³⁹ Ibid., 125.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 125.

Quadrilateral comes into play in that all four parts are connected. Ideally, a statement or proposition should agree with all four parts, but revelation (The Bible) takes the ultimate precedence. Reason comes next, and tradition and experience tag along after that.”⁴¹

What did the Quadrilateral mean in the day of Wesley?

In his writings, Wesley quotes Scripture far more than he does anything else.

“His use of Scripture can be grouped into five categories: textual – meaning Wesley used it as his primary source for preaching, studying, and sermon preparation; explanatory – meaning it functioned to explain something else; definitional – as an authoritative dictionary; narrative – a great source of stories, characters, and events that can be used as illustrations; and semantic – meaning it can be used to help make a point in conjunction with the authority provided in the source.”⁴² Clearly, Wesley would not only have held Scripture in this light for himself alone, but would have encouraged this same framework for the authority and use of Scripture by all who joined him in fellowship.

“John Wesley lived in an age when tradition was both despised and revered. It was despised, on the one hand, by the enlightened *philosophers* of the eighteenth century, who tended to see tradition – especially the inheritance of the Christian Middle Ages – as a hindrance to the development of human learning. On the other hand, at least ancient tradition was revered by many in the ‘Augustan’ age, and the architecture of Georgian England stands as a monument to their reverence,”⁴³ notes Gunter. Christian tradition was viewed with much of these same tones. His primary uses of tradition were twofold. First, he used tradition in defense of the *status quo*. Gunter suggests “In this respect,

⁴¹ John Smith. “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” *Religion & Spirituality*. (15 November 2000) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/alabaster/a464933.html> (accessed March 23, 2003).

⁴² See Gunter et al., *Wesley and the Quadrilateral*, 44-46.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 64.

Wesley corresponded to a more conventional Caroline (and Catholic) understanding of tradition, according to which ‘tradition’ designates a more or less unbroken continuity of the historic Church with presently existing institutions and teachings.”⁴⁴ His second use of tradition came in the form of advocating cultural change. Again, Gunter reasons “Perhaps Wesley’s most distinctive appeals to ancient and Anglican traditions, however, came in his insistence that Methodism was a ‘revival’ of the apostolic faith that he believed was expressed in the Bible and continued in the ancient church and in the constitutional documents of the Church of England.”⁴⁵ Here he appealed to tradition as a model for change in both church and culture.

Reason, much like in the Modern Era, was seen by many in Wesley’s time as something that was incompatible with faith. Wesley and his friends from the *Holy Club* first came together while pursuing a university education and believed otherwise. Although his ultimate goal was to make the pursuit of Christ as simple as possible for as many as possible, Wesley also took very serious his educational pursuits and believed that they could only enhance his faith. Where the two did clash, reason and Scripture, Scripture always trumped reason.

Lastly, and unlike the triad of Scripture, tradition and reason; experience was a new introduction to the elements of Christian theology and practice in the time of Wesley. This was probably the element that allowed for Christ to be experienced by as many as possible in Wesley’s day. Not everyone was well-educated in the Scriptures, nor tradition – and reason could easily exclude individuals from theological conversations. Experience, on the other hand, was an element that seemed to bring a level playing field

⁴⁴ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

to all who wanted to enter the theological conversation. Everybody had experiences in which they could better see, know, and understand God. Wesley's genius was to integrate the role of one's personal story into the mix with Scripture, tradition and reason.

What does the Quadrilateral mean for us today?

In the mid 1990s, notes Gunter, "a leader of The United Methodist Church was quoted in a newspaper article as saying, 'I ran the issue of homosexuality through the quadrilateral, and Scripture lost, three to one.'⁴⁶ It has become increasingly clear that the role, and priority, given to the different elements of the quadrilateral has changed. In the modern era, many Christians struggled to place Scripture above reason, understand the relevance of tradition, and see a need to engage in experience. The quadrilateral identifies instrumental influencers in our spiritual formation process and must be reunited as a means for growth and development. Gunter postulates that "Reason reflecting on human experience (including our experiences of God's revelation) is a necessary part of all of life, including faith. Reason helps understand and work with Scripture, experience, and tradition. Reason confirms what we learn from these other sources. In the company of these other sources, reason can do many things; but reason alone is useless."⁴⁷

The primacy of Scripture is something that must be reestablished as well. Placing the Word of God below any other element is to remove it from its rightful place of priority in Wesley's proven paradigm. Even though today's student struggles with anything that resembles authority, the authoritative function of Scripture must be established and upheld to allow the student to struggle with what that then means to them.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 99.

In the areas of experience and tradition, we see two elements that are increasing in popularity within the postmodern culture. There is an increasing trend to learn through an educational engagement in both of these arenas. Students are taking more of an interest in not just their own denominational heritage, but because so many are not buying into the idea of a denomination are looking to learn from the heritage and traditions across denominational boundaries. Experiences are also being sought out in varying contexts. Some of the key roles that experience is playing in the formation and development of students are: 1) providing empowerment for Christ-like living, 2) providing seasoned guidance for our spiritual pilgrimage, 3) providing public evidence of central Christian teachings, 4) providing guidance in doctrinal decisions, and 5) connecting theological reflection with daily Christian living.⁴⁸

Even with a positive trend in these four different elements of the quadrilateral, many Christians today continue to have a hard time bringing it all together. In many ways there remains a modernistic structure that causes us to compartmentalize these different elements that keep them from working together to grow and shape our lives as a whole. I believe that as we move further into the postmodern culture, this compartmentalized structure should begin to deteriorate, ultimately to be replaced by a more holistic approach to learning and living. Let us now consider Wesley's view of Christian Perfection.

Entire Sanctification or Christian Perfection

What is it?

This concept, or theology, of *Entire Sanctification (or Christian Perfection)* has caused great debate and confusion within the Christian world. For Wesley it was simple:

⁴⁸ See Ibid., 116-126.

it meant be perfect, as the Father is perfect. According to Gaustad, “Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had stressed the necessity for all Christians to press beyond the stage of mere justification to a higher plateau, a loftier goal of complete sanctification: that is, of being made holy.”⁴⁹ Keith Hardman cites in his edited collection *Issues in American Christianity*, that “Wesley taught that God had canceled the effects of original sin in the sacrifice of Christ. Therefore the atonement was universal in its effects. Wesley added to this the concept that, the person who receives the grace of God may then move on to seek the ‘second blessing’ of entire sanctification, which leads to sinlessness and cleanses away remaining sin and depravity.”⁵⁰ It is not an instantaneous process that happens as much as it is a process that begins instantaneously upon our acceptance of the promises of God. Wesley believed that He is never done working on us! Entire Sanctification does not give us a “free from sin” pass, but instead, it gives us a freedom from sin that allows us to not stay in that sin-state.

Kenneth Collins, in his book *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, states, “In several of his writings, John Wesley reveals that he first saw the end or *telos* of religion, which is *holiness*, when he was a young man.”⁵¹ The term holiness has to do with an inward religion – or a religion of the heart, which Wesley often referred to as the *circumcision of the heart*. This religion of the heart would bring a person to a purity of heart, and subsequently intention, which would render him without sin. Wesley believed that this heart of pure intentions was completely sanctified – or perfect. Simply, Christian Perfection is one thing – love – a perfect love that is free from the confines or effects of

⁴⁹ Gaustad, *A Religious History*, 247.

⁵⁰ Keith J. Hardman, ed. *Issues in American Christianity: Primary Sources with Introductions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1993), 166.

⁵¹ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 171.

sin. In his own words, Wesley postulates that “In this [love] is perfection, and glory, and happiness: the royal law of heaven and earth is this, ‘Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.’ The one perfect good shall be your one ultimate end.”⁵² It is the complete transformation of the Christian from one who has simply received Jesus as Lord and Savior, to living as one who now desires (*intention*) – with everything that is within them – to be made more and more into the image of Christ’s likeness each and everyday. States Collins, “Christian perfection describes, in other words, the characteristics of holy love reigning in the human heart, a love that not only embraces the love of God and neighbor, but that also excludes all sin.”⁵³ For Wesley, this pursuit is what the spiritual formation process was all about. In his own words, Wesley writes that,

The tree is known by its fruits. For, as he loves God, so he “keeps His commandments;” not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest. He is not content to “keep the whole law and offend in one point,” but has in all points “a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man.” Whatever God has forbidden, he avoids; whatever God has enjoined, he does. “He runs the way of God’s commandments,” now He hath set his heart at liberty. It is his glory and joy so to do; it is his daily crown of rejoicing, to “do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.”⁵⁴

As this term, *Christian Perfection* has been the focus of such confusion and debate from the days of Wesley to the present day, it is important to be clear on what this term does *not* mean according to Wesley. Christians are not perfect in the sense that:

They are not perfect in knowledge. They are not free from ignorance, no, nor from mistake. We are no more to expect any living man to be infallible, than to be omniscient. They are not free from infirmities, such as weakness or slowness of understanding, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination. Such in another kind are impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation; to

⁵² John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1777), 12.

⁵³ Collins, *The Scripture Way*, 172.

⁵⁴ Wesley, *A Plain Account*, 19-20.

which one might add a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behavior. From such infirmities as these none are perfectly freed till their spirits return to God; neither can we expect till then to be wholly freed from temptation; for “the servant is not above the master.” But neither in this sense is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, none which does not admit of a continual increase.⁵⁵

As Wesley saw it, there were still many things that were beyond our control, and possibly of less interest to God and his work upon us. So, instead of “complete” perfection, Wesley was more convinced of, “an entire inward and outward conformity to our Master.”⁵⁶ It could not be either one, or the other, but must be intrinsically both!

What did Christian Perfection mean in the day of Wesley?

In establishing the Methodist Church, Wesley prescribed to all who desired to belong that, “a Methodist is one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul, which is continually crying, ‘Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth whom I desire besides Thee.’”⁵⁷ Wesley states his conviction of living the Christian life to its fullest extent when he proclaims the “absolute impossibility of being half a Christian; and I determined, through His grace (the absolute necessity of which I was deeply sensible of), to be all devoted to God, to give Him all my soul, my body, and my substance.”⁵⁸ And so Wesley would challenge those who wanted more of God in their life to give more, indeed all, of themselves to Him. Part of their life would not do, not even most of it, but only one’s life in its entirety.

It was not simply an internal surrender, but also an outward surrender of how one lived life. This ties directly in to the concept of being a “Bible Christian,” as Wesley

⁵⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 10-11.

would call the believer to not only believe God's Word, but also follow it and accept the promises it puts forth for us. Service was a natural outward expression of what God was doing in the life of the sanctified believer. "Stressing ethical duty, holiness groups usually were concerned not only with personal purity but also with responsibilities toward the poor,"⁵⁹ notes George Marsden in *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Wesley and the holiness groups would often take up offerings to be given to the poor, as well as seeking to minister in very practical ways to the widows, fatherless, and orphaned. Richard Foster, in *Streams of Living Water*, points out that "For the Holiness tradition, external actions - this is the set of ethical practices or that set of observances - are never the center of attention. Specific actions are a consequence, a natural result of something far deeper, far more profound."⁶⁰

What many of Wesley's contemporaries struggled with, however, was his belief that Man could be free of sin. According to Wesley, "Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempters."⁶¹ Because of this theological struggle, there were obvious challenges to the pursuit and praxis of such ideas by Wesley's contemporaries. Ranging from stanch legalism, to Christians who were simply not looking to be as *personally invested* in their faith, Wesley's thoughts on Christian Perfection have proven to be challenging to all Christ-followers.

⁵⁹ George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 42.

⁶⁰ Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Tradition of Christian Faith* (New York, NY: Harper San Francisco, 2001), 86.

⁶¹ Wesley 1777, 27-28.

What does Christian Perfection mean for us today?

It is still all tied to intention! Our intentions tie directly into every aspect of our life. It is of the utmost importance that our intentions are rooted in all things pure, for what flows out of these intentions clearly defines the source from which we draw life. This is completely true for those in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, as well as all Christians who are seriously committed to living a life fully devoted to God. Wesley's focus on inward holiness was not just meant for his 18th century following, but is something that Christians today need to strive for more than ever. With all of life's distractions, and the worldly pulls that lure Christian leadership off track, we need to be focused on Jesus as the author and perfecter of our faith, as well as proactively taking steps towards being transformed into His image and likeness.

God calls us towards himself, and He requires us to be active participants in our relationship with him. It affirms Christ's call to "be holy as I am holy," and Wesley's challenging pursuit of Christian Perfection. It is important, however, that we not allow ourselves to get carried away with a "works" type of mentality, attempting to earn our way into his image. "Holiness never involves works, but it most assuredly involves efforts,"⁶² states Foster. More than anything else, it is a grace-filled act of God upon humankind.

As we answer God's call into a deeper relationship with Him, there are means (disciplines) through which we can *position* ourselves to promote this deeper relationship. According to Dallas Willard in *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Wesley believed that "'the soul and the body make a man; the spirit and discipline make a Christian:' implying that

⁶² Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, 95.

none could be real Christians without the help of Christian discipline.”⁶³ Wesley was known to pray two hours daily and set aside two days weekly for fasting. Daily, Wesley spent time in study and meditation of the scriptures and Mystics. In his book *Celebration of Disciplines*, Foster notes that “John Wesley spoke of the necessity of Christians coming into more of the forgiving grace of God. The Discipline of confession helps the believer to grow into ‘mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.’”⁶⁴ Spiritual disciplines, combined with the grace of God, offer us the same depth of relationship with God that they did back in the days of Wesley. We would be wise to seek to know God more through these means and consider spiritual disciplines in a holistic model for formation and development.

As we grow in personal holiness, we should also be compelled into action, because *we* are never the end of the equation. Serving others out of an outflow of our heart is a prime example of how God wants to use us as his instruments in the lives of others. If Christ is at work in our lives, it is hard for it not to shine in the life we live. What is in us must come out of us. Here, the emphasis of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition is the “inward holiness of intent applied to practical works in the world,”⁶⁵ states Collins in *Exploring Christian Spirituality*. Works and legalism are potential perils within this tradition, but it is a fine line that we must learn to walk, because the alternative – living without purpose or notice of others – is a life focused on self. It all goes back to our intentions. “When the heart is set right, then the actions that are good

⁶³ Dallas Willard. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York, NY: Harper San Francisco, 1988), 16-17.

⁶⁴ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York, NY: Harper San Francisco, 1988), 145.

⁶⁵ Kenneth J. Collins, ed., *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 179.

and true will flow naturally. So external action is of importance, but it is of secondary importance,”⁶⁶ says Foster. Let us now consider the important role of accountability in the context of community.

Methodist class meetings – Accountable Discipleship

What is it?

David Lowes Watson, in his book *Accountable Discipleship*, state that “The foundation of Wesley’s organization of the Methodist movement lay in his recognition that Christian discipleship was first and foremost a response to God’s grace, not a striving for virtue or an experience of instant salvation.”⁶⁷ For Wesley, Watson continues, “the true meaning of discipleship was the *working out* of salvation.”⁶⁸ The context within which this *working out* was to occur was in what German pietism referred to as: “*ecclesiola in ecclesia*, the little church in the big church.”⁶⁹ For Wesley, these *little churches* took the form of societies, class meetings, and bands. The bands were the smallest, and most disciplined, of these groups as its members were made up of those on the quest toward perfection. “We can trace a great deal of Wesley’s churchmanship to two specific patterns of disciplined Christian living which influenced him during his formative years, each an expression of *ecclesiola in ecclesia*: the Religious Societies of the Church of England, and the communal life of the Moravians,”⁷⁰ notes Watson. The former of these, he continues, “consisted of young men seeking to develop a more disciplined spiritual life, who met together in order to talk about their faith and how they

⁶⁶ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 91.

⁶⁷ David Lowes Watson, *Accountable Discipleship: Handbook for Covenant Discipleship Groups in the Congregation* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1984), 34.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

might live it out in the world.”⁷¹ Wesley’s encounter with the Moravians on his way to America in 1735 as well as the time he spent with them in Georgia was important for two reasons. First, it exposed him to the organization of small group fellowship and convinced him of their value. At the same time, however, Wesley’s eyes were opened to the limitations of the small groups which would inform how he structured small group communities within the Methodist movement.

What did Accountable Discipleship mean in the day of Wesley?

For Wesley, life with others was significant. It is an idea of “mutual accountability” that allows members of a community to grow in Christ as they do life with one another. Watson recalls that “The early Methodists worked out their salvation in the reality of worldly living, empowered through the means of grace afforded by the time-honored disciplines of the church. They did this by exercising a mutual accountability for their discipleship in the context of Christian fellowship.”⁷² He goes on to note that “Most of the people who joined the societies continued with their occupations – servants, farmers, craftsmen, shopkeepers – and therefore had to meet the challenge of Christian witness exactly where they were in the grist and grind of daily living.”⁷³ Robin Mass, in her chapter entitled *Accountable Discipleship: Methodism’s Quest to Retrieve a Tradition*, states, “It is never easy to be faithful to the demands of discipleship, and that is why Wesley emphasized so heavily the importance of regular, mutual, structured support for individuals struggling to be faithful to Christ in a culturally hostile environment.”⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 15.

⁷³ Ibid., 29.

⁷⁴ Robin Mass, “Accountable Discipleship: Methodism’s Quest to Retrieve a Tradition,” in *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, ed. Robin & Gabriel O’Donnell Mass, O.P. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 320.

Times together included singing, prayer, and time for each member to “give an account of the past week’s spiritual journey; and in response to each account, the leader would clarify what had been said, and then give appropriate guidance,”⁷⁵ notes Collins.

The original class meetings operated with a set of specific rules rather than a mutually designed covenant. These *Rules of the United Societies* were based on the broad injunctions of: 1) doing no harm, 2) doing good, and 3) participation in public worship. According to Watson, “There were many aspects of the Religious Societies which proved to be direct precedents for Methodist polity, perhaps the most important of which were the growing role of lay leadership and involvement in direct social outreach.”⁷⁶

What does Accountable Discipleship mean for us today?

Some of the most significant encounters with Christ come within the context of community. Other people have a major impact on every area of our lives, and I believe that is how God intended for it to be. The Bible clearly states that the two greatest commands are to love God, and love others. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in *The Cost of Discipleship*, notes “The object of Jesus’ command is always the same - to evoke wholehearted faith, to make us love God and our neighbor with all our heart and soul.”⁷⁷ Our obedience to Christ does not just affect our own life, nor is it supposed to, but it is meant to have an impact on those around us.

The words found in Watson’s introduction of *Accountable Discipleship* speak clearly to our current circumstances:

⁷⁵ Collins, *Exploring Christian Spirituality*, 184.

⁷⁶ Watson, *Accountable Discipleship*, 25.

⁷⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1963), 252.

In company with Christians across the ages, those of us who try to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ find ourselves living in a constant tension. We hear the call of the carpenter from Nazareth, and we respond with repentance and joy to his offer of salvation. But as we live out this salvation, the call becomes increasingly and disconcertingly direct. The more we learn about the life and teachings of this man who celebrated at Jewish weddings, who ate Jewish food, who walked the roads of Palestine and who sweated Jewish sweat, the more we find that his call is an invitation to discipleship which leaves nothing in doubt yet everything open.⁷⁸

It is clear that this invitation we receive from Jesus to be his disciple is one that would require tremendous sacrifice, yet reap unfathomable rewards. Truthfully, however, for us to truly engage in this life changing relationship, will require that we surround ourselves with others with whom we can walk the journey. It involves us being in community with others and having an openness to allow them to be agents of transformation in our lives, and us in theirs. According to Foster, "...we invite others to travel the journey with us. Such persons become both companions and mentors. They provide us with discernment, counsel, and encouragement."⁷⁹ Learning from those who are further along on their journey is one of the best ways to be formed spiritually. Learning from the successes and failures of our peers, and allowing them to learn from ours, is another incredible way of how God can use community to grow us more into His image.

Christian communities are not perfect. Without appropriate attention to the leading of the Holy Spirit within such communities, there is the potential for it to actually become a hindrance to the spiritual formation process. Some of the potential perils of small groups could come in the form of focusing too much on the group and not enough on Jesus; elitist attitudes within groups or group members; legalism; time spent together becoming routine; and lacking a sensitivity to the changing needs of the group. Every

⁷⁸ Watson, *Accountable Discipleship*, 1.

⁷⁹ Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, 95.

community should be in the habit of healthy assessment. A desire to keep Christ at the center of the community, as well as to meet the ever changing needs of the group, should forever be paramount.

Conclusion

John Wesley is one of the important figures in the history of Christian theology and praxis. Not only did Wesley play an instrumental role in the formation of the Methodist denomination, but served as an influential voice in how believers across denominational lines approach Christian spirituality. Wesley's practices and teachings from the 18th and 19th centuries have great relevance in considering how we approach spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st century.

In this chapter we considered the factors that were influential in the spiritual formation and leadership development of Wesley as a young man – his parents, the “Holy Club,” serving others, the Moravians, his Aldersgate experience, and the development of the Methodist Church. We later explored the elements of spiritual formation and leadership development that Wesley used to assist others in their pursuit of living the committed Christian life – the balance of the Scripture, tradition, reason and experience as well as the pursuit of Christian Perfection and accountability found in small groups.

The life and teachings of John Wesley must continue to play an influential role in considering a holistic model for spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st century. Let us now take into consideration the kind of students we are attempting to train and equip in this postmodern context.

CHAPTER 5. SPIRITUAL FORMATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND THE POSTMODERN STUDENT

A look at Spiritual Formation in Today's College Student

In this chapter I will explore some of the distinguishing characteristics that differentiate this cultural era, postmodernism, from all previous cultural eras. These distinctions, in turn, require that we approach spiritual formation and leadership development in an informed and creative manner. I will also explore some of the distinguishing characteristics that make today's college student unique in comparison to past generation of students, such that those of us engaged in ministry with college-aged students must rethink our methodology in how we approach, relate and reach-out to them.

I will make the claim that because of the cultural climate and evolving nature of students today, we will have unique challenges, as well as unique opportunities, for spiritual formation on college and university campuses. For us to have a voice in the lives of today's students, it is imperative that we strongly consider these claims and their ramifications for shaping and growing the Christian leaders of tomorrow.

A disclaimer as we start: The cultural transition from modernism to postmodernism is creating some new, and/or reclaiming some old, ways of thinking about and engaging in ministry with today's college students. Since we cannot control the shifts and trends of culture, I believe it is part of our responsibility as ministers to engage in conversations and study related to today's culture so that we might better understand

where our students are coming from and how better we can hope to reach them.

Admittedly, we will not always agree with cultural shifts and trends, but we must be willing to keep an openness to what is happening, otherwise we could render ourselves irrelevant to the people with whom we are trying to connect.

What is Postmodernism?

Leonard Sweet, Brian McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer state, in *A is for Abductive*, that “This emerging culture can best be understood, we believe, through the lens of the prefix post-. ‘Post-’ does not mean anti-, nor does it mean pre- or non-. This is important. Rather than anti- or pre- or non-, ‘post-’ means ‘coming through and coming after.’”¹ This definition is an important part of our understanding the cultural shift that is taking place. Much of the fear that is generated in regards to postmodernism is that it is a proverbial slap in the face of other cultural eras, especially modernism. This definition, however, points us to a more clear understanding of what this shift is all about. The idea of “coming through and coming after” causes to think in more of a linear creation: $A + B = C$ so to speak. Where as *A* might represent the cultural eras leading up to modernism, and *B* might represent the era of modernism, *C* then would represent the postmodern era. In many ways, postmodernism is the product of all of the cultural eras that have come before it. It is not an antagonistic movement, but an expression of a culture in search of meaning and significance as it comes out of the modern era. I firmly believe that if we can be open to understanding postmodernism in this context, we will be able to see without prejudice the important influencers that are at work shaping our students today.

¹ Leonard Sweet, Brian D. McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer, *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003), 241.

Lewis Drummond states in *Reaching Generation Next*, that “in the late 1960s the modern era pretty well died and postmodernism commenced its reign. Its constituents, generally speaking, are those born after 1965, often called Generation X or Busters, and the next generation, the children of the Busters, is following in their footsteps.”² Dating postmodernism back to the 1960’s may come as somewhat of a surprise to those who have not intentionally been a student of the culture and its changing ways. “Sociologists and others tell us that this new spirit has come about as a reaction to the sterility of modernism, or so-called modernity, the socialized, philosophical, rational mind-set that grew out of the Enlightenment movement,”³ notes Drummond.

According to Stanley J. Grenz, “postmodernism refers to an intellectual mood and an array of cultural expressions that call into questions the ideals, principles, and values that lay at the heart of the modern mind-set.”⁴ Common terms being used to describe this shift that is shaping our culture are *Deconstructionism*, *Anti-Enlightenment*, *Pluralism*, *Constructionism* and *Tribalism*. Although each term would give a slightly different definition of the nature of this new cultural era, they can all be boiled down to three basic elements that clearly depict the postmodern mood: 1) there are no absolutes, 2) the reclaiming of narrative, and 3) a renewed interest in community. Let us take a more in-depth look at these elements of truth, narrative, and community that have already been identified as playing a significant role in the development of this emerging culture.

² Lewis A. Drummond, *Reaching Generation Next: Effective Evangelism in Today's Culture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2002), 15.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 12.

Distinction #1: No Absolutes

The shift from modernity to postmodernity has clearly brought into question the concept of truth – how it is defined, who defines it, what it really means, and whether or not it really exists. Grenz notes that “The postmodern ethos resists unified, all-encompassing, and universally valid explanations.”⁵ According to Grenz and John Franke, in *Beyond Foundationalism*, “In the postmodern context, foundationalism is in dramatic retreat, as its assertions about the objectivity, certainty, and universality of knowledge has come under withering critique.”⁶ More clearly stated, we are transitioning from an age where truth could be defined in black-and-white terms, to an age of gray where truth believes to be more subjective than it is objective.

Understandably, this is where those of us who are products of the modern era are quick to disregard the philosophies of postmodernity, especially in light of the supremacy of God and the authority of Scripture. Long time missionary and author Lesslie Newbigin addresses this incredible challenge in his book *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. He notes that “In this culture an appeal to the Bible is simply an expression of my personal choice of this particular authority among the many that I might choose from.”⁷ He later suggests that, “Like the scientist, the Christian believer has to learn to indwell the tradition. Its models and concepts are things which he does not simply examine from the perspective of another set of models, but have to become the models through which he understands the world. He has to internalize them and to dwell in them. And, as in the case of the pupil learning physics or mathematics, this has to be in

⁵ Ibid., 12.

⁶ Stanley J. Grenz, and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 24.

⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company), 39.

the beginning an exercise of faith. He has to trust the tradition and trust the teacher as an authorized interpreter of it.”⁸ Even though much of the postmodern culture is unwilling to give anything the title of *absolute* or *authority*, I believe that this is an exercise that many will be willing to engage in. As Newbigin points out, “the Christian understanding of the world is not only a matter of ‘dwelling in’ a tradition of understanding; it is a matter of dwelling in a story of God’s activity, activity which is still continuing. The knowledge which Christian faith seeks is knowledge of God who has acted and is acting.”⁹

The modern approaches to the dissemination of truth may no longer work as well with an emerging culture that does not want to be told what truth is but would rather figure it out for themselves through experience and community. The days of the teacher-student model where truth in the form of information was directly being dispersed from one with years upon years of education and experience to one with much less education and experience are now being replaced with the model of the young journeyman who travels in search of truth, using community as a means of refining and clarifying the experiences that are shaping truth. Understanding this concept should significantly impact how we approach ministry with, and ministering to, this culture. Where the mentoring-style relationship was more of the older, wiser person investing in a young protégé; the picture is now one of a *coach* who may have much less opportunity for direct influence, but through encouragement and looking for the *teachable moments* will be able to speak into the lives of students in a different manner.

⁸ Ibid., 49-50.

⁹ Ibid., 51.

There are many areas and ideas that will benefit from the open mindedness that marks the postmodern view of truth. However, as Christians we now find ourselves having to re-instate, reiterate, or recreate the black-and-whiteness of Truth as defined by the Bible. Dr. Leonard Sweet, during a class discussion, referred to this task of holding such contradicting ideas – the definite Truth as defined in the Bible, and the undefined truth of the postmodern mind - as “holding extremes together.”¹⁰ As much as certain ideas about what is true and what is not may appear to the *modern mind* like complete contradictions, the postmodern mind seems to have no problem with embracing both of the opposing sides. Sweet suggested the notion of *holding extremes together* would be an essential skill to learn in order to be relevant and have a voice in this emerging culture. Although this idea of *holding extremes together* may not be new, what does appear to be new is the relative ease and frequency with which today’s student does so.

Distinction #2: Reclaiming of Narrative

Another important shift that is coming out of this postmodern movement is the reclaiming of narrative as a primary means for sharing information, passing on tradition, and defining truth. Today’s North American student culture does not want you to “prove it” to them on paper, or through formula, or in books, or via lecture, as was characteristic of the modern era. Instead, they want to see how what you claim has been true for you in your life. They want to hear your story. They want to see how this truth was lived out in your life. Value is not ascribed based on how true something is said to be, but instead, in how what was said indeed proves to be true as played out in real life.

¹⁰ Sweet, Leonard. Class Discussions. Portland, OR: George Fox Evangelical Seminary, January 2004.

This is a very challenging style of education, specifically for a society that has become so individualistic. For this kind of learning to take place, through narrative, it requires an intimate communal setting in which to happen. The postmoderns are going to learn in the context of daily hearing and watching their *fellow journeymen* live out what they believe to be truth. This directly ties into the final distinction of postmodernity – finding identity in community.

Distinction #3: Identity in Community

There is a significant move in culture today toward the reclaiming of community. What can only be described as a self-centered and individualistic culture in more recent decades is beginning to see people with a growing desire to be in community with others. Advances in technology have opened the door for participation in a global community where opportunities to connect and relate are limitless. We now have the capacity to create any kind of community, with members coming from all corners of the globe, through internet, phone, or travel options.

Paradoxically, in the midst of the movement toward globalization, the postmodern movement is actually one towards a more localized community. Grenz postulates that “Nationalism has diminished in the wake of a movement toward ‘retribalization,’ toward increased loyalty to a more local context.”¹¹ So even though we have infinite possibilities for community, it seems that this postmodern shift desires the creation of communities where face-to-face daily interaction is possible. Community is once again becoming a place to be known, accepted, and understood, but it is also becoming a place

¹¹ Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 18.

in which concepts like truth and purpose are beginning to be defined. This must be considered in how ministry happens in the postmodern context!

Unique Characteristics of the Postmodern Student

Sharon Parks, in *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, states that “Every major era or stage in the life span is marked by its own way of making meaning.”¹² The student world is shaped and affected by the prevailing philosophies of the day and today’s students are being informed by many of the postmodern ideas. In his article *The New Student*, Fred Newton, professor in the Department of Counseling and Psychology and director of counseling services at Kansas State University states “Students entering college at the beginning of this new century are a distinctive generation. Labeled millennials, Internet gens, generation Y, and baby boomers II, they have been described as ambitious, precocious, stressed, indifferent, wayward, techno-nerd, heterogeneous, politically conservative, and sexually active.”¹³ With all of the different potential labels for this group, it may be a challenge to understand whether or not we are all talking about the same group of people at times. They are distinguished by their proximity to the turn of the millennium, their primary source for information and communication (the internet), their chronological connection to Generation X and finally, they emit an aura about them that is reminiscent of the generation born in the fifties, shaped in the sixties and now providing substantial levels of leadership in most facets of life in the new millennium.

In his article *The Millennials Come to Campus*, John Lowery records from an interview conducted with William Strauss that “The best way to think about Millennials is as a correction for Boomers—that is, many of the things Boomers were not, they are.

¹² Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for meaning, Purpose, and Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 6.

¹³ Fred B. Newton, “The New Student,” *About Campus* (November-December 2000): 8.

They are reversing many of the trends of adolescence that their Boomer parents set in basically negative directions—aspects of substance abuse, crime, academic achievement as measured by aptitude scores, suicides, and accidents.”¹⁴ When we think back to the definition that was established in the first section of this chapter, postmodernism is a result of the eras that have come before it, this then makes sense. Today’s student is not rebelling against a way of life, but instead, they are trying to make necessary changes in how life is thought of and lived out. And, although students today are different in many ways than they were ten years ago, they will still traverse many of the same formational paths that are unique to the college age. Parks notes that “Becoming an adult is increasingly recognized as a complex process that includes changes in biological, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and moral dimensions.”¹⁵ What makes today’s student experience unique is the culture that directly influences so much of their lives.

Today’s students have “grown up in a world in revolution, where rapid changes have provided a new expansiveness in information, a multiplicity of potential life experiences, advancing technological sophistication, and pluralistic social models to emulate. In many ways, this revolution has dramatically affected the attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations of students and altered how the college years function in helping students make the transition from adolescence to adulthood,”¹⁶ notes Newton. Jeffrey Arnett, in an article written in 2000, suggests the need for the creation of a new developmental categorization for those between the ages of 18 and 25. He says the present-day demographics show that these years are the beginning of not simply a brief transition

¹⁴ John Wesley Lowery, “The Millennials Come to Campus,” Interview with William Strauss, *About Campus* 6, no. 3 (July-August 2001): 6-7.

¹⁵ Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 8.

¹⁶ Newton, “The New Student,” 8.

between adolescence and early adulthood but also an extended period that he labels *emerging adulthood*.¹⁷

Arnett further notes that “The characteristics that matter most to emerging adults in their subjective sense of attaining adulthood are not demographic transitions but individualistic qualities of character.”¹⁸ According to Newton, “It seems important that educators begin to recognize that this longer period of deferred adulthood is a significant period for formulation of life goals among emerging adults, not just a brief pause between childhood and adulthood.”¹⁹ The truth of the extended phase of life, during the formative college and post-college years, speaks directly to the opportunity for life change and impact that ministers to this age have. “The promise and vulnerability of young adulthood,” as Sharon Parks refers to it, “lie in the experience of the birth of critical awareness and the dissolution and recomposition of the meaning of self, other, world, and ‘God.’ This work has enormous consequences for the years of adulthood to follow. Young adulthood is rightfully a time of asking big questions and discovering worthy dreams.”²⁰

William Strauss, co-author of *Millennials Rising*, suggests in an interview with *About Campus* magazine in 2001, that there are seven attributes that distinguish the Millennials from Generation X and is a correction from the Baby Boomers. These seven characteristics are conventionalism, confidence, a sense of being *special*, a life of being sheltered, pressured, high achiever and team-oriented. I believe that gaining an understanding of these distinctions will help us to better understand the composition of

¹⁷ J.J. Arnett, “Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development for the Late Teens Through the Twenties,” *American Psychologist* 55, no. 5 (May 2000): 469-80.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Newton, “The New Student,” 13.

²⁰ Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 5.

today's student. Although these distinctions may not apply to every student, or every situation, I believe they can help to paint the picture of the "typical" college student at the beginning of the 21st century.

Distinction #1: Conventional

Strauss first notes that today's student is *conventional*. One way this is playing out is in their fresh application of older values. Considering work ethic and style, view of self and family, and a desire for one life-long marital partner, the *Millennials* tend to fall much closer to the *Builder* generation than they do the *Boomers* or *Gen Xers* that fall in between. Students are also wanting a more *classic* college experience in that there is a renewed interest in school spirit and campus life. The biggest challenge that students face in this area is the fact they are not used to sharing.

Distinction #2: Confident

These students are also seen as being very *confident*. They are *doers* instead of *talkers*. They are service-oriented, politically involved and are beginning to see the world as their classroom. There maybe some pockets of students found in more conservative settings who are not as quick and eager to approach the world with such confidence. Nonetheless, there is a growing attitude ingrained in many of today's students, not of arrogance, but of endless possibility.

Distinction #3: Sense of "Special"

Strauss also notes an aura of being *special* that permeates these students. They have been put first by their parents and told that they are *unique* and *different* since birth. One of the ways that this is proving to be apparent is in how this group is marketed to. Product marketers play into this sense of special by further showing this group how they

can distinguish themselves from the rest of the crowd by doing things their own way. Be it what they eat, how they dress, what they wear, what they choose to put on their own personal music device or the pictures they can take on their phones and put on their personal web pages or email to their friends, marketers know that today's students continue to look for ways to be different and unique.

Along the lines of the postmodern view of authority and absolutes, this sense of uniqueness does have its problems. Newton points out that "Students are well aware of campus and community rules, regulations, and political correctness." He says that "These rules are frequently perceived without personal or moral commitment, so that the challenge for students is to find a way around the rule, create the right appearance by hiding unapproved behavior, and live by a philosophy such as 'cheating is OK if you do not get caught.'"²¹

Distinction #4: Sheltered

This close connection with parents has also caused many of today's students to grow up in a *sheltered* setting. This being the case, many students will arrive on campus without a much needed critical thinking disposition that will help them to sift through the onslaught of new information that will come to them both inside and outside the classroom. According to Newton, "Students receive extensive and rapid exposure to a vast and ever-increasing level of informational activity, which makes them the most informed generation to have lived on the planet. However, although students have more general knowledge, they come to our campuses with less experience in exercising the discipline and focus required to explore a subject in depth."²²

²¹ Newton, "The New Student," 12.

²² Ibid., 9.

Compounding this issue is the fact that many students today are experiencing major life events at a much younger age. One of the unique characteristics held by today's students is that "[they] enter college having had greater exposure to and more experimentation with 'grown-up' activity than any previous generation,"²³ notes Newton. So even though we have students who have a tighter relationship with their parents, or maybe because of this, today's student has to deal with major life issues and experiences concerning sex, alcohol, drugs, spending money, and even different lifestyle options before ever coming to campus.²⁴ This can have powerful ramifications on both the individual and the community which they enter into.

Distinction #5: Pressured

Possibly because of their close tie to parents and adults, or possibly in spite of a lack of adult connection, these students are coming to campus with high expectations for themselves. It is not surprising that these high levels of expectation are shaping today's students. Newton says that "Emotionally, students are experiencing increasingly high levels of stress and anxiety."²⁵ They juggle expectations about grades, work, extra-curricular activities, relationships and the future. With this high level of expectation, we are also seeing students step up to the challenges set before them.

Yet, one area that educators should pay close attention to is that, according to Newton, "more students are taking part-time employment during college, while their commitment to school work appears to be diminished."²⁶ This likely reflects a financial awareness and desire to enter the working world with minimal debt, and also, a growing

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 10.

²⁶ Ibid., 11.

awareness that there is often as much to be learned in a working environment as a classroom.

Distinction #6: Achievers

Most of today's students are not just looking to race through the academic experience, but instead, see it more as a season in the life-long learning process. They are *achievers* in every sense of the word and they seem to appreciate the challenges they face. "Students are ambitious in their career aspirations yet frequently have unrealistic expectations about what it takes to achieve these goals,"²⁷ notes Newton. Part of our role in the lives of these students will be to help them distinguish fantasy from reality, without crushing their hopes and dreams, and helping them to discern the appropriate steps that they will need to take to move towards reaching some of their goals.

Distinction #7: Team-oriented

Lastly, Strauss identifies that today's student is very *team-oriented*. This is not surprising based on the reclaiming of community as a high priority of our postmodern culture. Students are looking to be involved with teams, clubs and activities that will allow for them to be apart of a group and contribute their gifts and skills in such a way that they know they are making a difference in the lives of those immediately around them, and the world at large. Politically speaking, notes Newton, "many students do get involved in political activity and community service projects, but do so within a circle of influence that is familiar and connected to their local interests."²⁸ He further states that relationally speaking, "social connection and intimacy are taking on different patterns as students are less likely to be paired off in couples and more likely to participate in group

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 12.

activities, have brief intimate encounters, and experiment with many living options before settling down into an adult pattern.”²⁹ Regardless the context, relationships and community are playing an important role in shaping today’s student. With all of the qualities that make today’s student unique, let us now turn to the specific challenges that we face in our spiritual formation efforts with the postmodern student.

Challenges of Spiritual Formation in the Postmodern Student

Due to the unique nature of today’s student and the culture which so powerfully influences them, there are distinct challenges that face ministry efforts to this group. According to Richard Mouw, “The North American Christian community today is in a missionary location.”³⁰ Translation: many settings claiming to be *Christian* are not recognizable as such and more *of this world*, that these people, communities, churches and Christian universities no longer reflect an accurate depiction of a Christian community, the Church, or Christ – and even more unfortunate in this scenario is that these settings are either unaware of their circumstances or unwilling to own up to them. The mission field is growing all around us, or from another perspective, is closing in on us. We no longer need to go across the globe to do missions; in fact, we can even do it on our own Christian college campuses.

This should have a significant impact on how we approach ministry in the college setting. As time, people, and culture change, we must revisit and reassess the ways in which we attempt to grow and shape our Christian leaders of tomorrow. The college years are some of the most formative of our lives, and the things that we learn, practice,

²⁹ Ibid., 10.

³⁰ Richard J. Mouw, “The Missionary Location of the North American Churches,” in *Confident Witness - Changing World*, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 3.

and define as important in these years will play a large role in shaping the things that we define as important for much of our lives to follow.

The time spent in a Christian academic setting is one that should promote both spiritual and academic growth which are both essential for our future leaders. However, as we approach these opportunities for spiritual and academic growth we must take into consideration how changing student culture should inform our educational and relational methodologies. We must look at the shifting importance of absolutes and decipher how this might alter our approach to ministry efforts on campus. We must also consider a natural resistance to cultural change that many of us might be prone to and how that could hinder our capacity to have voice and influence in the life of today's student.

Challenge #1: No Absolutes

As much as the idea of *no absolutes* serves to define postmodernism in general, it equally serves to describe one of the biggest challenges that college students have today with the Christian faith. In his study of Arnold Toynbee's work entitled, *Study of History*, Grenz claims that "the postmodern era is marked by the end of Western dominance and the decline of individualism, capitalism, and Christianity."³¹ This is a radical paradigm shift that ministry practitioners of today must be willing to make. According to Sweet, "Postmoderns are 'finders' and 'experiencers' who are open to new findings and experiences."³² When it comes to their faith, they truly consider it to be a journey – a process – that they are engaging in. They do not want to be told what is right or wrong, what to believe or not; instead they want to uncover truths for themselves. It becomes our challenge, as campus ministers, to find ways of coming alongside students

³¹ Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 16.

³² Sweet & McLaren, *A is for Abductive*, 239.

as they are on this journey, and creating a relationship that can open the door to conversations about how we integrate what we believe in the lives we lead.

It will be important for those who attempt to reach out to the postmodern student to discern which approaches will continue to be effective in speaking to them, and in what ways we will need to be creative and thoughtful in how we engage them. The modern era was defined by its logical explanations for all things, including religion. The challenge will be to move to a Systems (or Systemic) Theology of ministry, as today's student thrives in the experiences of life; and to discern what role a Systematic (or Analytical) approach to ministry can still be effective. McLaren suggests that "Systematic theology broke down wholes into discrete, disciplinary parts, reducing entities to the properties of their elements."³³ In this approach the idea is to divide and conquer. Compartmentalizing the different ideas about, and approaches to, spiritual formation and spiritual matters is an attempt to make them more easily understandable and manageable.

"The systems model or systemic theology," on the other hand, "is characterized by 'integrative thinking' or the ability to see complex organisms like the church as a whole and to make strategic decisions accordingly,"³⁴ says Haselmayer. This is a more holistic approach to spirituality in that everything is believed to be intricately tied together. They are losing the ability to compartmentalize thought and theory from reality and experience. While this is a positive shift when it comes to students living out their faith, before even getting to the point of faith it challenges all formal, rational and logical

³³ Ibid., 272.

³⁴ Ibid., 272-273.

approaches to faith that have been used in the religion of modernity. This shift in theology must be accompanied by a shift in methodology.

Challenge #2: We must know those we Serve – The Reluctant Leader Within

This issue of needing to change methodologies and theological perspectives stems from an even larger issue of needing to better know today's student. As Christians we need to play a major role in helping to define this emerging culture. Unfortunately, one of the biggest road blocks that we face as Christian leaders is the reluctant leader within us. Grenz and Franke believe that "in the cultural setting 'after modernity,' many theologians continue to pursue the modernist theological agenda. They routinely either discount the significance of the intellectual and cultural changes transpiring in our society or view such changes as largely negative."³⁵ This just will not do! As Christians we need to be some of the forerunners in understanding and speaking to the needs of students in these changing times. It will do us little good to fight the shifting flow of culture.

In essence, we must become students of students. Many educational leaders would argue that this has been a *common practice* of the educators and administrators serving college students for many years now. And although this may be true for some, I believe that there is a strong resistance to learning about the postmodern nature of today's students. Sweet suggests that "many Christians who approach postmodernism as a philosophy misunderstand, oversimplify, and hastily critique it from their vantage point within modernity, not realizing how enmeshed with modernity they are and how much they have made modern culture a cult, and not realizing that their own modernity may

³⁵ Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 10.

well have modified their Christianity more than their Christianity has modified their modernity.”³⁶

To be relevant to those we are trying to prepare for the future, Viv Thomas states in *Future Leader* that “leaders will have to anticipate and respond appropriately to the internal and external environment if their communities are to flourish regardless of the shape of the future. A large part of that process [for Christian leaders] understands their own reactions and responses, the community in which they live, and their relationship with God.”³⁷ So a large part of our responsibility as current Christian leaders, to our future Christian leaders, is our continued personal development in faith, leadership and the changing culture in which we live. We must allow ourselves to enter into the postmodern movement with the understanding that God will meet us there. All of our education and experience is not null and void in this context. However, this context must help us to reconsider what we do with our education and experience and how we share with today’s student. There is much we can learn from our students today, and if we are willing to engage them, there is much that we have to offer students as it relates to tradition, scripture and the elements that continue to shape the world as we know it.

Opportunities for Spiritual Formation in the Postmodern Student

Due to the unique nature of today’s student, and the culture which so powerfully influences them, there are also unique opportunities for ministry to this group. As tempting as it might be to view our current cultural scenario as one entering a downward spiral at break-neck speed, may I suggest that it could viewed as an organically forming portal that will allow us to enter into some life changing relationships and conversations

³⁶ Sweet & McLaren, *A is for Abductive*, 240.

³⁷ Viv Thomas, *Future Leader* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 1999), 125.

with individuals and communities at critical periods of their lives. We must constantly remind ourselves that God is still in control of the world today.

It is also important for us to remember that Jesus is an incredible example of someone who did not try to fit into the stiff, “religious” mold of his day. Instead, he was able to present himself in such a way that no matter who he was interacting with, he was able to connect with them on their level, where they were at, in such a way that he could meet them in their place of deepest need, irregardless of whether or not they received what he had to offer them. He did not attempt to make religion appealing to those who listened to him, but instead, he gave himself to those who listened to him in such a way that they were drawn instinctively to what he had to offer. Jesus knew what people longed for and were not receiving. I think we find ourselves once again in a place where culture, and students, are uninterested in what has been commonplace in life and spirituality, and are looking for something different. Their approach is a return to the most basic information with methods that are outside of the modern paradigm. Let us consider the opportunities found in a renewed interest in the supernatural and the powerful role of community.

Opportunity #1: A Culture in transition: Renewed interest in the Supernatural

Regarding spiritual formation efforts in relation to college students, one of the current distinct opportunities, is an overall renewed interest in spirituality by the culture as a whole. Now, much more than any point in the modern era, we are experiencing openness to mystery, spirituality and the supernatural in the midst of everyday life.

Robert O’Gorman, in an article from *Review and Expositor*, reveals to us the restoration of mystery in today’s culture as he states:

Prior to the modern era, Christianity had experienced the word as mysterious. The printing press took the mystery out of the word and put it in on a page by a technology that allowed it to be analyzed, manipulated and controlled. The postmodern era is defined by Einstein's inner look at substances that reveals there is no one fundamental particle, no non-reducible atom and by his outer look into space that reveals creation, the cosmos, is continuing to expand; there is no limit to space. And so it is that the deconstructionists in philosophy have claimed truth is not bounded by what was once held as fundamental truths, and so there are not overarching frameworks for truth. The postmodern era has restored the mysterious or unboundedness to reality.³⁸

Almost in a defying statement of "We are not that simple," the cultural mood of postmodernism has flung back open the doors that lead to the mysteries of life which ultimately include the realities of God. Yes, we must now engage in the discussion of *absolutes*.

Author Marjorie Thompson noted in 1995 that "both within and beyond traditional faith communities, a hunger for spiritual depth and integrity is gaining momentum."³⁹ Ten years later we are seeing this momentum played out in the forms of heightened levels of interest in "spirituality." Students want more than to learn about spirituality, as was the custom in the modern era. They want to experience spirituality and even participate in their faith development.

Leonard Sweet has coined the term *E.P.I.C.*, which stands for experiential, participatory, image-rich and connectivity, to describe the model which defines how postmoderns engage life and wish to learn. According to Sweet, "People today are experience gatherers."⁴⁰ It is through the experiences students have that helps to shape their beliefs about life and truth. More than life and truth, however, "postmoderns are

³⁸ Robert T O'Gorman, "Effect of Theological Orientation on Christian Education in Spiritual Formation: Toward a Postmodern Model of Spirituality," *Review & Expositor* 98, no. 3 (Sum 2001): 354.

³⁹ Marjorie Thompson, J, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 1.

⁴⁰ Sweet & McLaren, *A is for Abductive*, 120.

less ‘seekers’ of meaning in life than participators in experiences that are meaningful,”⁴¹ notes McLaren. So, even though experiences will ultimately serve to shape postmodern students, it is more about the meaning within the experience – the lives touched, the services rendered, the world changed – that most drives students. It is no wonder why images are such a powerful influence in today’s culture... because we are bombarded by them around every corner we turn. From magazines to billboards, from the computer screen to the big screen and the flat screen, it is hard for us to escape the powerful, and more often negative, images that invade our minds almost without end. Haselmayer suggests that “Metaphors are the masters of postmodern culture, and leaders must offer people master metaphors that offer life rather than death.”⁴² It may be, however, that the dimension of connectivity is making the most powerful impact on our students today. According to Sweet, “The experience of the self as a part of others – ‘we are all related’ – is one of the most spiritual of experiences. Everything is related. Nothing exists in isolation.”⁴³ Let us further explore this idea of connectivity in the context of community.

Opportunity #2: The Role Community Plays

Gilbert Bilezikian states in *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as a Community of Oneness*, that “The silent churning at the core of our being is the tormenting need to know and be known, to understand and to be understood, to possess and be possessed, to belong unconditionally and forever without fear of loss, betrayal, or rejection.”⁴⁴ This culture’s focus on relationships will prove to be an incredible context within which spiritual formation can happen. The renewed importance of belonging to a

⁴¹ Ibid., 232.

⁴² Ibid., 153.

⁴³ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁴ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 15.

community, as well as the departure for the individualistic way of life, is once again opening a door for the influence of relationships to be powerful. Within the context of community, relationships provide opportunities for lives to be shared and explored together. These relationships can come in many shapes, from the classic mentor-mentee to peer relationships; lives can be profoundly challenged and changed within the context of community.

As individuals question ideas about truth, it is almost inevitable that the topic of religion will at some point enter the conversation as community is becoming the context within which truth is being defined by this culture. As relationships have been developed, and community formed in such a way that individuals feel like they can explore important issues of life and faith without feeling pressed or persecuted, truth will be explored and re-defined within the context of community. Anytime we can get an open dialogue occurring on the topic of religion, it can, if relationships have been established, lead to an open door to talk about Jesus the Christ - He who makes Christianity different from all other religions. Grenz postulates that "The purpose [of theology] is to serve the believing community by assisting it in its calling to live as the people of God in a particular setting. Theology does not simply serve itself but should make a difference in Christian life."⁴⁵ And in this culture, drawing distinctions between religious faiths and beliefs is where this postmodern culture eventually hits the wall, because again, this culture questions anything claiming to be *absolute*, *truth*, or *the only way*. As previously mentioned, what will give Christians a platform to speak boldly about Christian Truth will be the relationships that are created in open, judgment-free

⁴⁵ Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 18.

dialogues, as well as the authentic Christian lives these people encounter in those who are willing to enter into such relationships and dialogues.

As members of a community understand that they belong to something larger than themselves, and seeing the unique role that they play within their community, they will be moved to serve one another in ways that are meaningful and life shaping. As we are molded into Christ's image internally (which is for personal benefit), we must allow God to manifest such transformation in our outward existence as well (this is for the benefit of others). This will take the form of evangelism, missionary work, community service, and general outreach to others through the love of Jesus in us. Because of the transformation that happens internally, we must further the process by extending our hands, and our love, to all of God's creation. If we neglect this external element, we will stall out the spiritual formation process. Neither the internal (discipleship), nor external (service) elements can stand alone in the spiritual formation process, but the two must go hand-in-hand. From here we enter into a circular spiritual formation model which moves us from discipleship to service and on to deeper discipleship and more committed service. Yes, it is possible to be a part of a community that serves and not experience spiritual growth. However, because God lives in community (the Trinity) and created us for community, it seems as though life lived in the context of community lends itself to spiritual growth and formation in ways that the life lived alone cannot.

Conclusion

There are clearly distinguishing characteristics that define this cultural era, postmodernism, as unique in comparison to all previous cultural eras. The distinctions that identify this cultural era are that it struggles to believe in absolute truth, is reclaiming

the narrative, and has a renewed sense of the importance of community. These distinctions demand that we approach the postmodern culture in ways that are appropriate and unique. There are also distinguishing characteristics of today's student. These characteristics – conventional, confident, *special*, sheltered, pressured, achievers and team-oriented – create a new context such that we must rethink our methodology in how we approach, relate and reach out to them.

Considering opportunities for spiritual formation in the postmodern student, it is clear that there will be both challenges and opportunities when we consider the trends of postmodernity and their influence on student culture. The challenges of *no absolutes* combined with the reluctant leaders of today will prove to be a tough environment in which to meaningfully engage students in faith orienting conversations. However, the opportunities present in this transitioning culture in a renewed interest in spirituality and community may be enough of a window for campus ministers to create meaningful relationships and walk alongside the postmodern student, waiting for the appropriate time and space to ask some of life's important questions. These are things that we must consider in approaching spiritual formation and leadership development with the emerging culture of students.

Let us now consider the important Biblical framework for a holistic model for spiritual formation and leadership development found in the Greatest Commandments.

CHAPTER 6. THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT:

Heart, Mind, Soul and Body as Avenues for Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind
and with all your soul and with all your strength.”¹

- Jesus

The statement above, made by Jesus to his followers, is defined as the “Greatest Commandment.” In essence, there is nothing greater one could attempt to do in life beyond loving God with absolutely everything he/she has. Jesus lived this among his followers, teaching them through his words and actions, and calling upon them to follow in his footsteps. He modeled for them how they could grow in their relationship with God through these avenues, all the while being transformed. This was no less true for the disciples in the days of Jesus than it is for those who follow Jesus today. I believe the Greatest Commandment holds four of the primary elements that the Lord seeks to develop in his people, especially his leaders, for life and ministry today. In this chapter we will explore the *heart*, the *mind*, the *soul*, and finally the *body* [strength] as avenues through which the disciples could love the Lord, as well as be shaped and molded as disciples. In all of this, I will argue that these are important avenues that should be

¹ Mk 12:30 NIV

understood and considered as we attempt spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st Century.

Heart

In this section I will explore the important role that the heart plays in our developmental process. In this context I will use the term *heart* as a metaphor for emotions, wanting to build a case for the importance of emotional awareness and intelligence. Because this topic is one that could be studied at great length, I will limit my exploration of the heart to the powerful roles of emotions and suffering. The heart is what gives us life, and how it processes the experiences of our lives directly impacts the shape our lives take on.

The Role of Emotions

Emotions are fascinating. We experience so many of them over the course of any given day, hour, even minute; many that we are aware of and many of which we are unaware. In *The Cry of the Soul*, Dan Allender and Tremper Longman III explain that “Emotion is usually provoked by horizontal relational encounters.”² Our relationships, casual encounters, and accidental path crossings evoke in us emotions that span the full spectrum of what we are capable of feeling. At times we can be so filled with joy that we think we can fly, and at other times, we hurt so deeply that we feel the pain we are experiencing will never end. Most of life, however, is lived somewhere in between these emotional extremes. “Our emotions connect our inner world to the ups and downs of life,”³ suggests Allender and Longman. This intersection between the inner and outer worlds is a place where we are shaped in powerful ways. As we experience life,

² Dan B. Allender & Tremper Longman III, *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994), 13.

³ Ibid., 19.

emotions are stirred in us. These emotional responses, in turn, serve to train and form us in relation to the world in which we live. For the most part we are unaware of the formation that is taking place through this avenue.

Passion is one of many powerful forms of emotions, especially in younger individuals. It is considered to be a strong feeling or emotion that can range from violent anger on one end of the spectrum to an extreme love and desire on the other end. In her article *Something to Live for*, Kendra Dean suggests that “In passion, desire meets will, and since young people possess extravagant quantities of both, society has long viewed adolescent passion as dangerous – too risky to allow, much less encourage, unless something truly radical is at stake.”⁴ Passions, however, are something I believe to be God-given. They speak to how he may want to use our lives in this world. The *responsible* world today, attempts to sway the rest of society to toss emotions aside in the decision making process and leave such important matters to the mind. This is an overreaction to emotionalism – using emotions alone as the sole guide through which to experience and grow in life, which I agree is something that should be avoided. But to eliminate the emotions from the important equations of life is to eliminate an important instrument that God uses to connect us with him and shape us in that connection. To follow our heart is to open ourselves up to the risk of being hurt. To not follow our heart, many would say, is to not truly live at all. The issue is not the over-valuing of emotions, but instead, the importance of emotional insights in our development and decision-making process.

As much as we may try at times, we cannot escape the impact our emotions have on us. Allender and Longman postulate that “To be aware of what we feel can open us to

⁴ Kendra Creasy Dean, “Something to Live for,” *Christian Century* 121, no. 5 (Mar. 9 2004): 9.

questions we would rather ignore. For many of us, that is precisely why it is easier not to feel. But a failure to feel leaves us barren and distant from God and others.”⁵ A growing awareness of the heart, or the feelings on the inside, can serve to better inform how we view life, as well as, the decisions about how we live. Through this process we are formed in ways that will impact every other area of our life. Emotions, both positive and negative, play an important role in our formation. At a deeper level, we are formed through the pain of suffering.

The Role of Suffering

There are times when our experiences go beyond the boundaries of *normal* emotion. There are times when our lives are seemingly put through a ringer. Events and circumstances come about that challenge our capacity to feel, comprehend and even survive. “Most of us are spared such life-wrenching tragedy, but none of us escapes the heartache of living in a fallen world. To live is to hurt,”⁶ says Allender and Longman. It can come in many forms – death of a loved one, broken relationships, broken dreams, abuse, etc. – and it leaves in its wake feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, hopelessness and a lack of self-worth. It can create so much pain that we begin to think of drastic ways of attempting to relieve even an ounce of it. Most of the world does not understand, nor does it desire to, why suffering exists. Sane human beings do not go looking for suffering; in fact, we do absolutely everything possible to avoid it.

Allender and Longman, however, suggest that “God’s perspective on suffering is very different. He invites us on a healing journey through the valleys and over the cliffs of an evil world, but we often miss out on his redemptive path. Too many of us suffer for

⁵ Allender & Longman, *The Cry of the Soul*, 20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

naught.”⁷ The reality is that we rarely have a choice about the events that lead us into suffering. What we do have a choice about, however, is what we do in the midst of suffering. When we run from our suffering, or attempt to ignore it, we stunt our developmental process under the guise of *something better* – less pain. Again, this would seem a logical move – avoiding suffering – but when the God of the universe wants to take our life experiences – the good, bad, and ugly – and use them to shape us, we must consider the cost of such a choice.

I have an aunt who experienced the death of her mother when she was quite young. Her older brother (my dad) and sister were both teenagers at the time of the tragic event and had available to them some outlets that enabled them to get through the devastating loss. The youngest of the three, however, was left at home with no such outlet, and a father who dealt with his own pain by drinking. When my aunt was older and could have taken steps to start the healing process in her life, she instead chose to keep the pain and memories of her shattered childhood buried. By the time I was old enough to notice that there was something *different* about my aunt, I started to hear stories about how she had not really *lived* since the passing of her mother. And in the time that I have known her, some thirty years now, it has only been in the past five years that I have started to notice some positive changes in her. I cannot say what has brought the changes about, but what I do know is that she spent 35+ years of her life *not living*. It is hard to say how life could have been different for my aunt, but I have to believe that the suffering she has experienced is something that God does not want to be for naught.

⁷ Ibid., 5

Why the Heart can't go it alone

As we have seen, our emotions and suffering play a powerful role in our development. Allender and Longman note that “Emotions seem to be one of the least reliable yet most influential forces that guide our lives.”⁸ How is it that such an unreliable source can play such a prominent role in how we are shaped? We must be sure that we do not simply allow our emotions to be the sole guiding force in our life. On the good days we could easily deceive ourselves into a view of the world, and ourselves, that is idealistic and unrealistic. On the dark days, or seasons, we could find ourselves on a downward spiral plummeting out of control which could leave us rendered hopeless. And on all of the days in between the extremes, we could find ourselves riding a rollercoaster of emotions that would leave us emotionally spent and without any solid bearing for life. The heart is a key avenue through which we learn and are shaped, but it must be accompanied by other avenues that can provide for a more holistic approach to spiritual formation and leadership development.

Mind

How, and what we think plays an important role in how we learn and develop. “The way you see your life shapes your life. How you define life determines your destiny. Your perspective will influence how you invest your time, spend your money, use your talents, and value your relationships.”⁹ These pointed words are found in Rick Warren’s book entitled, *The Purpose Driven Life*; a book that is currently sweeping across the world and is causing people everywhere to *re-think* their view of what life is really all about. Many of our students today are coming to campus with this desire at the

⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here for?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 41.

forefront of their minds. Parks notes that “Higher education is intended to serve as a primary site of inquiry, reflection, and cultivation of knowledge and understanding on behalf of the wider culture. As such, institutions of higher education hold a special place in the story of human development, particularly in the process of becoming a young adult in faith.”¹⁰ In this section I will explore the important role that the mind plays in our developmental process. Because this topic is one that could be studied at great length, I will limit my exploration of the mind to the areas of *how*, and *what*, we think for the sake of this project. The mind is what brings shape to our experiences, and serves as a filter for truth and meaning in our lives.

How we think

In considering the mind as an avenue, or mode, of formation and development, it is important that we explore the process of *how* we think. In this section we will explore three important areas that Christians must be open to in order to give optimal consideration to the mind as a tool for the forming of a spiritual leader – an openness to questioning, thinking within the context of community, and a willingness to think differently. It will be our ability to be open to these new ways of thinking that will dictate the extent that our mind will be a tool for formation and development.

ROOM FOR QUESTIONING

In considering the *mode* of thinking, I want to start in what might seem like an unusual place – questions. I truly believe that many people today are so inundated with *data* that there is not a lot of *processing* taking place. Whatever *diet* of information individuals are on comes not only in a quantity that is too large to digest, but also at a

¹⁰ Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for meaning, Purpose, and Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 10.

pace that is too rapid for full comprehension. It is not until one expresses doubt, or raises questions, that authentic *thinking* really begins. In his book *Know Why You Believe*, Paul Little states that “Doubt and questioning are normal to any thinking person.”¹¹ It is through raising questions that thoughtful reflection is initiated in individuals, or groups, and the quest for meaningful truth begins. We are not interested in simply philosophizing different ideas and theories, but indeed, it is the pursuit of answers... even if such questioning is not quick or easy. In this sense, doubt can mean something entirely different than questioning. It is only when doubt is accompanied by a desire for truth through questioning, and does not abandon the pursuit of truth because of fear or lack of interest. Questioning is a process that is entered into that calls upon the mind to logically consider ideas that are new, or may have been *present* for quite some time, in order to obtain greater understanding and a personal claim to what the idea represents... or not.

In regards to one’s personal faith, and faith development “one cannot drive himself indefinitely by willpower to believe something of which he is not intellectually convinced,”¹² notes Little. The mind must be engaged, asking deep and difficult questions, before authentic faith can form. Contrary to popular belief, faith is not something that is blind or unexplored, but should be something that is informed and consistently thought through. Questioning serves as a catalyst for engaging the mind in the faith formation process. To not engage in a certain level of questioning is to check the mind out of the filtering process of which we discern and define truth. As scary as questioning can be to one’s faith development, the alternative is something that lacks understanding and ownership.

¹¹ Paul E. Little, *Know Why You Believe: A Clear Affirmation of the Reasonableness of the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1987), 19.

¹² *Ibid.*, 16.

IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY

Equally important to asking questions is the context within which we explore them. Little suggests that “When young people begin to question and appear to have doubts, they should be welcomed into a climate where they are free to ‘unload’ and express their doubts.”¹³ I believe that one of the reasons that many individuals are fearful about asking tough questions is because the climate in which they live does not welcome this kind of difficult dialogue. This kind of fear-driven environment creates a mind-set that believes doubt is a bad thing and does not occur within *real* believers. This kind of closed community does nothing to help “seekers” to get answers to their tough questions and becomes isolating to those who are struggling.

In his book *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, Steve Garber identifies three key elements of students who were able to weave together their belief with their behavior during their college years. Not only were they developing a worldview that was big enough for the world as it exists, but they also sought out a mentor who could join them in their faith journey, as well as connected with a peer community through which they could further explore their beliefs and how they translated into action. In regards to the mentor relationship, “it is that dynamic relationship of a faculty member opening his life up to a student which enables young people to understand that their worldview can also become a way of life.”¹⁴ This element of the communal process serves to provide some guidance and direction to the searching student. In regards to the peer community, Garber states that “the evidence seems conclusive: for individuals to flourish they need to be part of a community of character, one which has a reason for being that can provide meaning and

¹³ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴ Steven Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief & Behavior During the University Years* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 129.

coherence between the personal and the public worlds.”¹⁵ He goes on to say “I am more and more convinced that the people you choose to have around you have more to do with how you act upon what you believe than what you read or the ideas that influence you.”¹⁶ The role that community plays in the developmental process cannot be overstated; it is a powerful tool in the life of all who engage it.

COUNTERCULTURAL

The kind of thinking that I am suggesting goes beyond being open to new questions, nor is it as simple as thinking within the context of community (which is not a new practice either). We must be willing to think in a way that is counter to our culture. A prime example of this kind of thinking being lived out can be found in the community of the New Testament. Stan Guthrie, in “The Evangelical Scandal,” postulates “That new community in the New Testament was living so differently from the world that people would say, ‘Wow, what’s going on here?’ Jews were accepting Gentiles; the rich were accepting the poor and sharing with the poor. Men were accepting women as equals. It just astonished people because the church was so different from the world. It was countercultural.”¹⁷ This is the kind of thinking that can be a catalyst for great change in our world. This kind of thinking is something that has to be explored, experienced, and instilled in our emerging leaders while they are in their formative years. It is the process of cultivating an openness to consider things from other perspectives, even opposite perspectives, than we are normally accustomed to. But our mode of thinking cannot be

¹⁵ Ibid., 145.

¹⁶ Ibid., 149.

¹⁷ Stan Guthrie, “The Evangelical Scandal,” *Christianity Today* 49, no. 4 (April 2005), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/004/32.70.html> (accessed February

the end of the conversation; we must also consider the content that serves as the *diet* for the mind.

What we think

Equally important to the process of *how* we think is the content of *what* we are thinking about. In this section we will explore three important elements that every Christian who is truly engaged in the process of forming as a spiritual leader must give serious consideration to – God, self, and others.

ABOUT GOD - THEOLOGY

According to Little, “There is in human existence no more profound question demanding an answer. ‘Is there a God?’ is the question that must be answered by every human being, and the answer is far-reaching in its implications for every individual.”¹⁸ Gary Thomas, in *Sacred Pathways*, states that “What we believe about God will affect how we serve him, in the same way that what we believe about a person will affect how we treat that person.”¹⁹ These words, upon first glance, probably seem quite obvious in nature; however, when we really consider the truth of their meaning we should begin to re-think what it is we really believe in and why we believe it. It is crucial that Christians retain more than a blind, untested, faith. “Theology is the attempt by faith to understand itself, its object, and its place in today’s world,”²⁰ says Trevor Hart in *Faith Thinking*. The truth is everyone is a theologian. We all consider issues of ultimate meaning. If we are all theologians in our own right, then we must also have our own thoughts about who and what God is, or is not. This is not an open door to make up ideas about the kind of

¹⁸ Little, *Know Why You Believe*, 21.

¹⁹ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), 207.

²⁰ Trevor Hart, *Faith Thinking: The Dynamics of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 1.

God that we would create if we could, but more so the responsibility that each of us has to explore the truth and reality of what the Bible, along with important Christian thinkers, says about God. At some point everyone is faced with the reality of having to make decisions about what we do, or do not believe. If we are uncertain about what we believe than we must be willing to go in search of answers, asking tough questions, because the alternative is to live uninformed, and therefore, outside the context of meaningful truth.

ABOUT SELF: SELF-AWARENESS

What we understand, and believe, to be true about God will have a direct impact on this second question about self. The self-perception and level of self-awareness that we live within speaks volumes to how we live out our time here on earth. What do we believe about ourselves, about who we are – our gifts, talents, appearance? Do we believe our life is an accident or that it has an intended purpose? Have we allowed other people to answer some of these questions for us? The degree, to which we accept their answers to these questions, or even our own, will directly shape our self-perception and inform our decisions and actions. Much of this happens without us even realizing it. If we do not give deeper thought to many of the things that we take in and how they affect us, the result is what M. Basil Pennington refers to as the “false self.” “It is all a part of this same construct, the false self, made up of what I have, what I do, what people think of me.”²¹ It is crucial that we are self-aware enough to move beyond this inaccurate definition of self to one that is more accurate and propels us to be the people that God has created – is creating – us to be.

²¹ M. Basil Pennington, *True Self/False Self: Unmasking the Spirit Within* (New York, NY: Crossroad Pub., 2000), 32.

“In the final analysis we must always remember that our greatest source of worth as leaders should come from the knowledge that we are known by God and declared righteous in Christ,”²² proclaims Gary McIntosh and Sam Rima in *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*. It is through this lens that we have the most accurate understanding of who we are at our very core that should then inform and enlighten us about the other elements that make us uniquely us. There will always be outside voices attempting to re-define us, for good or bad, intentionally or unintentionally; so we must become men and women who have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of who we are deep down inside, and allow that to then filter everything else that tries to alter that perception.

ABOUT OTHERS – KINGDOM AWARENESS

We have not been created as islands unto our own selves, but instead, as relational beings that live in community with something of value to give to the betterment of this community. Once we have come to some understanding of who God is, and gained insight into who we are as individuals, we begin to give consideration to other people and the role that we mutually play in one another’s lives.

Much of the world today struggles to see beyond its own needs and the ego-centric world in which it lives. Guthrie suggests “This culture is radically individualistic and relativistic. Whatever feels right for me is right for me; whatever feels right to you is right for you.”²³ We have grown into a culture that lacks the sense of identity that comes in being a part of community. We have become self-reliant and expect the same of others. With this loss communal identity, we have closed our eyes to those around us, especially those that are in need.

²² Gary L. McIntosh, & Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Baker Books, 1997), 205-206.

²³ Guthrie, “The Evangelical Scandal,” (accessed February 8, 2005).

As growing Christian leaders, however, we are called by God to take on a view of life that is outside of the self. Our perspective must be one of Kingdom proportions. By Kingdom here, I am referring to God's Kingdom and a desire to see the world in which we live through a set of eyes that are the product of a healthy relationship with God and a growing awareness of self. Warren notes that "God designed you to make a difference with your life. While many best-selling books offer advice on how to 'get' the most out of life, that's not the reason God made you. You were created to add to life on earth, not just take from it. God wants you to give something back."²⁴ When we come to the reality of this truth, how we view other people, as well as the world in which we live, will drastically change.

Why the Mind can't go it alone

There are two different ways in which *the mind* as an avenue for formation and development can hinder our overall growth process. The first way is when we fail to engage our mind in the spiritual formation and leadership development process altogether. We take on the mind-set that, as Christians, the mind is not our *friend* and we *check* it at the door. This approach renders us helpless when it comes to making a rational defense for our faith, or being able to have an analytical conversation with someone who may have important questions that need more than a *Sunday school* answer. A fully engaged mind is necessary for our own sake as well as the sake of those we encounter.

The second way that mind can hinder us is when we fail to put into action what we know. In this scenario we have fully engaged our mind in the process, but that is where the process ends. We do nothing with the information that we have discerned.

²⁴ Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 227.

Here, we adopt the perspective that everything about the Christian faith is a rational process. This allows us to compartmentalize our faith and disconnect what we know from the action that is necessary in the world. Faith without actions is not the faith of Christ. Therefore, the mind, much like the heart, is a key avenue to the spiritual formation and leadership development process; but it too is only one avenue that cannot serve as the only mode in this process.

Soul

Wendy Miller in *Jesus, Our Spiritual Guide*, suggests that “In this postmodern wilderness where many lack security or a center that provides direction and meaning, persons seek streams for their spirits and bread for their souls.”²⁵ Our ability to *tap into* our soul (or recognize God at our core), and further *cultivate the soil* (or grow this capacity to know God) plays an important role in how we learn and develop. F. Dean Lueking states, in “Gaining One’s Soul,” that “Jesus spoke of the soul not as fixed but ‘gained.’ The soul, he said, is not a gauzy abstraction fit only for occasional armchair speculation. The soul is that inward capacity in which the divine and human connect in a lifelong process of anchoring and maturing and enduring.”²⁶ Using this definition of soul, this section will explore the important role that the soul plays in our developmental process. I will focus my exploration of the soul to the areas of how we recognize and access the soul as a point of entry into spiritual formation and what we can do to grow our capacity to experience God through our soul.

²⁵ Wendy J. Miller, *Jesus, Our Spiritual Guide: A Pilgrimage Through the Gospels* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2004), 11.

²⁶ F. Dean Lueking, “Gaining One’s Soul,” *Christian Century* 115, no. 30 (November 4 1998): 1019.

How we tap into the soul

In considering the soul avenue of our formation and development, it is important that we explore the process by which we access it. In this section we will explore two key ideas in order to better understand the soul as a tool for the forming of a spiritual leader – spiritual awareness and spiritual temperament.

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

Eugene Peterson suggests, in *Spirit Quest*, “Spirituality is not the latest fad but the oldest truth. Spirituality, the alert attention we give to a living God and the faithful response we make to him in community, is at the heart of our Scriptures and is on display throughout the centuries of Israel and the church.”²⁷ The world today clips along at a dizzying pace, and most human beings attempt to match, if not outdo, this suicidal pace of life. It is not surprising that in the midst of the hustle and bustle, something like spirituality can be neglected or forgotten about altogether.

Marjorie Thompson, in *Soul Feast*, suggests that “Spirituality is simply the capacity for a spiritual life – the universal human capacity to receive, reflect, and respond to the Spirit of God.”²⁸ What this has been relegated to for many people, however, is a Sunday morning ritual, or some compartmentalized experience that is not given much attention beyond these minimal exercises. We are so overly consumed with the activity of *doing* that we neglect to simply *be* in the presence of the One who created us. We must move beyond simply acknowledging the existence of God to cultivating an awareness of His presence in our everyday happenings. This ability to be *spiritually*

²⁷ Eugene H. Peterson, “Spirit Quest: Five Items of Counsel for a Soul-Sick Culture and God-Starved Christians,” *Christianity Today*, November 8 1993, 30.

²⁸ Marjorie Thompson, J, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 7.

aware or *sensitive* is what opens the door to our soul and a greater connection with God. Spiritual rituals and experiences may make us aware that there is a God. However, it is through the soul that we can begin to encounter him in deep and meaningful ways. What, then, can we do to intentionally attempt to tap into the soul?

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL TEMPERMENT

According to Peterson, “We hunger for communion with God, something beyond the satisfaction of self, the development of me. We are fed up with being told about God.”²⁹ Yet we struggle to *experience God* through the means that are *preached* so prevalently. Thomas notes that “God wants to know the real you, not a caricature of what somebody else wants you to be. He created you with a certain personality and a certain spiritual temperament. God wants your worship, according to the way he made you.”³⁰ This is not an idea that is preached in many churches, or taught on many Christian campuses. College students that are more mystic, or theistic, would embrace this idea of *many ways* to experience God. On the other hand, many of our mainline Christian college students have difficulty thinking about God outside of the ways that their peers, youth leaders, or parents taught them to. In the midst of this struggle there is also the realization they know that they are different from all of these people who have had a profound impact upon them. For many, *knowing God* or *getting to know God* means going to church and doing *devotions*. This, however, has become a destructive propaganda that has been passed along by well-meaning Christian leaders. It assumes two things about spiritual growth: 1) all Christians grow in the same manner, and 2) spiritual formation does not happen outside of these traditional practices.

²⁹ Peterson, “Spirit Quest,” 29.

³⁰ Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 16.

“The focus on spiritual temperaments is an attempt to help us understand how we best relate to God so we can develop new ways of drawing near to him.”³¹ Gary Thomas, in his book *Sacred Pathways*, identifies nine different *pathways* by which believers could have genuine encounters with God, and suggests that every person can best experience God in one of these nine ways. The pathways that Thomas identifies are the: Naturalists, Sensates, Traditionalists, Ascetics, Activists, Caregivers, Enthusiasts, Contemplatives, and Intellectuals, and they are based largely on the Myers-Briggs personality indicators of Introvert-Extrovert, Intuitive-Sensing, Thinking-Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving. Each unique pathway taps into different temperaments and ways in which God can be encountered (see table 1). Suddenly a gate that seemed so narrow, especially for individuals who struggled to experience God through “traditional” means, now gives the appearance of being much broader. God is readily accessible and experienced in a multitude of ways that are rarely given much attention. Instead of trying to experience God as someone else does or thinks *we* should, I assert the need for freedom to experience God as each of us was created.

³¹ Ibid., 17.

(Table 1 – Thomas’s 9 *Sacred Pathways*)

Sacred Pathway	Means of Spiritual Growth
<i>Naturalists</i>	Loving God out of doors
<i>Sensates</i>	Loving God with the senses
<i>Traditionalists</i>	Loving God through ritual and symbol
<i>Ascetics</i>	Loving God in solitude and simplicity
<i>Activists</i>	Loving God through confrontation
<i>Caregivers</i>	Loving God by loving others
<i>Enthusiasts</i>	Loving God with mystery and celebration
<i>Contemplatives</i>	Loving God through adoration
<i>Intellectuals</i>	Loving God with the mind

What we do to grow the soul

Equally important with the process of *how* we access the soul is the process or means through which we attempt to *grow* its capacity. There is a lot of conjecture about how this takes place because there is no discernable way to *measure* the soul or its growth. In this section we will explore two important means through which individuals truly desiring to grow in their spiritual formation as Christian leaders should explore – other sacred pathways and spiritual direction.

THE ROLE OF “OTHER SACRED PATHWAYS”

According to Kenneth Boa, in *Conformed to His Image*, “The spiritual life is an all-encompassing, lifelong response to God’s gracious initiatives in the lives of those whose trust is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Biblical spirituality is a

Christ-centered orientation to every component of life through the mediating power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.”³² As we experience levels of formation and development through *pathways* that seem to fit with who we are, we should eventually come to the place where we want more. In our attempts to know God more and be stretched and transformed increasingly into his image, it is often required that we step outside of what is comfortable in order to experience God in a new way. This is when we get to experiment with some of the pathways that do not necessarily align with us as naturally as our primary pathway. This often happens because there is some element of these *other* pathways that intrigue us enough to explore further.

Exploring and experimenting with new pathways can be an amazing experience as our eyes are opened to an entirely new way of interfacing with God. Ideas we have had, and limitations we have unknowingly placed on God and our interaction with him, are now replaced with a growing awareness and understanding that our relationship with God can be shaped through a variety of different means. In a moment of revelation we realize that there are probably just as many people who experience God through this new pathway as there are who experience him through our primary pathway. And in yet another moment of divine revelation, the other seven pathways flash to mind, and we are again taken back with how creative the Lord our God is. Each pathway is a gift through which we can experience God in a new and amazing way, which all serve to foster growth and development. Each pathway will present us with new, challenging, and sometimes difficult ways of knowing, understanding and experiencing God. And although nine pathways have been identified and await exploration, it is important to

³² Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 19.

remember that we can never fully experience God in this human life. There are quite likely even more ways through which we can know and experience God.

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Jeannette Bakke states, in her book *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*, “Spiritual direction is a spiritual discipline that has played a part in the lives of numerous Christians, and like other Christian disciplines, it helps us hear, see, and respond to God.”³³ To have a friend (director), someone who is invested in you for no other reason than to see you *succeed* in spiritual development, is a priceless gift in the process of spiritual formation and leadership development. “Present-day directors do not give answers or tell directees what to do in their relationship with God or when making life choices. Instead, they listen with directees for how the Spirit of God is present and active. Directors support and encourage directees as they listen and respond to God,”³⁴ notes Bakke. This process of having someone to walk along side of us as we learn to hear, see, and respond to God is such a powerful tool in the overall equation of our development. The clarity and key questioning that a spiritual director can provide, as led by the Holy Spirit, can help to shape the life of the directee and the paradigm through which they view it.

Why the Soul can't go it alone

It could be easy to believe that a single-minded focus on the soul will yield the kind of Christian leader we all desire to become. I do not, however, believe this to be true. If we were to solely focus on the soul, we fall into the temptation of compartmentalizing areas of our life that are meant to be woven together. Through

³³ Jeannette A. Bakke, *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

emotions, we find release and can experience the heart of God. In the mind, we have the ability to describe experiences and encounters with the Lord in life and more adequately discern truth. In the soul, we have the chance to grow our awareness of God in all of life and increase the depth levels of intimacy we experience in that relationship. We need a holistic model for spiritual formation that includes the spiritual development of the soul, along with development of emotional intelligence and cognitive development. Let us also look at the role that the body plays in this holistic model.

Body

How we use and care for our bodies plays an important role in how we learn and develop. I think this is an avenue that many people do not necessarily associate with the developmental process of Christian leaders. However, I plan to build a strong case for why I believe the body should be one of these avenues that is included in a holistic approach to formation for emerging Christian leaders. In this section I will explore the role that the body plays in our developmental process through the modes of fitness, diet, and rest. The body is the vessel that God has given each of us to live out this earthly life. I earnestly believe that how we use and care for this vessel will impact the shaping of Christian leaders.

The role of fitness

Paul Schmidt states, in “The Character Assessment Scale,” that “Physical fitness is the commitment to preserve the health, fitness, and attractiveness of one’s body as the channel through which life must be experienced. This commitment is reflected in careful habits of eating, drinking, medication, and exercise. The health and attractiveness of physically fit people adds to their success in their work and personal lives. This success

reinforces their desire to take good care of their bodies.”³⁵ Whether or not you agree with the previous statement, there is a large percentage of the world’s population that glamorizes and idolizes the beautiful. A strong case can be built, however, for the success of people who may not be healthy or attractive; or that neither of these characteristics had any part in the success experienced by an individual in his or her work or personal life. Although much of the world might define success in terms of beauty and physical fitness, what I think might be more collectively agreeable to the general public is the notion that anyone who has experienced being *in shape* at any given point in their lives would admit to feeling *better* about themselves while being *in shape*, such that it directly or indirectly impacted every area of their life.

It is quite obvious that in the world today, especially America, physical fitness is either an unhealthy obsession or a fleeting thought. “In 2002 nearly 40 percent of non-institutionalized adults 18 years of age and over reported that they did not engage in physical activity during leisure time. The trend in leisure-time physical activity among adult men and women has remained stable in recent years. Among men and women, the percent that are physically inactive during leisure time increases with age. More than one-half of adults 65 years of age and over indicated being physically inactive during leisure time compared with about one-third of adults 18–44 years of age. Women were more physically inactive during leisure time than men of the same age, consistent with the pattern found among male and female high school students.”³⁶ Four out of every ten individuals over the age of 18 claim no physical activity in their life. The lack of overall

³⁵ Paul F. Schmidt, “The Character Assessment Scale: A New Tool for the Counselor,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 34, no. 2 (June 1980): 81.

³⁶ National Center for Health Statistics. “Health, United States, 2004: With Chartbook and Trends in the Health of Americans,” [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/04.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/04.pdf) (accessed February 12, 2005).

fitness that results from this kind of sedentary lifestyle is not only sad but cause for concern. How does this translate into our context of a holistic approach to spiritual formation and leadership development?

There tends to be little, if any, difference between people of faith and those who claim to have no faith in surveys that were not *directly* connected to faith. Knowing does not necessarily inform our actions, even when it comes to the issue of health and wellness. The discipline that comes in caring for one's body through appropriate levels of fitness, patterns and habits can be established in ways that directly impact the other areas of life. Physical fitness should also be viewed as a way that we can actively *maintain* the condition of the body that God has given to each of us in order to carry-out the life he has called us to.

It is important to note that not everyone has the same capacity for physical fitness. There are a number of diseases and physical disabilities that make it difficult, if not impossible, to engage in any form of physical activity. For many of these individuals, the fact that they are unable to engage in activities that most of us take for granted can become a different kind of barrier to one's formation and development. For those who are able, the physical fitness aspect of the element of the body is one that should receive adequate attention. However, it is not enough in and of itself. We must now consider the role of diet.

The role of diet

“Gluttony is the practice of indulging too much in food, tobacco, drink, and/or drugs. Overindulgence causes people to lose their attractive appearance, alertness, clear thinking, and eventually their health as well. When all of these losses increase depression

and put a strain on their personal relationships, their appetite for their habit is stimulated all the more.”³⁷ Much like the positive effects that fitness had in reproducing a desire to be fit, the negative effects of a poor diet can reproduce a negative pattern of consumption. The quip “garbage in, garbage out,” maybe appropriate, and true, of the mind as it relates to how what we consume mentally directly impacts the thoughts, words, and actions we express; but it is not so true for the body. More accurately, the saying for the body would go, *garbage in... and growing*. “Findings from the 1988–94 and 1999–2002 surveys, showed substantial increases in overweight and obesity among adults. The upward trend in overweight since 1980 reflects primarily an increase in the percent of adults 20–74 years of age who are obese. In 1999–2002, 65 percent of adults were overweight with 31 percent obese.”³⁸ Consider this in conjunction with the 40% of adults 18 and older that claimed to have no physical activity in the section above and these stats should not be too shocking. Furthermore, “an analysis published March 10 [2004] by the Journal of the American Medical Association said deaths caused by poor diet and sedentary lifestyles rose by 33 percent from 1990 to 2000. Another study by the Rand Corporation, based in Santa Monica, California, predicted that within 20 years, obesity-related diseases will cancel out health strides made through medical advances,”³⁹ states Larry Swain in the article “Churches Stressing Health and Fitness.” It is mind-boggling how willing we are to put our very existence in jeopardy in order to enjoy a diet of whatever pleases us.

What can we learn from this? I believe there are direct implications on the holistic formation and development of individuals. Issues of self-control, over-indulgence, discipline, and self-awareness are issues that we deal with across every area

³⁷ Schmidt, “The Character Assessment Scale,” 81.

³⁸ National Center for Health Statistics, “Health, United States, 2004,” (accessed February 12, 2005).

³⁹ Larry Swain, “Churches Stressing Health and Fitness,” *Christian Century* 121, no. 7 (April 6 2004): 13.

of our lives. How we deal with them in one area of our lives can have a direct impact on how we deal with them in other areas. If, as leaders, we speak of *moderation* in particular areas of life, but model something completely different in an area like physical health then what validity does our message hold? We must fight tendencies to compartmentalize truth based on how we desire to live. How we care for our bodies does say something about us.

Understanding food-related issues to be a growing trend, some Christians have started to take action. Swain notes that “With about 65% of Americans overweight, some denominations were [at the turn of the century] already working to get clergy and congregants to lose the fat.”⁴⁰ From hiring dietary consultants, to providing health conscious and fitness oriented programming, to even putting together web-based resources and online *screenings* for members of the clergy and their congregants, individuals and communities were being encouraged to be more aware of what they eat, why they eat it, and what they are doing with the only bodies they will have in their earthly existence. While fitness and diet tend to be more obvious ways in which the body is impacted, we must now consider the important and much forgotten role of rest.

The role of rest

According to Judith Wray, in “Jesus, the Sabbath and Rest,” “Our society, which has majored in the skills of work and minored in the fine art of leisure, knows little or nothing of rest.”⁴¹ We live in a time when rest is viewed as a luxury (something that can only be experienced occasionally) or unnecessary (because there are so many more important things that must be attended to).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Judith Hock Wray, “Jesus, the Sabbath and Rest,” *Living Pulpit* 7, no. 2 (April-June 1998): 10.

First, let us consider why we need rest. Without taking time to rest, it is easy to get wrapped up in what we do, so we lose a proper sense of perspective. Wray suggests “A call to rest characterized by Sabbath-keeping might invite the recognition of the hubris demonstrated by our insistence on poorly imitating God, thinking that the world, or at least our world, will collapse if we cease working for one day out of every seven.”⁴² Rest enables us to have a healthier perspective on life, our role in this world and God’s role in all of it. Consider the example of Jesus. “For Jesus, rest was inextricably linked with one’s relationship to the world, to the community and to God. Rest included the experience of moving through life with tranquility, empowered to do justice in an unperturbed state of body/mind/spirit (Matt 12:17-21), trusting in the certain grace of God,”⁴³ states Wray.

Far too many of us depend on the adrenaline that is produced through the high-stress lifestyle we choose to lead. Archibald Hart postulates, in *The Hidden Link Between Adrenaline and Stress*, that “Type-A behavior is an ‘action-emotion complex’ that can be seen in those persons who are always struggling to achieve more and more in less and less time. In essence, they are always in a hurry.”⁴⁴ This produces what Dr. Hart calls “hurry sickness.” Although Hart admits that we all need a certain level of stress in our lives to keep us functioning at our optimal level, he would suggest the need to find a healthy balance that includes a large portion of rest and relaxation.

The physical rest of the body also helps us to avoid many of the pitfalls that are a by-product of choosing no rest. More and more people experience burnout and

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁴ Archibald D. Hart, *The Hidden Link Between Adrenaline and Stress: The Exciting New Breakthrough That Helps You Overcome Stress Damage* (United States of America: W Publishing Group, 1995), 32.

exhaustion, fall prey to addictions, and seem to lack a sense of meaning in their lives.

Choosing not to rest puts us in a position where we are open to things that can undermine the effort and work that we are so devotedly giving ourselves to. Our bodies crave rest; a rest that allows us to reconnect with our creator, the one who modeled for us a holy rest. Many of us rarely allow ourselves the *luxury* of such rest until it is too late. Be it through burnout or addiction, neither is an end result that any of us desires for our timeless efforts.

Illness is another way our body can tell us that rest is long overdue. Belden Lane, in “Holy Silence,” suggests that “Under the stress of ‘having so much fun’ or ‘being stretched in so many new ways’ we frequently succumb to physical illness. Our bodies cannot sustain the feverish consumption of experience we demand of ourselves. And yet curiously, it is when we’re physically ‘spent’ that we at last feel immense relief – we have the permission to do nothing that we had been seeking all along.”⁴⁵ We choose, consciously or subconsciously, to punish our bodies until they can no longer manage, then we are forced to rest on its terms and not our own. The toll that this takes on us is not physical alone; its effects overflow into all areas of our lives. With a segment of the population that lives in a state of illness for reasons outside of their control, how reckless is it for “healthy” individuals to intentionally and/or willingly do this to themselves? It is a stewardship issue of the resources (our bodies) that God has given us.

Somehow we need to get beyond our fallen need to constantly be *doing* something and so overly focused on the self. Lane states that “In Sabbath nothing happens. That disturbs us, because Sabbath is not about me and what I’m getting from the experience. It’s about God, the One I meet most intimately in the absence of activity,

⁴⁵ Belden C. Lane, “Holy Silence,” *Christian Century* 118, no. 29 (October 24 2001): 25.

beyond words, beyond the twisted cravings of my fevered existence.”⁴⁶ If, and when, we are able to reeducate ourselves on the importance of rest, and the appropriate reasons for it, then and only then will we begin to bring a more healthy balance to the crazy paced life that we live so much of every week. If we choose to ignore the importance of rest in our lives, we willingly set ourselves up for pain and misfortune as a result of our own failure to yield to the internal rhythm of activity and rest that God created within each of us.

Why the body can't go it alone

As we have seen, our body is an important part of our development. Fitness, diet, and rest are all essential elements to our overall health, physical wellness, and holistic approach to formation. The body, just like each of the other elements, must not be overemphasized but must be considered within the context of a well-balanced approach to spiritual formation and leadership development. To over-emphasize the body will limit our growth to something that we can control and manipulate through our own efforts and *doings*. The body is an element that we have a lot of control over, and if we so desire, can fool ourselves into thinking that our growth in all areas of our lives are just as *easily* manipulated through our own efforts. Discipline, moderation, balance, and health are all good things that we learn in the midst of taking appropriate care of our body. However, holistic formation cannot be relegated to these same items. The body is a key element of our formation, but it must be accompanied by other elements that can provide for a more holistic approach to spiritual formation and leadership development.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 26.

Conclusion

The Greatest Commandment is a guide for how we can love God and grow in our relationship with him. The powerful truth embodied in the Greatest Commandment is no less truthful, or powerful, as we attempt spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st Century. We have seen how the heart is an essential avenue of our holistic formation and how emotions and suffering play an important role in the developmental process. We also examined the mind and the importance of the *how* and *what* of our thinking plays into our developmental experience. In regards to the soul, we identified the important need to be able to both access and grow our soul as a way to know and experience God as he shapes and forms us. Lastly, we explored the role of the body [strength] and how fitness, diet, and rest are all important elements of this avenue that help to grow and transform us in a more holistic manner. In all of this, we have seen how the Greatest Commandment should be utilized to inform how we approach spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st Century. Let us now look at the avenues found in the 2nd Greatest Commandment.

CHAPTER 7. THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT:

Community and Service as avenues for Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”¹
- Jesus

The statement above was also made by Jesus to his followers and is defined as the *Second Greatest Commandment*. Jesus’ command to love neighbor as self is a call to be involved and invested in the lives of others. Next to loving God, loving others takes a higher priority than anything else. Jesus modeled this call throughout his life on earth. He demonstrated what it meant to live in authentic community with others, sharing his very life with those included in his personal community. He also exemplified serving those who were in need. Women and children, those who were blind, deaf and lame, and those who could not help themselves were the people to whom Jesus gave attention and service. I believe the Second Greatest Commandment holds two of the primary elements of a holistic formation process for Christian leaders. In this chapter we will explore *community* and *service* as avenues through which Christ can shape us as we allow him to use our lives and the lives of others. I will argue that these important avenues should be understood and considered as we attempt spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st Century.

¹ Mk 12:31b NIV

Community

Kenneth Boa suggests in *Conformed to His Image*, that “Because God has created us in his image, we are relational beings who thrive best in community.”² Communities of all shapes and sizes play a profound role in our formation and development as Christian leaders. There are communities we enter into willingly and knowingly because of what they have to offer and what we believe we can receive by being a part of them. Maybe it is a small group at church, or a particular group of friends that we are drawn to because we know that it is a place we can belong, a place where we fit. There are other communities that we are a part of, however, and we are unaware that they have an equally profound influence in how our lives are shaped. Consider the idea of community at a global level, through travel, media and the internet; or consider our families. These are communities that we probably do not consider because of the regularity in which we encounter them, as well as the lack of choice we have in selecting them as a part of our social cloistering. As Christians, “we’re meant to be a new community, a holy priesthood,” suggests Dan Allender in *The Healing Path*, and we are not supposed to do this in isolation or seclusion, “we are meant to be in the midst of society, conducting business, writing plays, selling paintings, drinking coffee, and infiltrating the world with faith, hope, and love.”³

Global level

Leonard Sweet, Brian McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer, in their book *A is for Abductive*, state that “For the first time in human history, the world is forging an

² Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 415.

³ Dan B. Allender, *The Healing Path: How the Hurts in Your Past Can Lead You to a More Abundant Life* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: WaterBrook Press, 1999), 241.

awareness of our existence as a single entity, a *Unum Humanum*. The people of Planet Earth are having the same experiences at the same time around the same events and the same people, creating a planetary consciousness. Each person with a screen now has the whole world at his or her fingertips.”⁴ Our definition of community has been evolving over the past quarter century. Technology has allowed for ways of creating and connecting in community with people across the country and around the globe. Community, once thought of as the immediate environment within which one lived and related, now has expanded to include the world at large as a place for possible connection. The capacity to have the world at our fingertips has completely changed how we learn and the rate at which we do it. According to Steve Garber, as stated in his book *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, “The challenge for the contemporary college student – especially the Christian student whose creedal commitments are rooted in the possibility and reality of truth – is to form a worldview that will be coherent across the whole of life because it addresses the whole of life.”⁵ Let us consider the secular, and Christian, world at this global level.

SECULAR WORLD

What is the pervasive cultural message about what it means to be in community? It all depends on where you look and whom you ask. There are many cultures around the world that still hold a high value of community and family, but if they are watching the West as an example, the value placed on community is not so high. According to Boa, “Community has been deteriorating in the Western World [sic] and is being challenged

⁴ Leonard Sweet, Brain D. McLaren, *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003), 138.

⁵ Steven Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief & Behavior During the University Years* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 124.

on several fronts. We have witnessed a growing pursuit of autonomy and self-determination. Our culture has been marked by a quest for independence, self-preservation, control, privatization, avoidance of accountability, superficial relationships, and alienation.”⁶ Although we were created to be in community with others, the most prolific and high profile region in the world [North America] proclaims a message of self-reliance and independence. Although the global community is one where the possibilities for building relationships with people of common interest are high, creating authentic community seems to be a challenging task. It is easy to remain anonymous, unattached emotionally and physically, and therefore unengaged in a true form of community. We have made tremendous strides at the global level over the past quarter century; however, Viv Thomas points out in *Future Leader* that “technology and communication techniques are pushing us along in directions that are not focused on our emotional or spiritual health.”⁷ With the incredible challenges that are present in the secular society to creating a rich communal environment, it is important that we educate Christian leadership on how to counter the cultural influences in to facilitate the kind of community that all human beings are created for.

CHURCH

The church is a community that has much to teach us. According to Marjorie Thompson in *Soul Feast*, “The reasons for gathering are many and important. Whether we are alone or with others, we need to experience our Christian life as rooted in the larger community of faith. Even our most personal disciplines need to be supported, broadened, clarified, and sometimes corrected in the light of corporate theology and

⁶ Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 415.

⁷ Viv Thomas, *Future Leader* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 1999), 87.

practice. Otherwise we become susceptible to privatized visions of spiritual truth.”⁸ Our times of coming together are important for the common engagement of worship, hearing the Word of God through preaching and teaching, mutual edification, encouragement and fellowship. These times fill us and shape us as we prepare for the challenges of another week. The church, however, is still a place where we can remain anonymous and unattached if we do not take the initiative to connect.

While Church is a tremendous place to engage in meaningful community, it should also serve as a *hub* for community mobilizers. The church needs to be more than just a building to which we venture one or two times a week, but instead, a community that is fed as a body of believers to go out into the world at large and invite others to experience authentic community. It can also serve as fellowship for the believer that serves to support, encourage, edify, challenge, sharpen, and hold accountable to the ongoing process of being conformed more to the image of Christ in the midst of daily life. Community in the context of the church cannot be contained to the building with the cross on the steeple, but must happen as we are committed to one another in the context of everyday life. “We come to faith as individuals, but we grow in community,”⁹ suggests Boa. The large-scale community is just one context through which individuals can be formed. It is in the context of more intimate communities, however, that growth and development happens more readily. For this we now turn to small groups.

Small groups

Michael Wilkins postulates, in his book *In His Image*, that “People in families grow closer to each other and develop into the individuals they were meant to be when

⁸ Marjorie Thompson, J, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 56.

⁹ Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 416.

they learn to rely on each other, to help, challenge, and be loyal to each other.”¹⁰ The term family can be used in the biological sense or in the spiritual sense as a way of better understanding who *family* is and how we can become learners in these different contexts. Opportunities to be a part of intimate, life-changing, communities are more prevalent for some than others, but they must be things that we earnestly seek out.

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Depending on the context of your upbringing, your friends and/or family may or may not be the first place you look to find intimate relationships through which you can be shaped and formed in positive ways. These are, however, some of the best places for growth and formation in both casual and intentional ways. The family unit, for good or for bad, will serve to shape us in deep ways. This is the group that we are a part of during our most formational years. It is often not until later in life that we realize just how profoundly we were shaped by the family unit that we came from. The values and morals that we assemble are all a byproduct of the time and influence of family members with whom we spend nearly 20 years of our life. Much of our sense of self is developed by, and tied to, this group as well. No family unit is perfect, but some individuals definitely have a better experience in this context of community than others.

Although we don’t have anything to say about who is a part of our biological community, we do have the power to choose our friends. Eugene Peterson suggests, in *Leap Over a Wall: Earthly Spirituality for Everyday Christians*, “Friendship is a much underestimated aspect of spirituality.”¹¹ Often, our friends are people we choose to

¹⁰ Michael J. Wilkins, *In His Image: Reflection Christ in Everyday Life* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1997), 127.

¹¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *Leap Over a Wall: Earthly Spirituality for Everyday Christians* (New York, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 53.

associate with based on common interests, aspirations, and opportunity to be with them on a regular basis. As a Christian, we are not called out of relationship with non-Christian, but instead, to consider the level of influence that any relationship might have for good or for bad. Garber postulates that “For individuals to flourish they need to be part of a community of character, one which has reason for being that can provide meaning and coherence between the personal and the public worlds.”¹² It is in this context that we begin to bring our beliefs and our behaviors together in how we choose to live. This is a very powerful community! Depending upon the kind of environment that is created within the biological community of the family, the community created with friends will take on a greater level of influence and importance at an earlier or later stage of life in the individual.

FOCUSED GROUPS

There are also opportunities that we have to be a part of more intentionally focused communities. Gilbert Bilezikian comments, in *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness*, that “It is in small groups that people can get close enough to know each other, to care and share, to challenge and support, to confide and confess, to forgive and be forgiven, to laugh and weep together, to be accountable to each other, to watch over each other, and to grow together. Personal growth does not happen in isolation. It is the result of interactive relationships. Small groups are God’s gift to foster changes in character and spiritual growth.”¹³ The focused groups usually assemble to meet a common desire, or need, of the group members. In most instances the reasons are focused on knowing God in a more intimate way. Prayer groups,

¹² Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, 145.

¹³ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 54.

accountability groups, Bible study groups and fellowship groups are just a few of the forms such groups can take. The level of intimacy between group members grows over the course of time as individuals feel more comfortable with the group. This allows for more open sharing, reflection, and self-actualization as the group comes before the Lord in the hopes of knowing him better. There is still, however, a more intimate level of relating through which we can be shaped and formed.

One-on-one relationships

The most intimate form of community is that which happens one-on-one. These relationships are some of the most formational that we can experience. The capacity for influence and impact in a positive manner at this level is exponential. At the same time, the chance for deep hurt and pain to be experienced is greater at this level, because we feel the most freedom to be who we are and we open ourselves in the most vulnerable sense to the person we are relating to. Let us consider two different models of this relationship – the parent/child relationship and the mentor/mentee relationship.

PARENT/CHILD

From the time that a child is born, until the time they leave for their first day of school, it is the parent that has the most influence on a child's development (and if the child is put into a day-care system of some sort, then it is this person(s) who takes on this role by default). According to Wilkins, "As husbands and wives help each other [to grow spiritually], they are preparing themselves to disciple their children in healthy spiritual growth. Parents lead their children toward Jesus, introduce them to Him, and prepare them for life with Him after they leave home. Let me say it plainly: We lead best by personal example and that means living lives that are changing and growing in godliness

and love.”¹⁴ The parental influence on a child is profound as it sets the very foundation for the rest of the child’s development. Even after children start the schooling process and are introduced to new influential relationships, parents continue to have the opportunity, and responsibility, to be involved daily in their child’s life. The relationship that is established over the first eighteen years of a child’s life with their parent(s) will have a tremendous impact on their development during those years, as well as the formative years that occur after the child leaves home. A parent’s ability to establish a growing and loving relationship with his or her child in the early years of the child’s life, as well as the ability to flex and morph that relationship as both parent and child grow and change, will directly impact the level of healthy influence the parent will have throughout their children’s adult life. No matter how good, or bad, a parent-child relationship might be the need for a one-on-one relationship with someone older and wiser should eventually bring a young Christian into a mentoring-type relationship outside of the home.

MENTOR/MENTE

Mentoring provides an opportunity for deep, intentional relating. It is a context for great awareness and awakening within both mentor and mente, is but usually more focused on the younger of the two involved. This relationship can take on many different forms depending on the need of the individual(s) involved. Sharon Parks, in *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, states that “Mentoring, in its classic sense, is an intentional, mutually demanding, and meaningful relationship between two individuals, a young adult

¹⁴ Wilkins, *In His Image*, 132.

and an older, wiser figure that assists the younger person in learning the ways of life.”¹⁵

These relationships can be so powerful that it has become common to see these relationships actually grow into *mentoring communities* where one mentor meets with a few young adults. Two reasons for this evolution are the lack of people willing to avail themselves to the demands of a mentoring relationship, as well as the acknowledgement of both mentor and mentee of the value of having a few more committed individuals to add to the educational experience. Parks further notes that “Mentoring communities play an essential role in the formation of a faith that can ground ongoing meaning and purpose throughout adulthood.”¹⁶

The term *coach* is another one that is used today to describe this type of relationship. “The duties of a spiritual coach are to bring out the best in a player. Coaches cannot play the game for their people, but they can teach, correct, discipline, motivate, mentor, inspire, and praise their players to spiritual greatness. A personal spiritual coach helps disciples of Jesus to realize God’s dream for their lives, maximize their soul’s potential, and to lead faithful, abundant lives true to the gospel,”¹⁷ states Sweet, McLaren and Haselmayer. This kind of terminology seems much more prevalent, and acceptable, in the world today where authority, authoritative language, and any form of hierarchical positioning of one person over another is held in sober suspicion.

Spiritual direction is a practice that fits into this category of intimate relational influence. Thompson suggests that “Spiritual direction is basically the guidance one Christian offers to another to help that person ‘grow up in every way... into Christ.’ A

¹⁵ Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 127.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁷ Sweet and McLaren, *A is for Abductive*, 67.

spiritual guide is someone who can help us to see and name our own experience of God.”¹⁸ The art of spiritual direction has changed over the course of time. Jeannette Bakke writes, in *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*, that “Present-day directors do not give answers to tell directees what to do in their relationship with God or when making life choices. Instead, they listen with directees for how the Spirit of God is present and active. Directors support and encourage directees as they listen and respond to God.”¹⁹ Regardless of the terminology or approach, what is being experienced by those who engage in this form of community is the opportunity for life change to happen through the context of deep, intimate, authentic relationship.

Community, like any other element of a holistic approach to formation, is an important piece of the developmental process. However, we must be aware of some of the pitfalls that await us as we actively participate in community. “Perhaps the most menacing danger is manipulation and control by leaders,”²⁰ suggests Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline*. The power that is placed in the hands of leadership can, for some leaders, be too much to handle. The allure of control over a person or community can cause a leader to make poor judgments in thought and action that can forever change the level of influence and impact that they might have. Yet, we need to be able to trust leaders in our lives, so it is important that we have an awareness of the possibility for the misuse of leadership and encourage the establishment of checks and balances within the collective leadership of any system.

¹⁸ Thompson, *Soul Feast*, 103-104.

¹⁹ Jeannette A. Bakke, *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 19.

²⁰ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1988), 187.

The health of the community is another area that has the potential to become a hindrance to the holistic formation process. A toxic community can undermine the original intention as to why the members chose to be a part of it. For instance, one survey found in *Religious Education* showed that, “U.S. small groups have a tendency to privatize community and domesticate the sacred.”²¹ Spirituality, in these instances, can become too closely associated with a community which can lead to the distortion and manipulation of scripture and the focus on God can take a backseat to a focus on the community. Healthy communities and relationships are made up of individuals who are achieving a balanced approach towards their holistic formation that includes times of community and times of solitude.

The third area for consideration is the unhealthy individual that is a part of a healthy community. This individual has the capacity to infect other members of the group, dominate time and focus that are meant for mutual encouragement and edification, and also have the potential to *infect* healthy members of the community. Unhealthy members of any community deserve just as much respect and love as any healthy member of the same community. At the same time, there needs to be an awareness of what effect the unhealthy member of the group may be having on the overall function of the community and the desired outcomes of their collective time together. In extreme situations, unhealthy members of a community may need to be asked to leave the group for a period of time.

²¹ Marecel J. Dumestre. “Postfundamentalism and the Christian Intentional Learning Community,” *Religious Education* 90, no. 2 (Spring 1995), <http://0-web33.epnet.com.catalog.georgefox.edu/citation.asp> (accessed February 20, 2005).

Service

Richard Foster, in *Streams of Living Water*, suggests “The power to be the kind of people we were created to be and the power to do the works of God upon the earth places us on solid ground to engage the demands of the social arena. And no place is in greater need of people full of the Holy Spirit and divine love.”²² The capacity to serve others, and be served by others, is not something that comes naturally to a fallen human nature. This is one of the most challenging elements of the holistic formation process, and for that very reason it can be one of the most powerful in our developmental process. We know that being a part of community is an important dynamic of our formation; however, it is not enough to be inwardly focused within this community. According to Wilkins, “We come together to receive training so that we can live with an outward perspective, not a desire to turn inward to escape.”²³ Our spiritual formation and leadership development is ultimately not about us, but about others. Boa suggests that “As children of God through faith in Christ, we are called to a lifestyle of growing others-centeredness and diminishing self-centeredness as Christ increases and we decrease.”²⁴ We have been called and created with a purpose, and that primary purpose is to serve those in need. There are four primary levels that I believe this happens at. Although each level has many similarities when it comes to service, I believe there are unique things that can be learned at each level. The four levels we will explore are global, local community, relational and familial.

²² Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 137.

²³ Wilkins, *In His Image*, 148-149.

²⁴ Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 46.

Global

When most people think of service, they probably think of what happens *out* there or *over* there. Mission efforts are one of the many ways that service is played out. Jesus' command to love our neighbor extends around the world. "Neighbor, says Jesus, is 'nigh-bor,' the person near us, the person in need. Jesus refuses to put walls around the word neighbor. No national heritage, no racial origin, no ethnic background, no barriers of class or culture can separate us from our neighbor,"²⁵ notes Foster. Service in places that are new, and unfamiliar, to the person engaged in service can be a very powerful setting through which God can work in the lives of all who are involved. One of the important factors here is that those doing the service are taken out of their comfortable setting, without many of the luxuries and amenities they are used to having, which can really help them to focus on where they are, why they are there, and what life is really like in that community. These experiences can be both short and long-term and are typically quite intense. Even though this is one of the first expressions of service that people think of, it is one that should often be thought of last. One of the big challenges that occur with service at this level is that it can be hard to fully invest in relationships, or communities, when the time you are spending in them is fixed. For those who jump right to this level of service, a revelation that hopefully occurs in the midst of their experience is that there are people with similar needs, in similar settings, much closer to their home. For some individuals, it will take this kind of distant experience to have their eyes opened to the need that is right around the corner from where they live or work. It is important that acts of service not be limited to trips that happen for small portions of one's life, but

²⁵ Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, 167.

instead, that individuals find opportunities to get involved in a setting that they can invest in on a regular basis.

Local Community

According to Mark Falbo, in “Community Service and Social Transformation,” “The transformation of society and the churches begins in service. Community is formed, both figuratively and literally, through service.”²⁶ This kind of service entails members of a community investing right where they live. Service at this level is second nature for many people. For others, however, it is a very hard need to comprehend. Whether it is an unwillingness to admit that there are issues that would require the need for outreach and service in their neighborhood, or a lack of empathy for those that are *common scenery* on the street corners and building out coves of their community, many individuals struggle to see and/or identify the need for service within their local community. The local community, however, is one of the best places for individuals to get involved in service. Jeff Imbach, in *The River Within: Loving God, Living Passionately*, suggests that “Each person is called to become a contributing part of a loving community. Each, in the current of life he or she receives from God, has life and gifts to offer.”²⁷ The local community is a place where, with great regularity, we can invest our passions and gifts for the betterment of the community and allow God to further develop those gifts and passions within us. “It is our life, shared with the lives of others, that creates the webs that form the mystery of community,”²⁸ states Imbach.

²⁶ Mark C. Falbo. “Community Service and Social Transformation: The Contribution of Religious Education to the Health of the American Polis,” *Religious Education* 93, no. 2 (Spring 1998) <http://0-web1.epnet.com.catalog.georgefox.edu/citation.asp> (accessed February 20, 2005).

²⁷ Jeff Imbach, *The River Within: Loving God, Living Passionately* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1998), 218.

²⁸ Ibid.

Serving at the local level helps us to grow in awareness of needs that are more immediate to our surroundings, which we can invest in on a more regular basis, while we continue to grow into the people God has created us to be.

Ongoing involvement at any of these levels can serve to shape the approach we take to leadership. Many leaders struggle with the concept of servant-leadership. I believe that hands-on service is one of the most effective ways we can begin to understand the model of leadership that Jesus set before us. According to Foster, “True service is a life-style. It acts from ingrained patterns of living. It springs spontaneously to meet human need.”²⁹ This is not the kind of lifestyle we typically associate with success or leadership, yet it is the kind of leadership that Jesus modeled for his disciples and called us to embrace. Service does not stop at the global and local community levels. There is a need for service at deeper, more intimate levels of community as well.

Within relationships

Our relationships should be very important to us. These are the people that we love and love to spend time with, and yet we often overlook them as people we can serve. Service within the context of relationships, however, is a tall task. Because of our humanness we have a hard time submitting to, or serving, others, especially those to whom we are close. It is one thing to serve when the need is obvious or the person you are serving is not someone you know, but to serve someone when the need is not so obvious and they are someone you see on a normal basis, is an entirely different level of service and can be an avenue for further growth and development. Service in this context will look different than it does in other contexts. The need is for us, suggests Allender, “to be ‘response-able’ [which] is to live with our senses alive, to gather data given to us

²⁹ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 129.

by others and then respond.”³⁰ Within the close context of our relationships this might seem like an easy task, but it is not. Because we are so familiar with our friends, it can be easy for us to overlook struggles they might be having, especially if they don not seem too severe. It can be just as easy to pass on an opportunity to engage a friend in their time or place of need for fear of making the other person, and ourselves, feel uncomfortable.

Often it is in the *small things* that we can make the biggest difference to these people that we truly care so much about. One of the greatest services we can provide our friends is by being willing to listen to them, really listen to them. Dietrich Bonhoeffer suggests, in *Life Together*, “Christians, especially ministers, so often think they must always contribute something when they are in the company of others, that this is the one service they have to render. They forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking.”³¹ To make ourselves available in this capacity, without holding room for judgment, or feeling the need to make comment, can be an incredible blessing to a friend in need. This is just one of many examples through which we can serve others. There is possibly one group that is even more readily available to our service than our friends, and it could be the toughest place for us to allow ourselves to serve - our family.

Within family

Scot McKnight, in *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others*, suggests that “Neighborly love begins in the home. In fact, if it is not shown in the home, it is a sham

³⁰ Allender, *The Healing Path*, 252.

³¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship* (New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1954), 97.

in public.”³² This may come as a surprise to some, and possibly a major barrier to others. The family is far and away the toughest context in which we can choose to serve. These are the people that we have seen at their best, and worse, and they have seen us in the same way. They have the greatest capacity to influence, hurt, or manipulate us. With everything in life in which we have a choice, the family that we are a part of is not one of those choices. In this context the parents have the important role of setting the tone for creating an others-focused paradigm for their family. According to Thompson, “Parents provide a hospitable home by being genuinely present to their children – available to listen, affirm, guide, and correct. Taking time to listen and talk to one another is one of the most important expressions of hospitality in home life, especially in an age when time is a premium. It requires self-sacrifice on the part of adults to make this a priority.”³³ Children will naturally push the boundaries of a parents desire to be of service to them, but in the process, parents must take the initiative to help their children understand the importance of serving others through daily modeling this as a lifestyle. “Sadly, far too many Christians love others with abandon while their own families are starving for their love,”³⁴ notes McKnight. This truth will inevitably cause members of a family system that are not receiving any of the *love* to have a negative or warped view of both family and service. The family setting is a powerful context that has the potential to shape our view and capacity for service in the greatest and deepest of ways.

The role that service plays in our developmental process is far-reaching. This element of the holistic formation process, like any other, can become a hindrance to our

³² Scot McKnight, *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others* (Brewster, Massachusetts: Palette Press, 2004), 56.

³³ Thompson, *Soul Feast*, 129.

³⁴ McKnight, *The Jesus Creed*, 55.

development if we give it all of our focus and attention. The pitfall is that we become *doers* that lack the capacity to simply *be*. Service becomes the sole focus of our life, and we do not take the time for rest. This may feel like the right way to live in light of Jesus' command to love others, but it is not. In order to serve those that the Lord brings across our path, we must have a healthy sense of perspective. This is constructed in our lives through the intentional rest that we create space for in our schedules. It is shaped through the time that we spend tending to our own needs, and at times, allowing others to tend to our needs. One of the biggest needs we have is to be replenished by the Lord as we spend time with him in worship, and this requires that we slow down. It is only in the *replenished* state that we can give 100% of who we really are to those that we desire to serve. Balance, in all of this, is the key to a holistic approach to formation.

Conclusion

Henri Nouwen postulates, in *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, that “When we have lived a while, [sic] the walls of our lives have become marked by many events – world events, family events, personal events – as well as by our responses to them. These markers speak their own language and often lead to a dialogue, sometimes limited to the heart, but occasionally expressed in words and gestures. It is in these situations that we reach out to each other and that parents, children, teachers, students, healers, patients and all people meet on their way through life and start speaking to each other and discovering each other a part of a larger community with a common destination.”³⁵ Jesus command to love neighbor as self has profound implications for how we go about spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st Century.

³⁵ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 100.

This call to community and service speaks of two more essential elements of a holistic approach to the development of Christian leaders. We were created for community and God has created each of us with unique passions and talents that speak directly to how we can invest in, and serve, our communities.

We examined the role that community plays at a large, medium and small scale. We also explored our call to serve at the global, communal, relational and familial levels of community and how each has the opportunity to shape us and instruct us as we give of ourselves unselfishly to others. We have seen how the 2nd Greatest Commandment should be utilized to inform how we approach spiritual formation and leadership development in the 21st Century. Let us now look to the conclusion of my study – a holistic formation model for emerging Christian leaders.

CHAPTER 8. PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER:

A Holistic Model for Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development

Over the course of the previous six chapters, I have laid a foundation for a holistic model of spiritual formation and leadership development that I will set forth in this chapter. I explored the formation and development of Moses and David in their Old Testament leadership roles. I investigated Jesus and the special relationship he had with his disciples. I examined the life and leadership of John Wesley and the contributions that he has made in this important study. I considered the postmodern context in which we find ourselves and the effects this will have on a model of this nature, especially considering the college-age target group. I identified the *heart, mind, soul, body, community* and *service*, as the important elements identified in the Greatest Commandments, and explored their relevance and role in a holistic spiritual formation and leadership development model. Having taken an in-depth look at all of these different areas and elements, the following model represents what I believe to be the necessary process for our future Christian leaders to experience as they prepare for a life of service in the context of a full-time ministry setting.

In this section I intend to give a specific plan for mentors to use with emerging student leaders. What follows is a three year experience designed to address different themes and topics in such a way that they will ingrain long-lasting patterns and habits in the future leader and to encourage lifelong holistic formation. This model will include

“common experiences” for each individual that is involved – a mentoring relationship, involvement in a small group, and engagement in a variety of service experiences. This model will also include elements that are *personalized*, or specific, to the individual based on particular needs and interests as identified by the mentor and/or mente.

The ultimate goal for anyone who engages in this holistic process for spiritual formation and leadership development is to be equipped for leading a balanced and healthy personal and professional life in order that they might avoid some of the pitfalls (i.e. – burnout, moral failure, etc.) that often plague those engaged in spiritual leadership. This particular process is designed with the college-age student in mind who senses a call into ministry and desires a holistic approach to their preparation and ongoing development. Although designed with the college-age student in mind, this model could easily be adapted to people of any age who sense a call to ministry, or who simply desire to take their discipleship of Jesus to an entirely new level.

There are a number of things to consider in the following model of spiritual formation for young men and women. First, it is vital to remember that God is the ultimate agent of change in a person’s life. He can use people, programs, and systems, but if He is ever left out of the process it will cease to be Christian *spiritual* formation and become something less. For this reason I suggest Biblical study and prayer as an integral part of this entire experience. By entering into this process, the best we can hope to do is become more open to Christ at work in our lives and willingly participate in the formation progression.

Second, it is equally important to note that no two people will go through this process in the same way, with the same results. For this process to be as successful as

possible for any given individual, it must be form-fitted to them, their needs, personality, spiritual gifts, vocation, past, relationship with Christ, etc. Everything about the individual will factor into what they will most need in their three year journey (with us). For that reason there is a *menu* at the end of this chapter that includes themes/foci, tools, experiences, and the habits and patterns that can be engrained in the individual who decides, with the help of his or her mentor, that this would be an important area(s) for the individual to spend time exploring.

Allow me to explain further the four fold structure that individual time, as well as small group time, will take on.

1) The mentor, group facilitator, and/or student(s) will start by identifying a particular theme(s) or foci that should be explored for a pre-determined length of time (typically a semester in duration, but an assessment by everyone involved at the end of the time should help to determine whether or not more time should be devoted to the particular theme).

2) With each theme/focus there will a list of tools that can help to facilitate exploration and development within a given theme. The list of tools will often include reading material, and in some cases, assessment tools, web-sites, etc.

3) Each theme/focus will also have a list of experiences that will allow the student to engage the theme in different ways, helping to bring different perspective and further opportunity for formation.

4) Finally, each theme/focus will have a list of desired habits and patterns that would be developed in the life of the student as a result of exploring each theme. These are the desired outcomes. It is quite possible that mentors/mentees will look at this section

to help determine which theme(s) they would like to spend time exploring. It is important to note that each list, including the list of themes, is not considered comprehensive and should be added to as deemed appropriate by mentor and/or mente.

A third important factor will be the students' willingness to commit to the experience. I believe that what a student puts into this process will directly reflect what they will get out of it. Unfortunately, we can only be encouragers with them along the way; we cannot do the work for them, nor can we make them do the work; they really have to want to be apart of the process (taking the steps that God asks them to) of spiritual transformation and leadership development.

A fourth key element will be the mentoring relationship. To the extent that the mente has a pre-established relationship, or can quickly form a relationship, with the mentor will help the process to move deeply and well. Equally important is how willing the mentor is to give him/herself to the individual, and the process, over the course of the three-year process. The mentor must be someone who is engaged in their own spiritual formation and leadership development on a daily basis. The mentor must also be someone who is truly devoted to engaging the student in this experience. They must be willing to earnestly pray for the student throughout their time together. They must have experience in the art of mentoring such that they know how to listen to the student, having the capacity to be spiritually sensitive and aware of the student's needs, and they must also be willing to ask the *tough questions* of the student, while prompting them towards areas of growth and awareness. There is so much to be learned in the mentoring relationship from those who are further along on their journey.

One final element of note will be small group participation. As there is much to be learned from the mentor, there is much to be learned from peers who are going through the same/similar process (remembering that no two processes will be exactly the same!) Of course there are many other factors that will play into the level of *success* that is experienced from one participant to another, but the aforementioned are some of the key areas to be aware of as students/mentors enter into this process.

God bless you as you journey towards Him!

Getting Started

2nd semester of the first year (recommended)

Since everyone tends to experience their *call* to ministry in different ways, and at different times, it is hard to set a hard and fast rule about when things should occur. For the sake of this model, however, I would like to identify years two through four as the best university years for experiencing this process. That would mean that at some point during the first year of a student's career they would hear about this holistic formation model and begin the process of getting themselves involved with it. There should be an extensive screening process for a number of reasons.

First, it will be important to assess a student's readiness for entering into a process like this. What are the reasons they want to be a part of a process like this, what do they hope to get from it, what needs do they have, what specific areas might be important to focus on over the course of their experience, etc. Second, this process should also serve to identify a good mentor for the individual if they do not already have one in mind. The information gleaned from these assessments would be tools to share with the mentor of the individual, as well as the facilitator of the small group. Lastly, this time will be a

good opportunity to prepare the individual for the process, helping him or her to understand time commitments, see the need to explore new levels of vulnerability and awareness, the pursuit of Christ above all else, and create an overall willingness to give themselves whole-heartedly to this experience before they actually embark on it.

In considering how to recruit and screen for this kind of process, I think the following would be important to consider. First, every mentor will be unique, and therefore find different approaches to this process more helpful than others. For that reason, the mentor could take a number of approaches including the likes of an application; asking the potential mente to submit a proposal indicating desired outcomes, commitments, etc.; an in-person interview; submitting a personal faith autobiography – including their call into ministry (See Appendix 1) whatever will be most beneficial to the mentor, or individual who is facilitating the larger process, in determining an individual's readiness for a process of this magnitude. Also, if there were reason to *recruit* for this kind of process, it would be beneficial to seek out nominations from faculty and staff based on observed leadership potential, fit for this type of experience, call to ministry, etc. (See Appendix 2)

It is important to help the students understand as much about the process before they get into it because of the relational nature of the overall experience. If a student gets into it, and later decides that it is not for him or her, than that leaves a mentor and a small group community in the awkward position of trying to adapt to his or her departure. It is equally important that an individual, mentor, and/or small group periodically address the level of commitment of anyone engaged in the experience and re-assess their future

involvement. This should, of course, be done in the most appropriate ways possible (See Appendix 3).

Focus:

- To gather information on the student.
- To determine the student's suitability for the experience.
- To identify a suitable mentor for the student.
- To identify specific needs; areas to focus on, etc., that will be important for the student to explore during their experience.

Tools:

- Application/Assessment
- Interview process

Experiences:

- Student will write an essay detailing the spiritual journey, as well as their understanding of their call to ministry.
- Student will go through an interview process with the small group facilitator for the upcoming cohort.
- If possible, student will have an initial meeting with their mentor to "test the waters" for suitability, as well as begin the relationship process.

Habits & Patterns:

- The student will begin to engender a sense of commitment to the process.
- The student will begin to engender a sense of self-awareness.

Summer

The summer leading into this three year process will be a good exercise in self-discipline and commitment. There will be some preliminary readings, as well as casual correspondence between the mentor and mente during this time. The goal here is two-fold: 1) to begin the process of self-awareness in relation to the forthcoming journey, and 2) to begin to establish a level of comfort and relation between the mentor and mente. Every step of the process is important, but the work that happens over the course of this summer in order to prepare the student for this holistic approach to spiritual formation and leadership development, will lay the foundation for what is to come. Should a student choose not to engage in any of these preliminary exercises, it may be worth re-assessing their desire to be apart of the program. Since this process includes individuals beyond the mente (i.e. – the mentor, the small group, etc.) it will be important that the student is willing to commit to the process in its entirety.

The Journey Ahead

Focus:

- To prepare the student for the journey ahead.
- To cultivate a healthy relationship between the mentor and mente.

Tools:

Contact information should be shared between mentor/mente with a goal of connecting on a weekly basis. Early correspondence will be casual in nature, and should follow a natural progression of deepening over the summer months. These correspondences will not only help to establish a relationship, but will also serve to identify whether or not the mentor and mente are a good match for one another. Ideally, there will be a pre-existing

relationship between the two, but if not, then hopefully the facilitator of this program will have had enough interaction with both the student and mentor to have paired together individuals that will be a good match. The following is information to exchange for the summer correspondence:

- Email addresses
- Primary phone numbers
- Mailing addresses
- *Possible Reading Materials:*
 - *The Life You've Always Wanted*, John Ortberg
 - *Does God Believe in You?* Keith Anderson
 - *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, M. Robert Mulholland Jr.
 - *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, John Ortberg
 - – other reading(s) as determined by mentor/mente –
- A spiritual formation journal – to record the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and lessons learned over the course of the Journey (to be utilized all three years, forming the important discipline of journaling). This can be a continuation of the journal that the student started over the course of the summer if so desired.

Experiences:

- Students will commit to spend time daily in activity that helps them to intentionally engage their relationship with God (i.e. – Reading the Bible, spending time in prayer, meditation, reflection, walking in nature – however the

student has “connected” with God in the time leading up to the present would be appropriate, but with a more intentional commitment and focus).

- Students should be encouraged to spend time daily in God’s Word and talking with him in prayer, even if this is not a normal part of their previous experience.
- Students should be encouraged to start a journal if it is not already a common practice of theirs. Aside from being a beneficial spiritual discipline, it will prove to be a great tool for reflecting on their thoughts and feelings that may often go unexplored. It will also be a tool for later reflection. No particular focus is needed in this early venture; simply have them begin by writing down their thoughts, feelings, and experiences of each day.

Habits & Patterns:

- The summer part of the experience will engender in students a growing level of commitment to this process.
- The summer part of the experience, as well as the journaling experience, will engender in students a greater level of self-awareness.
- Students will gain a better understanding of spiritual discipline and the importance of daily engaging in their relationship with Jesus.
- Journaling will engender in students the importance of reflecting on the days events, as well as help them to begin to identify the patterns of God’s work already present in their lives.

Year 1

First Semester

Focus:

- To promote greater self-awareness in the life of the student.
- To engender a sense of community in the life of the student.
- Additional foci as discerned by mentor/mente and small group.

Tools:

- A spiritual formation journal
- A mentor (to be a one-two-or three year commitment),
- A small group community with other students who are going through this process – taking a module or cohort approach. This will allow the group to cultivate deeper levels of intimacy over the course of three years. It is suggested that this group not be “mixed” such that there are students at different stages in process involved in the same small group (i.e. – someone who is just entering the process with someone who has been a part of it for two years), nor mixed in the sense of gender (as this dynamic, particularly during this season of life, would be more of a distraction than it would be a catalyst to the overall process). Although both kinds of mixed groups may have some benefits, you will also have to deal with differing levels maturity, spiritual maturity, different seasons of life, male/female relationships, and the addition and subtraction of members on a yearly basis (as new student enter the program and seniors graduate). All of these elements can drastically change the dynamics of the group and create a need for extra time

enculturating new members to the group or dealing with holes left by members who are no longer involved.

Experiences:

- Students should continue to daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality throughout this experience.
 - Students should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Students will also participate in a weekly meeting with mentor – approximately 60 minutes.
 - It is important not to underestimate the importance of a healthy relationship between the mentor and mente. Early on, this time may be focused on developing the relationship between mentor and mente. Before too long, however, this time should begin to focus on the student's holistic formation process. If this relationship takes on more of a “business” feel, as opposed to feeling like a healthy relationship, than the developmental process in the mente may be stunted. In this case the mente will not glean from the relationship what was intended, nor will they gain an appropriate understanding of what this type of relationship has the potential to be.
 - This time will also be an important time for the mentor and mente to discuss the semester/year ahead and the perceived needs and areas to focus on. The “menu” starting on page 26 can serve as a guide of potential

themes that can be explored in this time. It would not be out of the ordinary for the mente to have some sort of “assignment” in between weekly meetings. This should serve as a time to explore what the mente is learning and not a time to go through the exercises and/or readings for the first time unless a particular meeting is designed with something special in mind.

- It will also be important for the mentor and mente to talk through how the mente will daily engage in their relationship with Christ in an intentional and appropriate way. Scripture and prayer should be included in any regiment, but the approach should be shaped around how this student best experiences God. Later on it will be important that the mentor challenge the mente to explore new, less familiar, ways of experiencing God in this solo time.
- Have the mente write out their calendar for a “normal” week in the current semester. Help them to identify what a healthy, balanced, schedule looks like and help them to assess and discern whether or not their schedule might be “too full” or lack something that might keep it from being a healthy/balanced schedule. Equally important to this particular part of the experience will be the mentor’s ability to model a healthy and balanced approach to life and commitments through how they live their life before their mente.
- Students will meet weekly with their small group community – approximately 60 minutes.

- Early on in this time it will be important to help group members to feel comfortable with the other members of the group. This will come quickly for some and take longer for other individuals. The group facilitator should find creative ways for the group to get to know one another early in the semester.
- This time will also serve as a time for the group members to start the process of opening up to one another. A great way to start this is to have each member of the group share why they are participating in this holistic formation experience, as well as, some of the goals they have for the experience. This would also be a good time for each member of the small group to share their testimony or spiritual autobiography.
- Students will attend a weekend retreat as a small group with their group facilitator serving as the guide.
 - This initial retreat will be an important time for the group to continue bonding. The group facilitator will identify some creative ways for the group to work as a team over the course of the experiences (i.e. – create teams to take turns preparing the meals, set up and tear down camp, etc.)
 - This will also be a great opportunity to engage the group members in different spiritual exercises. Consider a silent hike, an afternoon of solitude within a certain distance of base camp, fasting a meal, etc. The possibilities are endless.

- It will be important to have an appropriate balance of community building and spiritually-focused experiences, as well as, some time to just hang-out and enjoy one another's company.

Habits & Patterns:

- Students will understand the importance of being a part of a community.
 - Experiences will engender a spirit of mutual accountability.
 - Experiences will engender a willingness to be vulnerable.
- Students will understand the importance of a mentoring relationship.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone invested in them for the sake of their holistic formation.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone involved in their life that is further along on the journey and able to speak words of wisdom and truth into their life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is willing to ask the "difficult questions," and genuinely listen to them.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is in prayer for them and their specific needs.
- Students will understand the need for daily engagement of one's personal relationship with Jesus.
 - Experiences will engender the habit of daily engaging and growing their relationship with Jesus.
- Students will understand the importance of being self-aware.

- Experiences will engender the value logging thoughts, feelings, lessons learned, prayers answered, etc. through the discipline of journaling.
- Experiences will engender the value of thoughtful reflection.
- Experiences will engender the value of spiritual discipline(s) in one's life.
- Experiences will engender the value of a healthy and balanced approach to daily life.
- Students will understand the value of retreat.
 - Experiences will engender the need to “get away” for spiritual self care and/or community building.
 - Experiences will engender the value of experiencing community in different contexts.

Second Semester

Focus:

- To enhance relationships.
 - In this new semester the mentor and mente should look to move their relationship to a deeper level.
 - It will be important that the mentor and mente reflect on the previous semester, assess progress made towards reaching desired outcomes, and if necessary, establish new goals and desired outcomes for this semester. It may be beneficial to create a covenant, or learning contract, that will ensure that the mentor and mente are both on the same page.

- It will also be important for the mentor and mente to occasionally revisit the mente's approach to daily engaging in their relationship with Jesus.
- In this new semester it will also be important for the members of the small group to take their relationships to a more intimate level.
 - It will be important that the group facilitator work with the group to identify some goals and desired outcomes for the new semester.
 - Together, the group can map out their journey for the upcoming months.
- To explore an "others" focus through intentional service opportunities.
- Any additional foci as discerned by mentor and mente.

Tools:

- Students will utilize the same spiritual formation journal, mentor, and small group this semester.
- Students will utilize a week long service opportunity over spring break.

Experiences:

- Students will daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality throughout this experience.
 - Students should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Students will meet weekly with their mentor – approximately 60 minutes.

- The mentor and mente will reflect on goals and desired outcomes from previous semester and assess progress made and lessons learned.
- The mentor and mente will identify any new goals and/or desired outcomes for this semester for both one-on-one time and the student's solo time.
- The mentor will have the mente write out their calendar for a "normal" week this semester. The mentor will help the mente to identify what a healthy, balanced, schedule looks like and help them to assess and discern whether or not their schedule might be "too full" or lack something that might keep it from being a healthy/balanced schedule. Equally important to this particular part of the experience will be the mentor's ability to model a healthy and balanced approach to life and commitments through how they live their life before their mente.
- Students will meet weekly with their small group – approximately 60 minutes.
 - The small group will reflect on goals and desired outcomes from previous semester and assess progress made and lessons learned.
 - The small group will identify any new goals and/or desired outcomes for this semester for the collective group.
- Students will be involved in a mission trip or outreach opportunity over the spring break – not as a small group function.
 - This initial service experience will serve to engage the student in the idea of being "other" focused.

- Students will be at various stages in their development ability to be “others” focused, but a common experience can initiate insightful conversation and reflection among group members.
- This is an opportunity for the student to view a peer (or peers) in a leadership role in a service context. Seeing peers model leadership in this kind of setting can be a very formational experience.
- This service experience is not being done in the context of the small group community for a couple of reasons:
 - Still in the first half of the college experience, it will be important to continue to build, and maintain, relationships with students outside of the small group community.
 - Week-long experiences like these are great ways to meet new people, or reconnect with acquaintances, and build meaningful relationships over a short period of time.
 - A potential danger in having the small group serve together over at this point that the members of the group can become overly focused on the group itself, and neglect other relational opportunities. This is not an intended outcome of engaging in meaningful small group community.
 - This will also allow students to have a short break from one another.

- Although relationships are probably growing and going quite well, a short break should only enhance the relationships within the small group once it is reunited.
- A danger is “over exposure” to group members such that they become overly critical of, or desensitized to, one another.

Habits & Patterns:

- Students will understand the need to be a part of a community.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual accountability.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual vulnerability.
- Students will understand the need for a mentoring relationship.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone invested in them for the sake of their holistic formation.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone involved in their life that is further along on the journey and able to speak words of wisdom and truth into their life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is willing to ask the “difficult questions,” and genuinely listen to them.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is in prayer for them.
- Students will understand the importance of daily engagement of one’s personal relationship with Jesus.

- Experiences will engender the habit of daily engaging and growing their relationship with Jesus.
- Students will understand the importance of being self-aware.
 - Experiences will engender the value of logging thoughts, feelings, lessons learned, prayers answered, etc. as a way to grow in self-awareness.
 - Experiences will engender the value of thoughtful reflection.
 - Experiences will engender the value of spiritual discipline(s) in one's life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of a healthy and balanced approach to daily life.
- Students will understand the value of service.
 - Experiences will engender the need to be "others" focused.
 - Experiences will engender the value of sharing our giftedness with others.
- Other habits and patterns may be established in the student based on the other goals/foci identified by the mentor and mente at the beginning of the semester.

Summer

Focus:

- For the student to take a personal inventory after year 1.
- For the student to explore their call to ministry.
- Additional foci as discerned by mentor and mente

Tools:

- Students will utilize the same spiritual formation journal and mentor over the course of the summer.
- Students will utilize a ministry site for a summer job or volunteer opportunity to gain meaningful ministry experience.
- Students will have the opportunity to utilize their supervisor at their ministry site as an additional mentoring figure.

Experiences:

- Students will daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality throughout this experience.
 - Students should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Students will maintain contact with their mentor in the most effective manner possible – face-to-face, phone conversations, email, letters, etc.
- Students will take a personal retreat of 2-3 days. This is meant to be a time for personal reflection and renewal. The mentor should give the student some ideas of places they could go (i.e. – camp sites, retreat centers, etc.). If the student will be in an area that the mentor is unfamiliar with for the summer and/or this retreat then the mentor and mente should spend some time researching possible settings for the student to spend their retreat.
- Students will find a place that they can “feel out” their call to ministry. If they sense a leading towards a particular field of ministry, encourage them to attempt

to gain summer employment in that field. If they have not identified a specific field of ministry, then work with them to brainstorm some possible options based on their particular strengths, gifts, and passions – 20-40 hours a week.

- Students should engage their ministry supervisor in an additional mentoring-type of relationship. This person will be someone who can really share with them about the reality of ministry in that particular context. This supervisor will also be able to talk with them about the kinds of gifts, talents, and passions that are desired for successful ministry in this field. Over the course of the summer they will hopefully be able to provide the student with opportunities to engage their gifts and talents in different ways in the ministry setting.
 - The student should write out their calendar for a “normal” week this summer and share it with their ministry supervisor. They will share with them their desire to be healthy and balanced in their approach to life and ministry. Students should ask them for any advice or input they might have as it may give them a different perspective than what they hear from you as the mentor.

Habits & Patterns:

- Students will understand the importance of maintaining connection with the mentor during time away.
- Students will understand the value of a personal retreat.
 - Experiences will engender the need for time “away.”
 - Experiences will engender the need for time in solitude.

- Experiences will engender an understanding for the need for thoughtful reflection and forward vision casting and goal setting.
- Students will understand the value of gaining ministry experience in a concentrated and focused manner.
- Students will understand the value of additional mentoring-type relationships.
- Students will understand the value of growing in self-awareness.
- Other habits and patterns based on the other goals/foci by the mentor and mente at the beginning of the summer.

Year 2

First Semester

Focus:

- To gain a greater sense of self-awareness.
- To enhance relationships.
- To participate in service as a communal group.
- Additional foci as discerned by mentor and mente.

Tools:

- Students will utilize the same spiritual formation journal, mentor, and small group this semester.
- Students will utilize a weekly service opportunity this semester.

Experiences:

- Students will daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality throughout this experience.
 - Students should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Students will meet weekly with their mentor – approximately 75 minutes.
 - This time has increased this year by 15 minutes as this relationship should have matured to a point where there will be more to talk about between mentor and mente.
 - Mentor and mente should spend time thinking about the year ahead and identifying new goals and desired outcomes for their time together.
 - Mentor and mente should also identify new goals and desired outcomes for the mente's daily walk with Jesus.
 - Have the mente write out their calendar for a “normal” week this semester. Help them to identify what a healthy, balanced, schedule looks like and how their schedule might be “too full” or lacking something that might keep it from be a healthy/balanced schedule to attempt for this semester.
- Students will meet weekly with their small group – approximately 75 minutes.
 - The small group meeting time has also been extended by 15 minutes in length as the individuals in the group will be more comfortable with one another and more willing to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences with this community.

- The group facilitator should work with the group to identify new goals and desired outcomes for their shared time together. This year it will be appropriate the group facilitator to start sharing some of the facilitation/leadership role with the group members.
- Students will attend a weekend retreat as a small group with their group facilitator sharing the role of guide with the group members.
 - This second retreat will be an important time for the group to reconnect after the summer and share about the things that God is doing in their lives.
 - This will also be a great opportunity to engage the group members in different spiritual exercises. The group facilitator and group members will work together to plan an appropriate schedule for their time together.
 - It will be important to have an appropriate balance of community building and spiritually-focused experiences, as well as, some time to just hang-out and enjoy one another's company.
- The small group facilitator will identify an outreach or ministry where the entire group can serve on a weekly basis – for 2-3 hours – on a weeknight or weekend depending on what would work best for the majority of the group.
 - This will serve as a great opportunity for group members to grow their sense of community in a new setting.
 - This will also serve to encourage the group members to assess the different gifts within a community and collectively discern how best to utilize the different gifts in the specific ministry context. This will be a

good chance for the members of the community to learn an appreciation for those gifts and talents that are different from their own. Students can learn to encourage and edify one another in the midst of further developing their own gifts and talents.

Habits & Patterns:

- Students will understand the need to be a part of a community.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual accountability.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual vulnerability.
- Students will understand the need for a mentoring relationship.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone invested in them for the sake of their holistic formation.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone involved in their life that is further along on the journey and able to speak words of wisdom and truth into their life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is willing to ask the “difficult questions,” and genuinely listen to them.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is in prayer for them.
- Students will understand the importance of daily engagement of one’s personal relationship with Jesus.
 - Experiences will engender the habit of daily engaging and growing their relationship with Jesus.
- Students will understand the importance of being self-aware.

- Experiences will engender the value of logging thoughts, feelings, lessons learned, prayers answered, etc. as a way to grow in self-awareness.
- Experiences will engender the value of thoughtful reflection.
- Experiences will engender the value of spiritual discipline(s) in one's life.
- Experiences will engender the value of a healthy and balanced approach to daily life.
- Students will understand the value of service.
 - Experiences will engender the need to be “others” focused.
 - Experiences will engender the value of sharing our giftedness with others.
- Students will understand the value of retreat.
 - Experiences will engender the need to “get away” for spiritual self care and/or community building.
 - Experiences will engender the value of experiencing community in different contexts.
- Other habits and patterns based on the other goals/foci by the mentor and mente at the beginning of the semester.

Second Semester

Focus:

- To gain a greater sense of self-awareness.
- To enhance relationships.
- To participate in service as a communal group.
- Additional foci as discerned by mentor and mente.

Tools:

- Students will utilize the same spiritual formation journal, mentor, and small group this semester.
- Students will utilize a weekly service opportunity this semester.

Experiences:

- Students will daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality throughout this experience.
 - Students should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Students will meet weekly with their mentor – approximately 75 minutes.
 - Mentor and mente should spend time thinking about the semester ahead and identifying new goals and desired outcomes for their time together.
 - Mentor and mente should also identify new goals and desired outcomes for the mente's daily walk with Jesus.
 - Have the mente write out their calendar for a “normal” week this semester. Help them to identify what a healthy, balanced, schedule looks like and how their schedule might be “too full” or lacking something that might keep it from being a healthy/balanced schedule to attempt for this semester.
- Students will meet weekly with their small group – approximately 75 minutes.
 - The group facilitator should work with group to identify new goals and desired outcomes for the time the group spends together. This semester it

will again be appropriate to share some of the facilitation/leadership role with the group members.

- The small group facilitator will discern whether or not it would benefit the group more to continue to serve in the same setting or to move on a different setting this semester – 2-3 hours a week.
- Students will be involved in a mission trip or outreach opportunity over the spring break as a small group.
 - This will give the group a chance to travel and engage in ministry as a team that has a strong sense of calling and commitment to one another. This will serve to educate the students as to the nature of “team ministry” and what it can look like.

Habits & Patterns:

- Students will understand the need to be a part of a community.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual accountability.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual vulnerability.
- Students will understand the need for a mentoring relationship.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone invested in them for the sake of their holistic formation.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone involved in their life that is further along on the journey and able to speak words of wisdom and truth into their life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is willing to ask the “difficult questions,” and genuinely listen to them.

- Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is in prayer for them.
- Students will understand the importance of daily engagement of one's personal relationship with Jesus.
 - Experiences will engender the habit of daily engaging and growing their relationship with Jesus.
- Students will understand the importance of being self-aware.
 - Experiences will engender the value of logging thoughts, feelings, lessons learned, prayers answered, etc. as a way to grow in self-awareness.
 - Experiences will engender the value of thoughtful reflection.
 - Experiences will engender the value of spiritual discipline(s) in one's life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of a healthy and balanced approach to daily life.
- Students will understand the value of service.
 - Experiences will engender the need to be "others" focused.
 - Experiences will engender the value of sharing our giftedness with others.
 - Experiences will engender the value of team ministry.
- Other habits and patterns based on the other goals/foci by the mentor and mente at the beginning of the semester.

Summer

Focus:

- For the student to take a personal inventory after year 2.
- For the student to further explore their call to ministry.

- Additional foci as discerned by mentor and mente

Tools:

- Students will utilize the same spiritual formation journal and mentor over the course of the summer.
- Students will utilize a ministry site for a summer job or volunteer opportunity to gain meaningful ministry experience.
- Students will have the opportunity to utilize their supervisor at their ministry site as an additional mentoring figure.

Experiences:

- Students will daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality throughout this experience.
 - Students should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Students will maintain contact with their mentor in the most effective manner possible – face-to-face, phone conversations, email, letters, etc.
- Students will take a personal retreat of 3-4 days. This is meant to be a time for personal reflection and renewal. The mentor should give the student some ideas of places they could go (i.e. – camp sites, retreat centers, etc.). If the student will be in an area that the mentor is unfamiliar with for the summer and/or this retreat then the mentor and mente should spend some time researching possible settings for the student to spend their retreat.

- Students will find a place that they can continue to explore their call to ministry. Hopefully by this time they have a stronger sense what direction God is leading them and they can find an internship in a preferred field of ministry. If a specific field of ministry has still not been identified then work with the student to brainstorm some possible options based on their particular strengths, gifts, and passions. A goal with this placement will be to possibly find a position in a ministry that will allow the student to stay on during the following academic year in a more limited capacity, pending it is a good fit for all parties involved – 40 hours a week.
- Students should engage their ministry supervisor in an additional mentoring-type of relationship. This person will be someone who can really share with them about the reality of ministry in that particular context. This supervisor will also be able to talk with them about the kinds of gifts, talents, and passions that are desired for successful ministry in this field. Over the course of the summer they will hopefully be able to provide the student with opportunities to engage their gifts and talents in different ways in the ministry setting.
 - The student should write out their calendar for a “normal” week this summer and share it with their ministry supervisor. They will share with them their desire to be healthy and balanced in their approach to life and ministry. Students should ask them for any advice or input they might have as it may give them a different perspective than what they hear from you as the mentor.

Habits & Patterns:

- Students will understand the importance of maintaining connection with the mentor during time away.
- Students will understand the value of a personal retreat.
 - Experiences will engender the need for time “away.”
 - Experiences will engender the need for time in solitude.
 - Experiences will engender an understanding for the need for thoughtful reflection and forward vision casting and goal setting.
- Students will understand the value of gaining ministry experience in a concentrated and focused manner.
- Students will understand the value of additional mentoring-type relationships.
- Students will understand the value of growing in self-awareness.
- Other habits and patterns based on the other goals/foci by the mentor and mente at the beginning of the summer.

Year 3**First Semester****Focus:**

- To gain a greater sense of self-awareness.
- To enhance relationships.
- To participate in ongoing service to the same community.
- Additional foci as discerned by mentor and mente.

Tools:

- Students will utilize the same spiritual formation journal, mentor, and small group this semester.
- Students will utilize a consistent ministry setting this semester.

Experiences:

- Students will daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality throughout this experience.
 - Students should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Weekly meeting with mentor – 75 minutes
 - Notice the time has not increased for this third year of meeting with the mentor. Part of this is to not over-extend the mentor as they are typically a full-time professional at the academic institution and might also be a mentor to more than one individual. As the relationship between mentor and mente continues to grow they will have to discipline themselves to find an appropriate balance between “casual” and “business.”
 - Mentor and mente should spend time thinking about the year ahead and identifying new goals and desired outcomes for their time together
 - Mentor and mente should also identify new goals and desired outcomes for the mente’s daily walk with Jesus
 - Have the mente write out their calendar for a “normal” week this semester. Help them to identify what a healthy, balanced, schedule looks like and

how their schedule might be “too full” or lacking something that might keep it from being a healthy/balanced schedule to attempt for this semester.

- Students will meet weekly with their small group – approximately 90 minutes.
 - The small group meeting time has again been extended by 15 minutes in length as the individuals in the group will be more comfortable with one another and more willing to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences with this community.
 - The group facilitator should work with the members of the group to identify new goals and desired outcomes for their shared time together.

This year the group facilitator should share even more of the facilitation/leadership role with the group members.
- Students will engage in a weekend retreat with small group led by group members – group facilitator not present.
 - This third retreat will be an important time for the group to reconnect after the summer and share about the things that God is doing in their lives.
 - This will also be a great opportunity to engage the group members in different spiritual exercises. The absence of the group facilitator will challenge the students to work together to assure this is a meaningful experience.
 - It will be important to have an appropriate balance of community building and spiritually-focused experiences, as well as, some time to just hang-out and enjoy one another's company.

- Students will be involved in a weekly outreach or ministry, preferably with the same organization that you were involved with over the previous summer – approximately 10-15 hours a week.

Habits & Patterns:

- Students will understand the need to be a part of a community.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual accountability.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual vulnerability.
- Students will understand the need for a mentoring relationship.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone invested in them for the sake of their holistic formation.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone involved in their life that is further along on the journey and able to speak words of wisdom and truth into their life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is willing to ask the “difficult questions,” and genuinely listen to them.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is in prayer for them.
- Students will understand the importance of daily engagement of one’s personal relationship with Jesus.
 - Experiences will engender the habit of daily engaging and growing their relationship with Jesus.

- Students will understand the importance of being self-aware.
 - Experiences will engender the value of logging thoughts, feelings, lessons learned, prayers answered, etc. as a way to grow in self-awareness.
 - Experiences will engender the value of thoughtful reflection.
 - Experiences will engender the value of spiritual discipline(s) in one's life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of a healthy and balanced approach to daily life.
- Students will understand the value of service.
 - Experiences will engender the need to be "others" focused.
 - Experiences will engender the value of sharing our giftedness with others.
- Students will understand the value of retreat.
 - Experiences will engender the need to "get away" for spiritual self care and/or community building.
 - Experiences will engender the value of experiencing community in different contexts.
- Other habits and patterns based on the other goals/foci by the mentor and mente at the beginning of the semester.

Second Semester

Focus:

- To gain a greater sense of self-awareness.
- To enhance relationships.
- To participate in ongoing service to the same community.
- Additional foci as discerned by mentor and mente

Tools:

- Students will utilize the same spiritual formation journal, mentor, and small group this semester.
- Students will utilize a consistent ministry setting this semester.

Experiences:

- Students will daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality throughout this experience.
 - Students should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Students will meet weekly with their mentor – approximately 75 minutes.
 - Mentor and mente will spend time thinking about the semester ahead and identifying new goals and desired outcomes for their time together.
 - Mentor and mente will also identify new goals and desired outcomes for the mente's daily walk with Jesus.
 - Have the mente write out their calendar for a "normal" week this semester. Help them to identify what a healthy, balanced, schedule looks like and how their schedule might be "too full" or lacking something that might keep it from being a healthy/balanced schedule to attempt for this semester.
- Students will meet weekly with their small group – approximately 90 minutes.

- Group facilitator should work with group to identify new goals and desired outcomes for the time the group spends together. This year the group facilitator should share even more of the facilitation/leadership role with the group members.
- Students will be involved with local outreach or ministry, preferably with the same organization as first semester – 10-15 hours a week.
- Students will engage in an intensive outreach or ministry experience with the organization that they are currently involved with during spring break – solo experience.

Habits & Patterns:

- Students will understand the need to be a part of a community.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual accountability.
 - Experiences will engender the importance of mutual vulnerability.
- Students will understand the need for a mentoring relationship.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone invested in them for the sake of their holistic formation.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone involved in their life that is further along on the journey and able to speak words of wisdom and truth into their life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is willing to ask the “difficult questions,” and genuinely listen to them.
 - Experiences will engender the value of having someone who is in prayer for them.

- Students will understand the importance of daily engagement of one’s personal relationship with Jesus.
 - Experiences will engender the habit of daily engaging and growing their relationship with Jesus.
- Students will understand the importance of being self-aware.
 - Experiences will engender the value of logging thoughts, feelings, lessons learned, prayers answered, etc. as a way to grow in self-awareness.
 - Experiences will engender the value of thoughtful reflection.
 - Experiences will engender the value of spiritual discipline(s) in one’s life.
 - Experiences will engender the value of a healthy and balanced approach to daily life.
- Students will understand the value of service.
 - Experiences will engender the need to be “others” focused.
 - Experiences will engender the value of sharing our giftedness with others.
- Other habits and patterns based on the other goals/foci by the mentor and mente at the beginning of the semester.

Summer

Focus:

- For the student to take personal inventory after year 3.
- For the student to wrestle with the question of “what’s next?” The student should create a plan to continue their holistic formation in a new setting.
- Additional foci as discerned by mentor and mente.

Tools:

- Students will utilize the same spiritual formation journal and mentor over the course of the summer.
- Students will utilize their full-time ministry position to further explore their holistic formation and development.
- Students will have the opportunity to utilize their supervisor at their ministry site as an additional, or new, mentoring figure.

Experiences:

- Graduates will daily engage in their relationship with Jesus.
 - Duration of times will vary, but should grow in focus and intentionality.
 - Graduates should be encouraged to be creative in their approach, setting, etc., as they look to deepen this relationship.
- Graduates can maintain contact with their mentor in the most effective manner possible – face-to-face, phone conversations, email, letters, etc. if both mentor and mentee decide to continue in their relationship. It will be important for both to talk new expectations in regards to this relationship now that the student has graduated and will possibly relocate.
- Graduates will take a weeklong spiritual retreat with their small group, to be led by their small group facilitator. This time is meant to be an opportunity for personal reflection and renewal, as well as, communal reflection and closure.
- If the graduate has not already identified their first full-time ministry setting then this would be the time to do it. Depending on their proximity to campus you may or may not still be a viable resource for them in this process.

- As they transition out of the academic setting and into their first full-time job – probably without any of the people that have been a part of their community for the past three years – it will be important that they start to put into practice many of the habits and patterns that they have acquired over the past three years.
 - The graduate should start by identifying someone who can play a mentoring-type of role in their life. This may or may not be someone new.
 - After they have had a chance to get into their new community it will be important for them to identify people that might be interested in forming a small group. Even better, if there is already a small group in existence that can fulfill many of the needs that they have, than they can ask if they can join.
- Graduates should engage their ministry supervisor as a new, or additional, mentor. This person will be someone who can really share with them about the reality of ministry in that particular context. This supervisor will also be able to talk with them about the kinds of gifts, talents, and passions that are desired for successful ministry in this field. Over the course of the time they minister together, the supervisor will hopefully be able to provide the graduate with opportunities to engage their gifts and talents in different ways in the ministry setting.
 - The graduate should write out their calendar for a “normal” week this summer and share it with their ministry supervisor. They will share with them their desire to be healthy and balanced in their approach to life and

ministry. Graduates should ask them for any advice or input they might have as it may give them a different perspective than what they hear from you as the mentor.

Habits & Patterns:

- Graduates will understand the importance of maintaining connection with the mentor during time away.
- Graduates will understand the value of a communal retreat.
 - Experiences will engender the need for time “away.”
 - Experiences will engender the need for time in community.
 - Experiences will engender an understanding for the need for thoughtful reflection and forward vision casting and goal setting.
- Graduates will understand the value of gaining ministry experience in a concentrated and focused manner.
- Graduates will understand the value of additional mentoring-type relationships.
- Graduates will understand the value of growing in self-awareness.
- Other habits and patterns based on the other goals/foci by the mentor and mente at the beginning of the summer.

A Menu of Options

What follows is a “menu” of various foci, themes, readings, experiences, self-assessment tools, etc. that a mentor and mente can choose from to help tailor this process to the needs and desired outcomes as determined by both mentor and mente. For this to truly be a holistic spiritual formation and leadership development experience, the mentor and mente must attempt to engage a number of the following themes/foci according to the

mente's needs and ultimate desired outcomes. This menu will include much of the relevant material as of the posting of this dissertation project, but by no means should be considered exhaustive. This holistic formation model, as well as the corresponding menu, has been assembled with the college-age student who senses God's calling into full-time ministry in mind. It will be important for anyone considering this model that falls outside of this intended group to consider the need for possible modifications to the model to better fit the individual's stage of life, field of ministry, and desired outcomes.

Menu Packages

“Packages” can be modified if agreed on by both mentor and mente

Theme: **Spiritual Journey**

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Does God Believe in You?* Keith Anderson
- *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, M. Robert Mulholland Jr.
- *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, John Ortberg
- *The Life You've Always Wanted*, John Ortberg
- *Leap Over a Wall: Earthly Spirituality for Everyday Christians*, Eugene H. Peterson
- *In His Image: Reflecting Christ in Everyday Life*, Michael J. Wilkins

- *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here for?*
Rick Warren
- *The River Within: Loving God, Living Passionately*, Jeff Imbach
- *Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God*, Brennan Manning
- *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey*, Brian D. McLaren
- *Spiritual Mentoring*, Keith Anderson & Randy Reese
- Others as determined by mentor and mente

Experiences:

- Students will seek out other Christians to hear their story.
- Students will share their faith story with others.
- Students will engage in spiritually focused conversations.
- Students will attend regular chapel and church services.
- Others experiences as determined by the mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a capacity to experience God.
- Experiences will engender a capacity to love God and love other people.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Spiritual Self-Care**

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God*, Gary Thomas
- *Celebration of the Disciplines*, Richard Foster
- *Prayer*, Richard Foster
- *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard
- *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*, Kenneth Boa
- *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*, Jeannette A. Bakke
- *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*, Marjorie J. Thompson
- *Leading from the Inside Out: The Art of Self-Leadership*, Samuel D. Rima
- *Too Busy Not to Pray: Slowing Down to Be with God*, Bill Hybels
- *Hearing God's Voice*, Henry and Richard Blackaby
- *Listening to God in Times of Choice: The Art of Discerning God's Will*, Gordon T. Smith
- *The Way of the Heart*, Henri J. M. Nouwen
- *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence

- *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*, Dallas Willard
- *Working with Angels: The shape of pastoral integrity*, Eugene H. Peterson
- Other readings as determined by mentor and mente.

Possible Tools:

- *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* – spiritual temperament assessment
- *Experiencing God Day-by-Day: The Devotional and Journal*, Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby
- *Celebrating the Disciplines: A Journal Workbook to Accompany Celebration of Discipline*, Richard J. Foster and Kathryn A. Yanni
- Other tools as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will be involved in a mentoring relationship.
- Students will participate in a small group community.
- Students will take spiritual retreats.
- Students will attend regular chapel and church services.
- Students will engage in spiritual disciplines.
- Students will have spiritually focused conversations.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender an understanding for continual growth and spiritual self-care in the life of the committed Christian.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Faith & Theology

Tools:*Possible Readings:*

- *Know Why You Believe*, Paul E. Little
- *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief & Behavior During the University Years*, Steven Garber
- *Faith Thinking: The Dynamics of Christian Theology*, Trevor Hart
- *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*, Richard J. Foster
- *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others*, Scot McKnight
- *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*, Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke
- *Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God*, Stanley J. Grenz & Roger E. Olson
- *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*, Lee Strobel
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will take a class on the subject of Christian Theology.
- Students will attend chapel programs and church services with an open expectation of hearing from God during that time.
- Students will identify and pursue in-depth Biblical study in particular areas of interest of questioning.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a willingness to put in the time and effort to search for answers to spiritual questions and grow your faith.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Self-Awareness

Tools:*Possible Readings:*

- *True Self/False Self: Unmasking the Spirit Within*, M. Basil Pennington
- *Awareness*, Anthony DeMello
- *The Courage to Be Yourself: A Woman's Guide to Emotional Strength and Self-Esteem*, Sue Patton Thoele
- *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*, Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Possible Assessment Tools:

- Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator
- D.I.S.C. – Sharpening Your People Skills
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will create a personal questionnaire and ask ten people who they think know them the best to take it. Students will ask them for their honest feedback. Students will also complete the questionnaire themselves. They should expect other people's answers do differ from their own. Students should be willing to have difficult conversations, without being defensive, to get clarification and a deeper understanding when necessary.
- Student will take a solo retreat for an extended period of time. They will journal their thoughts throughout the experience. After they return, they can explore their findings with their mentor for further insight.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender an ability to learn about self through self-examination, reflection and other people.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Dealing with the Past

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Love*,
Henri Nouwen
- *The Healing Path: How the Hurts in your Past Can Lead you to a
More Abundant Life*, Dr. Dan B. Allender
- Others as determined by mentor and mente

Other Resources:

- The university counselor.
- The student's family.

Experiences:

- If possible, the student should talk with members of their family to explore particular issues or influences that have impacted their life.
- Students should meet with a counselor. They should go in with a desire to explore the depths of their personal and family life and have an openness to whether or not the counselor might want to have more sessions with them to further explore their personal and family life.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a need to be emotionally healthy.
- Experiences will engender a capacity to share deep and personal issues with someone who can help lead them towards healing.

- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Family of Origin**

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Family-of-Origin Therapy and Diversity*, Russell H. Searight
- *Your Family Voyage: Discover how the Patterns Set by your Family of Origin Affect your Life Today*, Roger P. Hillerstrom
- Others as determined by mentor and mente

Other Resources:

- The university counselor.

Experiences:

- If possible, the student will talk with members of their family to explore particular issues or influences that have impacted their life.
- Students will meet with a counselor. They should go in with a desire to explore the depths of their personal and family life and have an openness to whether or not the counselor might want to have more sessions with them to further explore their personal and family life.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a need to be emotionally healthy.
- Experiences will engender a capacity to share deep and personal issues with someone who can help lead them towards healing.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Strengths**

Tools:*Possible Readings:*

- *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Possible Assessment Tools:

- Strength's Finder – online assessment
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will practice utilizing their strengths in obvious, and not so obvious, contexts.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a capacity to utilize gifts in every situation possible.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Marriage and Ministry**

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Do Yourself a Favor: Love your Wife*, H. Page Williams
- *Good Christians, Good Husbands?: Leaving a Legacy in Marriage & Ministry*, Doreen Moore
- *The Power of a Praying Husband*, Stormie Omartian
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will identify and meet with ministers that seem to do it “right.” Students will seek opportunities to see the marriage in action and ask questions about what has made it a “healthy” and “balanced” relationship to be a part of.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender the ability to identify practices and habits that can lead to a healthy marriage relationship - that has an appropriate view of ministry inside and outside of the home and the role that the spouse plays in ministry in the external setting.
- Experiences will engender the ability to identify people who are “doing it right.”

- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Family and Ministry

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *The Pastor's Family: the Challenges of Family Life and Pastoral Responsibilities*, Daniel L. Langford
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will identify and meet with ministers that seem to do it “right.” Students will seek opportunities to see the family in action and ask questions about what has made it a “healthy” and “balanced” family system to be a part of.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender the ability to identify practices and habits that can lead to a healthy family system - that has an appropriate view of ministry inside and outside of the family unit and the role that family plays in ministry in the external setting.
- Experiences will engender the ability to identify people who are “doing it right.”
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Purity

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Quest for Love: True Stories of Passion and Purity (Rules for Christian Singles!),* Elisabeth Elliot
- *Every Man's Battle: Every Man's Guide to Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time,* Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Other Resources:

- *xxx.church.com – online filtering software.*

Experiences:

- Students will identify an accountability partner.
- Students will share specific issues with their mentor and ask for counsel.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a desire for sexual purity.
- Experiences will engender a desire for healthy relationships.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Vocation**

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Let Your Life Speak*, Parker Palmer
- *Hearing God's Voice*, Henry and Richard Blackaby
- *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*,
Os Guinness
- *If You Want to Walk on Water You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*,
John Ortberg
- *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, Parker J.
Palmer
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Possible Tools:

- *Called & Accountable: God's Purpose for Every Believer*, Henry
T. Blackaby and Kerry L. Skinner (workbook)
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will identify specific settings where they can explore their
sense of calling.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a capacity to love God and love others.
- Experiences will engender a sense that God has created you with specific gifts, passions, and talents because he wants to use you in specific ways.
- Experiences will engender an understanding that the context in which we live out our calling is something that can change; therefore we should be aware of the direction God is leading us.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Discerning God's will**

Tools:*Possible Readings:*

- *Listening to God in Times of Choice*, Gordon T. Smith
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will practice the discipline of spiritual direction with their mentor, spiritually sensitive friends, or someone identified as a spiritual guide/director.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a capacity to listen for the voice of God.
- Experiences will engender a capacity to wait on God and his timing.

- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Leadership

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Upside Down: The Paradox of Servant Leadership*, Stacy T. Rinehart
- *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, Gary L. McIntosh & Samuel D. Rima, Sr.
- *Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the Secrets of Servant Leadership from the Life of Christ*, C. Gene Wilkes
- *Future Leader*, Viv Thomas
- *Which Jesus?: Choosing Between Love and Power*, Tony Campolo
- *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence*, Bill Thrall
- *Becoming a Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others*, John C. Maxwell
- *Leading from the Inside Out*, Samuel D. Rima
- *A Work of Heart: Understanding how God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, Reggie McNeal
- *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*, Henri J. M. Nouwen
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will look for opportunities to take on leadership roles in different contexts and settings.
- Students will look for opportunities to serve other people.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a student's capacity to lead a group in a project or task.
- Experiences will engender a student's ability to communicate vision, mission, directions, encouragement, and constructive feedback to a group.
- Experiences will engender a student's understanding of service as leadership and challenging them to integrate "traditional" leadership roles and a service approach.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Spiritual Gifts**

Tools:*Possible Assessment Tools:*

- Spiritual Gifts Assessment by Kenneth Kinghorn
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will find an environment that will allow them to “practice” and develop their spiritual gifts through regular use.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender an understanding of their unique spiritual gifting and how God may want to use their gifts in the lives of others.
- Experiences will engender an understanding of the importance of other spiritual gifts and the unique role that they play in completing a healthy community context.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Emotions & Suffering**

Tools:*Possible Readings:*

- *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God*, Dan B. Allender & Tremper Longman III
- Others as determined by mentor and mente

Possible Tools:

- The university counseling staff.

Experiences:

- Students will meet with a counselor. Students should go in with a desire to explore the depths of their life and an openness to whether or

not the counselor might want to have more sessions to further explore their life with them.

- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a need to be emotionally healthy.
- Experiences will engender a capacity to share deep and personal issues with someone who can help lead them towards healing.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Health, Fitness & Nutrition

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- Faith and Fitness Magazine
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Possible Tools:

- www.faithandfitness.net
- The university nutritionist.
- The university personal trainer.
- The university fitness instructor.

Experiences:

- Students will establish a regular recreation and exercise routine that meets their needs, goals and desired outcomes.

- Students will establish a healthy diet that meets their needs, goals and desired outcomes.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a need to be healthy and physically fit.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Community

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will get involved in a mentoring relationship.
- Students will get involved in a small group community.
- Students will go on community-focused retreats.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender the need to be in relationships with others.

- Experiences will engender the potential to learn from someone further along on the journey.
- Experiences will engender the potential to learn from peers who are engaged in a similar faith journey during a similar season of life.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: Service

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, Henri J. M. Nouwen
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will volunteer at their church.
- Students will volunteer at an outreach or service organization that seems to resonate with their passions or interests.
- Students will find a place to invest their passions, gifts, and talents for an extended length of time.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender a sense of “others-centeredness.”
- Experiences will engender a better sense of calling.
- Experiences will engender the development of their passions, talents and gifts.

- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Evangelism**

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *Reaching Generation Next: Effective Evangelism in Today's Culture*, Lewis A. Drummond
- *More Ready than you Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix*, Brian D. McLaren
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will share their faith story with family, friends, and anyone who is willing to listen.
- Students will write their spiritual autobiography – identify some of the key mile-markers, influencers, challenges and people that have made up their faith journey to date. Students can post this to their personal website.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender an openness and willingness to share their faith with others.
- Experiences will engender an ability to identify key elements in life that serve to shape one's spiritual development.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Theme: **Culture/Postmodernism**

Tools:

Possible Readings:

- *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church*,
Leonard Sweet, Brian D. McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer
- *A Primer on Postmodernism*, Stanley J. Grenz
- *Christ and Culture*, H. Richard Niebuhr
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Experiences:

- Students will participate in an “Urban Reality Tour.”
 - The mentor will set up a day-long experience that takes the student(s) all over the nearest “big city,” in which the students can use public transportation, visit with local agencies that invest in the community, and talk with various people groups within the community to get a better sense of the community culture.
 - Students should also interface with college-age students from that community and identify what, if anything, is different about their experience
- Students will engage in cross-generational conversations.
 - Students should have conversations with their parents, grand parents, and great grand parents (if able) and ask them what life was like when they were in college. Ask

them what they think about the world today and what they think are the biggest issues for today's college students to address in their own life and the world.

- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Habits & Patterns:

- Experiences will engender the ability to learn about and understand cultures within different contexts.
- Others as determined by mentor and mente.

Conclusions

This dissertation addressed a model of how to help students to “*start well*” in life, and ministry, such that they can form *healthy patterns and habits* that will *promote growth and fruit* throughout their lives, as well as “*finish well*” without having to deal with issues of *burn-out or moral failure*. A three-year holistic formation model was created for the emerging Christian leaders that will “begin the process” of spiritual formation for the leader and equip them with “tools” and “practices” that will enable them to continue in their holistic formation throughout their lives.

**APPENDIX 1 – A TOOL FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS' READINESS FOR
INVOLVEMENT IN THIS KIND OF PROGRAM**

Name_____ **Email**_____ **Box#**_____

Major_____ **Minor**_____ **Age**_____

Year in School_____ **Campus Ex.**_____ **Cell#**_____

Please describe your desires to be a part of this program. What would you hope to get from being a part of this experience?

Please describe your spiritual journey thus far in your life. What have been some of the significant milestones you have experienced on your journey thus far?

If you can, please describe the sense of calling the Lord has placed on your life. What direction do you believe He is leading you?

What do you anticipate bringing to this experience? Define the level of commitment you are willing to give to this experience.

What areas in your life and/or spiritual journey to you know need attention?

Have you taken the Myers-Briggs personality assessment? If so, please list our moniker and describe how you have seen this played out in your life.

Have you taken the Strengths Finder assessment? If so, please list your strengths and how you have seen this played out in your life.

Based on what you know about yourself right now, propose a plan you would like to follow over the next three years with a mentor.

Do you have a mentor in mind? Have you talked with this person?

Is there anything else you would like to mention about yourself in regards to this potential experience?

APPENDIX 2 – SAMPLE RECRUITMENT LETTER TO FACULTY AND STAFF

Date

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing you today about in incredible opportunity for some of our students.

As you may or may not know, we have recently created a holistic formation experience for students who sense God's call into a life of full-time ministry. This is a three-year experience that includes elements of personal discipleship, mentoring relationships, small group community and service in a variety of settings. It uses the Greatest Commandments as a framework within which to shape each student's personal and communal experience. This experience is something we believe will serve to engrain important habits and patterns in the lives of these emerging Christian leaders such that they will be equipped to start well and end well as faithful leaders. Ultimately, our desire is that these students will have the tools they need to lead balanced and healthy personal and professional lives without having to deal with the pain of personal burnout and/or moral failure.

So, why am I writing you? I have three reasons.

- 1) I need your help in identifying potential students for this experience. Do you know a student that senses God calling him or her into full-time ministry? If so, please pass along their name to me and I will make sure they receive encouragement to check out this opportunity.
- 2) With a program that is as far reaching as this program has the potential of being, it is important that have a number of high quality mentors available to invest in the lives of these students. Are you willing? Do you think this is a way that God may want to use you as you live out the call that he has placed on your life? Please contact me if you have a desire to participate in this capacity. If you are not sure if this is right for you, contact me and we can talk through what this might entail and how it may, or may not, be a good fit for you.
- 3) Finally, we are also in need of a few individuals who would be willing to facilitate weekly small group times as members of this experience come together for fellowship, mutual edification and encouragement, as well as a time for accountability and prayer. Again, if you believe this might be an area that the Lord might want to use you in the lives of these young people, please contact me.

I thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration about this unique experience. This is an exciting time at our institution and I hope that you will join us as we prayer for these emerging Christian leaders!

Yours,

Campus Pastor

APPENDIX 3 – A TOOL FOR PERIODIC (RE)ASSESSING AN INDIVIDUAL'S COMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS

** This list is not exhaustive, but should serve as a good start to getting both the mente and mentor thinking about their investment in one another, as well as the overall process.

A. Questions for the mente:

- What have been significant experiences for you over the past few months?
- How much time/focus have you given to this process on a daily/weekly basis?
- How much have you allowed your mentor to get to know you?
- How much have you allowed members of your small group to get to know you?
- What have you learned about yourself over the past few months?
- What area(s) do you feel like you have grown in?
- What area(s) have you become more aware of your own sense of need? What do you propose you do about it?
- Where is your interest level in this experience/process today?
- Where do you want to go from here in the process?

B. Questions for the mentor:

- How have you intentionally invested in your mente over the past few months?
- How well have you modeled a life of health and balance to your mente?
- Have you been faithful to pray for your mente over the past few months?
- Do you feel like you continue to grow in your relationship with your mente?
- What significant experiences can you identify in the life of your mente over the past few months? How have the two of you come together to explore these experiences?
- What area(s) has the mente grown in? How have you helped him/her to explore this area?
- What area(s) have you identified in the mente's life that are in need of attention? How have you discussed this with them? What course of action do you think should be taken? Are you willing to do what is necessary to walk with your mente in the next phase of their experience?
- How well have you done at letting your mente get to know you?
- Where is your interest level in your mente and their experience/process today?

These questions can be explored in any number of ways, but ultimately the answers should be shared between the mentor and mente. IF this relationship has become

strained, then it would be important to share the answers to these questions with the facilitator of the program to (re)evaluate the mentor/mente relationship.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allender, Dan B. & Tremper Longman III. *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994.
- Allender, Dan B. *The Healing Path: How the Hurts in Your Past Can Lead You to a More Abundant Life*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: WaterBrook Press, 1999.
- Arnett, J.J. "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development for the Late Teens Through the Twenties." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 5 (May 2000): 469-80.
- Bakke, Jeannette A. *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000.
- Bilezikian, Gilbert. *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.
- Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Collier Books, 1963.
- . *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship*. New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1954.
- . *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 1966.
- Bruce, A. B. *The Training of the Twelve: Timeless Principles for Leadership Development*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1988.
- Campolo, Tony. *Which Jesus?: Choosing Between Love and Power*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2002.
- Clarke, Adam, "Commentary on Genesis 37." *The Adam Clarke Commentaries*. <http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=037.html> (accessed September 18, 2004).
- , "Commentary on Genesis 39." *The Adam Clarke Commentaries*. <http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=039.html> (accessed September 22, 2004).

- , “Commentary on I Samuel 24.” *The Adam Clarke Commentaries*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=1sa&chapter=024.html>
 (accessed September 28, 2004).
- , “Commentary on I Samuel 26.” *The Adam Clarke Commentaries*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=1sa&chapter=026.html>
 (accessed September 28, 2004).
- , “Commentary on II Samuel 11.” *The Adam Clarke Commentaries*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=011.html>
 (accessed September 28, 2004).
- , “Commentary on II Samuel 12.” *The Adam Clarke Commentaries*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=012.html>
 (accessed September 28, 2004).
- , “Commentary on II Samuel 2.” *The Adam Clarke Commentaries*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=002.html>
 (accessed September 28, 2004).
- , “Commentary on II Samuel 5.” *The Adam Clarke Commentaries*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=005.html>
 (accessed September 28, 2004).
- Coffman, James Burton, “Commentary on 2 Samuel 11.” *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=011.html>
 (accessed August 9, 2005).
- , “Commentary on 2 Samuel 12.” *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=012.html>
 (accessed August 9, 2005).
- , “Commentary on 2 Samuel 5.” *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=005.html>
 (accessed August 9, 2005).
- , “Commentary on Genesis 37.” *Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*.
<http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=037.html>
 (accessed August 9, 2005).

- , “Commentary on Genesis 39.” In Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament.
<<http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=039>>.
- Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1987, 1998.
- Collins, Kenneth J. *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- . *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Dean, Kendra Creasy. “Something to Live for: What Adolescents Want.” *Christian Century* 121, no. 5 (9 Mar 2004): 9-10.
- Drummond, Lewis A. *Reaching Generation Next: Effective Evangelism in Today's Culture*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2002.
- Dumestre, Marcel J., “Postfundamentalism and the Christian Intentional Learning Community.” *Religious Education* 90, no. 2 (Spring 1995). <http://0-web33.epnet.com.catalog.georgefox.edu/citation> (accessed February 20, 2005).
- Falbo, Mark C. “Community Service and Social Transformation: The Contribution of Religious Education to the Health of the American Polis.” *Religious Education* 93, no. 2 (Spring 1998). <http://0-eb1.epnet.com.catalog.georgefox.edu/citation> (accessed February 20, 2005).
- Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1988.
- . *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.
- Garber, Steven. *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief & Behavior During the University Years*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Gaustad, Edwin Scott. *A Religious History of America, New Revised Edition*. New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990.
- Grenz, Stanley J. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996.
- Grenz, Stanley J., and John R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

- Groothuis, Rebecca Merrill. *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1997.
- Gunter, Stephen W., Scott J. Jones. *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Guthrie, Stan. "The Evangelical Scandal," *Christianity Today* 49, no. 4 (April 2005).
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/004/32.70.html> (accessed February 8, 2005).
- Hardman, Keith. *Issues in American Christianity: Primary Sources with Introductions*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1993.
- Hart, Archibald D. *The Hidden Link Between Adrenaline and Stress: The Exciting New Breakthrough That Helps You Overcome Stress Damage*. United States of America: W Publishing Group, 1995.
- Hart, Trevor. *Faith Thinking: The Dynamics of Christian Theology*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
- Hettinga, Jan David. *Follow Me: Experience the Loving Leadership of Jesus*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1996.
- The Holy Bible*. 1973. Translated by International Bible Society. New International Version. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1984.
- Imbach, Jeff. *The River Within: Loving God, Living Passionately*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1998.
- InTouch Ministries. "Susanna Wesley: A Mother Who Made a Difference." *Spiritual Journeys of Great Christians*.
http://www.intouch.org/myintouch/mighty/portraits/susanna_wesley_213595.html
 (accessed March 11, 2003).
- Lane, Belden C. "Holy Silence." *Christian Century* 118, no. 29 (October 24 2001): 24-27.
- Little, Paul E. *Know Why You Believe: A Clear Affirmation of the Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1987.
- Lowery, John Wesley. "The Millennials Come to Campus." Interview with William Strauss. *About Campus* 6, no. 3 (July-August 2001): 6-7.
- Lueking, F. Dean. "Gaining One's Soul." *Christian Century* 115, no. 30 (November 4 1998): 1019.

- Marsden, George M. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991.
- Mass, Robin. "Accountable Discipleship: Methodism's Quest to Retrieve a Tradition." In *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, ed. Robin & Gabriel O'Donnell Mass, O.P., 320-30. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- McIntosh, Gary L., & Samuel D. Rima. *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*. Grand Rapids, Mi: Baker Books, 1997.
- McKnight, Scot. *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others*. Brewster, Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2004.
- Miller, Wendy J. *Jesus, Our Spiritual Guide: A Pilgrimage Through the Gospels*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2004.
- Mouw, Richard J. "The Missionary Location of the North American Churches." In *Confident Witness - Changing World*, ed. Craig Van Gelder, 3-15. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.
- National Center for Health Statistics. *Health, United States, 2004: With Chartbook and Trends in the Health of Americans*. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/has/has04.pdf>. (accessed February 12, 2005).
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989.
- Newton, Fred B. "The New Student." *About Campus* November-December 2000: 8-15.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *In the Name of Jesus*. New York, NY: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1989.
- . *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. New York, NY: DoubleDay, 1975.
- Outler, Albert C. "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in John Wesley." In *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage*, ed. Thomas C. & Leicester R. Longden Oden, 22-37. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985.
- O'Gorman, Robert T. "Effect of Theological Orientation on Christian Education in Spiritual Formation: Toward a Postmodern Model of Spirituality." *Review & Expositor* 98, no. 3 (Sum 2001): 351-68.

- Parks, Sharon Daloz. *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000.
- Pennington, M. Basil. *True Self/False Self: Unmasking the Spirit Within*. New York, NY: Crossroad Pub., 2000.
- Peterson, Eugene H. *Leap Over a Wall: Earthly Spirituality for Everyday Christians*. New York, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997.
- . "Spirit Quest: Five Items of Counsel for a Soul-Sick Culture and God-Starved Christians." *Christianity Today*, November 8 1993, 27-30.
- Reasoner, Vic. "Spiritual Geometry: Evaluating the Wesleyan Quadrilateral." *The Armenian Magazine* 14, no. 2 (Fall 1996).
http://wesley.nnu.edu/arminianism/arminianmag/14-2_96.htm (accessed March 12, 2003).
- Schmidt, Paul F. "The Character Assessment Scale: A New Tool for the Counselor." *Journal of Pastoral Care* 34, no. 2 (June 1980): 76-83.
- Slaatte, Howard A. *A Purview of Wesley's Theology*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2000.
- Smith, John. "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral." *Religion & Spirituality*. November 15, 2000.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/alabaster/a464933> (accessed March 23, 2003).
- Swain, Larry. "Churches Stressing Health and Fitness." *Christian Century* 121, no. 7 (April 6 2004): 13.
- Sweet, Leonard. *Class Discussion*. Portland, OR: George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Jan, 2004.
- Sweet, Leonard, Brain D. McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer. *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003.
- Thomas, Gary. *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000.
- Thomas, Viv. *Future Leader*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 1999.
- Thompson, Marjorie, J. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

- Thorsen, Donald A. D. *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1990.
- Ward, W. Reginald and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *The Works of John Wesley. Journals and Diaries*, vol. 18. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988.
- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here for?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Watson, David Lowes. *Accountable Discipleship: Handbook for Covenant Discipleship Groups in the Congregation*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1984.
- . “Methodist Spirituality.” In *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader*, ed. Kenneth J. Collins, 172-213. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.
- Wesley, John. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1777.
- Wilkes, C. Gene. *Jesus on Leadership*. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, INC., 1998.
- Wilkins, Michael J. *In His Image: Reflecting Christ in Everyday Life*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1997.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988.
- Wray, Judith Hock. “Jesus, the Sabbath and Rest.” *Living Pulpit* 7, no. 2 (Ap-Je 1998): 10-11.