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A STRATEGY FOR BUILDING CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER
AT THE WAY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP THROUGH LECTIONARY PREACHING

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ABSTRACT

A Strategy for Building Christlike Character at The Way Christian Fellowship through Lectionary Preaching

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The purpose of this ministry focus paper is to implement a strategy for the development of personal spiritual transformation traits among parish members of The Way Christian Fellowship in Vista, California through preaching, utilizing the traditional church year, and the common lectionary. The paper will contain three major sections. The first section of the project will address the cultural landscape, profile, and analysis of the Vista area and The Way Christian Fellowship (hereafter, The Way), which is affiliated with the Anglican Mission. The Way is a new church plant that is liturgical, sacramental, evangelical, and charismatic. The parish is also intentional in developing the church around spiritual practices instead of church programs. The first section of the paper will offer a broad summary of the parish and its Anglican ethos, describing the church's people, its diocese, and its history, including its contemporary values and beliefs.

The second section will develop the critical biblical and theological assumptions for the development of Christlike character. The conclusions drawn from the theological reflections based on the literature review will weave the three components of character formation, lectionary utilization, and preaching into an integrated whole in developing a strategy for The Way.

The concluding section will address the strategic role of the rector as the chief liturgical servant leader and primary pastor-teacher of the parish concerning the communication and transference in word and deed of Christlike character. Utilizing the lectionary as a model for preaching, this section will identify themes concerning the specific text used through the church year that will assist the rector in identifying practical life applications for his or her parishioners.

Theological Mentor: Kurt Fredrickson, PhD

Words: 269

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INTRODUCTION

The very title of this doctoral project sounds impossible. Even planning such a strategy presents quite a challenge. God laughs when people make plans but also corrects them when they are not prepared for what is coming (Proverbs 16:9; 24:27; 27:1).¹ The average church usually does not plan a strategy, as many believe that spontaneity is the way of the Spirit. The goal of building Christlike character in parishioners at a new church plant would sound peculiar to many. First, there is an abundance books instructing church planters on how to start a church, and most of them are focused on the mechanics of pre-launch and launch duties for the entrepreneur. Of course, they generally cover vision, mission, and purpose with a strong emphasis on the instrumental view of church; but few of them put the highest priority of ontological issues like Christlike character. In addition, as the primary planter of The Way Christian Fellowship (hereafter, The Way) in Vista, California, I am in my mid-fifties, and as such, I may not relate as well to the younger generations.

This ministry focus paper will present a strategy of building Christlike character at The Way through an ancient method of lectionary preaching. One way that Christians can mature is by verse-by-verse exposition through a book of the Bible. Preaching that does not implement a lectionary approach is often unhelpful and even abrasive to today's churchgoers. Today's congregations need videos, sound bites, and cleverly worded phrases by preachers that can make them laugh, cry, or do both.

¹ All biblical references will be taken from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

The ministry challenge of building Christlike character within any parish can be done successfully and perhaps even more effectively through lectionary preaching than any other current model of preaching. Preaching is not the only tool in building Christlike character, but it is a primary tool that Jesus and his apostles used, and followers of Christ have used for nearly two thousand years. The purpose of this project is to implement a strategy that was used in synagogues and churches during the first century for the development of modern-day spiritual transformation traits among parish members of The Way through preaching, utilizing the traditional church year, and the lectionary.

The challenge to provide a substantial answer is great on several fronts. First, there is a growing recognition among evangelicals that congregations are becoming more biblically illiterate, less interested in theological matters, and more inclined to live a lifestyle with values similar to the world. This lack of spiritual depth has created within the evangelical community a civil religion that distorts power, creates celebrities, espouses hawkish politics, and advocates individualism and consumerism. Second, pastors and parishes are tired of trying to run programs, solicit monies, and motivate their congregants to maximize their time, talents, and treasures to sustain the inner workings of churches that make little sizeable difference in their communities. Third, the margins in life are slowly dissipating among evangelicals as they have ignored natural rhythms, sacramental living, divine hours, seasonal activities, Holy Sabbath, and communal liturgical worship. The words “busy” and “holy,” as four-letter words, have been transposed among clergy and church so often that many think these two words are the same. Fourth, significant theologians, seminary professors of homiletics, and pastors

have drawn a line in the sand that those who do not preach in a traditional way (book-by-book study) are spiritually impoverishing their congregations. Yet, it has been my experience, as a pastor and adjunct professor of homiletics, that much of the topical preaching among evangelicals is simply psychological principles with the Bible added in, or expository preaching containing too much contemporary news and too few ancient God-inspired words.

In mapping out the purpose of the doctoral project, this paper will be divided into three parts: context, foundations, and strategy. Part One will describe the people within the smaller community of The Way and the larger community of the Anglican Mission in the Americas, headquartered in Pawley's Island, South Carolina. This section will show the historical context of their beginnings, both locally and nationally, and the impact, both positively and negatively, of their spiritual formation. Finally, this section will present the key leaders and their movements as they are, without idealized perceptions that may obscure reality. These chapters will relate the wounds and brokenness of the past in which the Anglican denomination betrayed their patrons. They will also describe the healing of many and the scabs that remain for full restoration of communal well-being. These pages will reveal an Anglican ethos that has been abused and then restored through the sacramental, liturgical, and ecclesiastical history of its people.

The first chapter within this section will introduce a new faith community, The Way, which has blossomed from the old faith community. The chapter will present the demographics and socioeconomic of the people within The Way as well as the people within the community of North County San Diego. Significant developments of this faith

community will be outlined, as well as their alignment with the beliefs, values, and mission of the greater Anglican Communion, particularly the Church of Rwanda.

The second chapter will present the past and present strategies used within the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Mission in the Americas, and The Way in building Christlike character. The chapter will discuss the impact that pluralism and sexuality has had on all three communities, along with the institutional factors that have exhausted venues for reconciling mission and values. The chapter will also consider internal strengths, outside opportunities, inside challenges, and outside threats that make The Way the living, breathing Body of Christ. The chapter will conclude with several observations about the current process that The Way has developed toward building an Anglican spiritual formation of Christlikeness.

Part Two, encompassing chapters three and four, presents the critical theological foundations necessary in developing the strategy for The Way. Much theological thought has been provided by the Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican traditions concerning spiritual formation, the lectionary, and the place of preaching. The two other significant Protestant branches, liberalism and evangelicalism, also provide significant information on how the disciplines of formation, the skills of preaching, and the usage of the lectionary interrelate as a cohesive unit in developing a practical strategy for the community of faith at The Way.

This section will provide in Chapter Three a summary of the significant literature, both ancient and contemporary, related to the three disciplines of spiritual formation, lectionary usage, and the art of preaching. Because of the immensity of the project, this chapter will concentrate on the seven best books that tie all these disciplines into a

universal whole. Then, after presenting a more global picture, the chapter will provide clarity as to their wisdom regarding how it relates to the local Anglican setting.

After summarizing the appropriate literature, Chapter 4 will develop a theological understanding of what it means to have a Christlike character, and how this kind of Jesus-character is manifested in a person in the twenty-first century. Within that theological development, the various venues God uses in developing character will be considered, including the role of the local church, the role of preaching, the role of everyday events, the role of spiritual practices, and the role of the sacraments. Special attention will be given to the activity of preaching, particularly lectionary preaching, in terms of how this means of grace is uniquely provided for followers of Christ in developing their faith and a Christlike character.

The final section, Part Three, is the practical strategy for the preacher, pastor, and priest to serve as a prophet for the people of God. If the first section of the doctoral project is designed to provide framework for the portrait, and the second section is to provide the foundational principles of painting, then this section is designed to provide a unique flair and unusual color so that the painting has movement and emotion. In essence, the entire purpose of the project is culminated for the local pastor in providing a way forward in lectionary preaching that is scripturally sound, interpersonally connecting, and historically rich.

Within this last section, Chapter 5 will speak of the rector's role as an Anglican priest in being a catalyst for change toward Christlikeness within his or her flock. Special attention will be given to show that the preaching ministry is both a priestly and prophetic function, similar to the Old Testament and early Church traditions. The primary role of

this kind of preacher is to inspire, equip, and encourage God's people to live in God's power for God's vision in a world that God deeply loves. This chapter will include the concepts of modeling, mentoring, and messaging for Christlikeness.

Chapter 6 will focus on developing a preaching strategy using the Church calendar, the three-year lectionary, and providing unique tools to consider for implementation so that Christlike character is developed within the parish. Along with highlighting the rhythm of the church year as a tool for spiritual formation and espousing the clear advantages of utilizing the lectionary, the heart of the chapter will be the preaching vision for The Way. The chapter will conclude with an overview of securing measurement tools in determining the progress within the parish.

This paper will attempt to provide a roadmap for The Way, and hopefully for other churches within the Anglican Mission. But it is important to recognize that topography can change as quickly as an earthquake in Haiti or a tsunami in Japan. The only sure indicator is the compass. Even when the noticeable landmarks are missing, a compass always points north. The compass is the head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

One goal of this paper is to benefit the Church. One cannot study God's Word without realizing that the Church is significant to God (John 21:15-17). In Ephesians, the Church is described as the "bride of Christ" (Ephesians 5:25-27). This title suggests that the Church's identity is found in Jesus Christ, and its intimacy is deeply enriched by its relationship to Jesus Christ. Whether it is a house church or a megachurch, an emerging church or a traditional church, a denominational church or an independent church, I love these communities that seek to live by faith, endure in hope, and walk in love to the glory

of God. My goal in this project is that the Church can be all that it was designed to be—the people of God, the bride of Christ, and the body of Christ.

A second goal of this paper is to benefit pastors. Regardless of whether they are priests or preachers, male or female, young or old, pastors are a special breed anointed by God to shepherd his flock and equip his saints for the work of ministry. Several years ago, the noted author and scholar Dallas Willard told me in one of my discouraging times of ministry that the pastorate “is the greatest calling in life.”² Pastors can influence more people—without limitation to age, status, or gender—to the kingdom of God than in any other calling, and one of their greatest tools is the gift of preaching. It is for these two reasons that I want to help my community in building a preaching strategy for Christlike character at The Way, within the greater Anglican Communion, and as part of the Church universal.

² Dallas Willard, conversation with the author, Mater Dolorosa Passionate Retreat Center, Sierra Madre, California, June 6, 2006.

PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

PAST AND PRESENT STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER

Demographic and Socioeconomic Analysis of Vista, California

Vista, California is located in San Diego County, thirty miles north of downtown San Diego and centrally located between the two biggest north county hubs on Highway 78, Oceanside and Escondido. Established in 1882 and incorporated in 1963, Vista has a population of 89,857, almost equally divided between male and female.¹ Of the population within Vista, 32 percent is between 25 to 44 years of age, with a median age of 30. The majority of the population is White, but nearly 39 percent is Hispanic. Of the population, 54 percent own their own homes.

In 2010, the Percept Group gathered data concerning the greater Vista area based upon three study-area definitions. These three included a 3-mile, 5-mile, and 8-mile radius around the location where The Way is currently meeting for Sunday services.² The Percept Group breaks down the information into four categories: People and Places, Faces of Diversity, Community Issues, and Faith Preferences.

¹ Percept Group, "First View 2010 Prepared For: The Way Fellowship – 3 miles," <http://www.perceptgroup.com> (accessed April 14, 2011).

² Ibid.

The current population density of the community is extremely high. Projections for future growth are also high. Within a three-mile radius around The Way, which includes the community cities of San Marcos and Carlsbad, there are currently 99, 209 persons in residence.

The diversity within the population is also extremely high, with the largest population referred to as “affluent families” (33.7 percent). The average household income of \$86,582 per year, and the top individual segment (representing 23.5 percent of all households) is listed as “educated mid-life families.” The racial/ethnic diversity in the area is extremely high, with Asians projected to be the fastest-growing group, increasing by 29.0 percent by 2015. Another statistic to note is that the most significant generational group compared to national averages is the “Generation Z (0- to 8-year-olds)” who make up 14.4 percent of the total population of the area. Adding this to the Millennials (9- to 28-year-olds), 40 percent of the population within The Way’s 3-mile radius is 28 years of age and younger, slightly higher than the United States average.³ This area is described by Percept as somewhat traditional in family structures because of an above average population of married persons and two-parent families.

The community stress level is somewhat lower than the national average. However, the number one concern of this population is that of community problems, including neighborhood gangs, crime and safety, social injustice, affordable housing,

³ Percept Group, “First View 2010 Prepared For: The Way Fellowship – 8 miles,” <http://www.perceptgroup.com> (accessed April 14, 2011), 4.

time for recreation, and long-term financial security.⁴ These community stress levels are the same even at the 8-mile radius.⁵

The faith preferences category at the 3-, 5-, and 8-mile radius are also similar. In comparison to the national averages, the population in proximity to The Way is not very receptive to faith and has an extremely low religious preference.⁶ In preferring an overall church style that is more traditional or contemporary, the research indicates that the community would prefer “very contemporary” as a church style preference.⁷ Based on that data, the church program preferences that are likely to exceed the national average are music and art cultural programs, daycare services, sport programs, and parent training programs.⁸

Demographic and Socioeconomic Analysis of The Way

Utilizing the same format as the Percept Group in providing a study definition of The Way, the same four headings will be used: People and Places, Faces of Diversity, Community Issues, and Faith Preferences. The population under study within The Way is a significantly smaller sample than Percept’s population study and, for that matter, than most established churches. Based upon a recent survey, there are twenty-one family units that regularly attend the church.

⁴ Percept Group, “First View 2010 Prepared For: The Way Fellowship – 8 miles,” 5.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Percept Group, “First View 2010 Prepared For: The Way Fellowship – 3 miles,” <http://www.perceptgroup.com> (accessed April 14, 2011), 3.

⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁸ Ibid.

People and Places

Most of the members within The Way live between five and eight miles away from The Way's worship center at Datron World Communications, Inc. Out of the twenty-one family units that attend The Way, six live in Oceanside, six live in Carlsbad, four live in San Marcos, three live in Vista, one lives in Escondido, and one lives in Poway. Approximately forty adults and children identify The Way as their church home.

Faces of Diversity

Of the six major segment groupings outlined by Percept, the largest grouping within The Way is "affluent families," which accounts for 48 percent of the church population. This is significantly higher than the 33.7 percent population of the households represented in the 3-mile radius.⁹ The top individual segment, "educated mid-life families," is consistent with the geographical area. Although the racial/ethnic diversity of the area is extremely high, the diversity within the community of The Way is very low. Nearly all "Anglos," The Way has two Hispanics (mother and daughter), and one Asian (pastoral staff, male).

Contrary to the most significant generational group within The Way's three-mile radius in terms of numbers and comparison, Generation Z (aged 0 to 8 years), the most significant generational group within the church is Boomers (aged 50 to 67 years) at 57 percent. This is both significant higher than the study area (17 percent) and the United

⁹ Percept Group, "First View 2010 Prepared For: The Way Fellowship – 3 miles," <http://www.perceptgroup.com> (accessed April 14, 2011), 3.

U.S. average (21 percent).¹⁰ The second significant group within the church is Survivors (aged 29 to 49 years) at 12 percent. The Way has four individuals (10 percent) that are Millennials (aged 9 to 28 years) and only three children (7.5 percent) that are Generation Z. Based upon the study area data, The Way needs to be more intentional in reaching out to Survivors, Millennials, and Generation Z.¹¹

Our never-married single adult population is one college student and one recent college graduate, well below the study area and United States average.¹² The Way ministers to three divorced adults and three widowed adults. Most of the population is a traditional blend of married persons and two-parent families. The Way is significantly higher than the study area and the U.S. average concerning overall educational levels. Of the church membership, 50 percent hold post graduate or college degrees, exceeding the study area by 30 percent.

It should also be noted that The Way has been intentional in reaching out to the corporate community, in particular, Datron World Communications, Inc. Datron is where The Way meets for their services, and Datron provides the facility at no charge to the Church. Out of the twenty-one family units that attend The Way, Datron employs four.

¹⁰ Percept Group, "First View 2010 Prepared For: The Way Fellowship – 8 miles," <http://www.perceptgroup.com> (accessed April 14, 2011), 4.

¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹² Ibid., 5.

Community Issues

Long-term financial security and affordable housing are two of the most pressing issues within the Church community. Due to the economic downturn in California, The Way has one family who nearly lost their home to foreclosure because of extensive unemployment for both adults. Fortunately, the adult male in the family recently secured a job that allowed them to make the mortgage payments.

Vista, particularly North Vista, has many households living below the poverty line, suffers gang-related trauma, experiences elevated levels of high school dropouts, and has significant concerns about basic necessities. According to Doreen Quinn, CEO of the Vista-based non-profit, New Haven Family Services and Technological School, 78 percent of the Hispanic students attending Vista High School do not receive their high school diplomas.¹³ At this time, 50 percent of the church income goes toward alleviating some of these issues, but there is not an intentional program within the church that reaches out to this population.

Faith Preferences

Six families joined with me from St. Anne's Anglican Church to start The Way. All of them love the liturgical service, informally based upon The Book of Common Prayer, and the Eucharistic focus. They also respond well to contemporary music and all agreed that the clergy will not have wear vestments or collars in order to meet the needs of the current culture. The sermons are lectionary-based, about twenty-five minutes in length, and are taught by three different teaching pastors. Sermon notes are provided.

¹³ Doreen Quinn, interview by the author, Vista, CA, April 14, 2011.

The Way is composed of people who formerly attended Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, Calvary Chapel, Evangelical, and Lutheran churches. Two adult males were previously “dechurched,” and returned to the Church through The Way after long years of hiatus.

Historical Overview and Anglican Character

One cannot tell the story of the start of The Way without explaining the formative impact St. Anne’s Anglican Church had on its founders and upon me personally. St. Anne’s Anglican Church (hereafter, St. Anne’s) was formed in 1887 by a Church of England minister and missionary to the American Indians in North County San Diego. The Reverend Jacobs, in his lifetime, also started two other Episcopal churches in North County, one in Carlsbad and another in Vista, California. Initially, St. Anne’s was called Grace Episcopal Church. It was so named not for the theological doctrine of grace, but for a benefactor whose first name was Grace. In the 1950s, the church was renamed St. Anne’s Anglican Church and relocated to 701 West Street, four blocks away from the Oceanside beach.

In 1960, the Episcopal Church, officially named The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, claimed to have 6.2 million members. Forty years later the number had dwindled to 1.8 million and still today is losing members at a steady rate. Many have claimed that the cause of the member decrease was due to increased theological liberalism, Prayer Book revisions, women clergy, and increasing homosexuality practices among some clergy without church discipline. Because of the large theological umbrella within the Anglican Communion and in particular The Episcopal Church, the St. Anne’s community fluctuated depending upon the theological orientation of the current rector.

In the 1980s, St. Anne's became more charismatic due to the growing Episcopal movement of Faith Alive, Cursillo, and the teachings of its priest, the Reverend Gary Heniser.¹⁴ After nine years as the priest at St. Anne's, Fr. Gary was becoming increasingly concerned about the liberal orientation of the national Church; he eventually took about ten families with him to establish a new church in nearby San Marcos called The Church of the Advent, affiliated with the denominational Episcopal Charismatic Church, initially headquartered in San Clemente, California. The Episcopal Charismatic Church was not then, nor is it now, part of the worldwide Anglican Communion or ecclesiastically recognized by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

St. Anne's called Rev. Quinton Morrow, a more liturgically formal, non-charismatic, 1929 Prayer Book advocate as their new rector. The difference in personality and theology was noticeable within the congregation. The church grew again in numbers, and the teaching sessions by the rector were well received by the parish. In 2000, after five years, Rev. Morrow left to become rector of an Anglo-Catholic congregation in Fort Worth, Texas.

The Reverend Al Smith, a retired priest, became the interim while a search for a new Rector was taking place. Again, the leadership change was significant. Forty-minute sermons were now ten-minute homilies. Younger families were moving out of St. Anne's and only the "cradle-to-grave" Episcopalians remained. The Reverend Smith, more a traditional, broad churchman, served for nearly eighteen months.

¹⁴ Faith Alive is a weekend lay ministry within the Episcopal Church to help the participants re-examine the promises they have made with their baptismal and confirmation covenants. See www.faithalive.org. Cursillo is a four-day lay movement by invitation only to assist potential leaders to see how the essential truths of the Christian faith relate to everyday living. See www.cursillo.org.

I was then called to serve St. Anne's in June 2002. I served that parish until the end of September 2009, when I accepted the position of president of the Servant Leadership Institute, an affiliate of Datron World Communications, Inc. During my tenure at St. Anne's, the upheaval within the national Episcopal Church was at the crisis stage, made even more acute with the 2003 election of a homosexual bishop, the Right Reverend V. Gene Robinson in New Hampshire. If leadership is rooted in the word, "to steer a ship in a storm," then I served as the leader of St. Anne's during this tumultuous time. During my first year, the 120 that attended grew to more than 200. After the consecration of Bishop Robinson, St. Anne's lost forty conservative parishioners who no longer could identify themselves as Episcopalians. Because of my evangelical leanings, within another twelve months St. Anne's lost an additional forty parishioners who were self-identified liberals to more like-minded Episcopal churches.

Intentionally, I educated the congregation in a calm, thoughtful manner regarding the recent significant changes in the Episcopal Church. It took several years of prayerful discernment before the Vestry, the designated decision-makers, unanimously decided to leave the Episcopal Church while retaining the property deed. The congregation voted enthusiastically, with only three no-votes, in January 2006 to leave the Episcopal Church and be under the temporary ecclesiastical authority of the Bishop of Bolivia, the Right Reverend Francis Lyons.

Upon leaving the Episcopal Church, St. Anne's grew to over three hundred attendees on a Sunday. The congregation was primarily evangelical with strong charismatic leanings. Deeply committed to the healing ministry, St. Anne's purchased a building for the use of prayer, healing ministries, pastoral counseling, and spiritual

direction. During my last two years, I felt a strong inclination to start a new church in the Carlsbad area, near Bressi Ranch. I asked my friend and noted church planter, Todd Hunter, if he was willing to join me with this venture. It was during this journey, over a course of several months, that Todd felt the Lord's leading to become an Anglican.¹⁵ He eventually became a bishop within The Anglican Mission.

With the opportunity presented to me at Datron to serve as president of the Servant Leadership Institute (SLI), I now had the financial means to start a new work near Bressi Ranch. Our current facility is only two miles away from my initial dream location. The Way was legally incorporated on May 24, 2010 as a non-profit religious organization with the official title of The Way Anglican Church with a mailing address in Carlsbad, California. The original directors of the corporation were Margret Ogg, Mark Gardner, Kirsten Gardner, Alex Hamlow, Candice Hamlow, Barbara Schipke, and me.¹⁶

The purpose of the Church is “to inspire, equip, and encourage God’s people to live in God’s power in order to live out God’s vision in a world God loves; on earth as it is in heaven.”¹⁷ The Articles of Incorporation state that The Way is “to be a church aligned with and in ecclesiastical fellowship with a bishop of a Province of the worldwide Anglican Communion that holds and propounds the historic Faith of the One, Holy, catholic, and Apostolic Church, the Faith once delivered to the Saints, which is based on the Gospel of the centrality and uniqueness of the Person of Jesus Christ and the authority

¹⁵ Todd Hunter, *The Accidental Anglican: The Surprising Appeal of the Liturgical Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 24-25.

¹⁶ “Articles of Incorporation, The Way Anglican Church,” incorporated by the Secretary of State of California, May 24, 2010.

¹⁷ Ibid.

of Holy Scripture as containing all things necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.”¹⁸ The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886, 1888 states that an Anglican must confirm four tenets to be an Anglican. They are:

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as “containing all things necessary to salvation,” and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
2. The Apostles’ Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
3. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself – Baptism and the supper of the Lord – ministered with unfailing one of Christ’ words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.
4. The Historic Episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.¹⁹

On January 1, 2010, Kirsten Gardner, already an ordained Anglican deacon, became licensed to serve in the Anglican Mission in the Americas (hereafter, AMIA), an missionary outreach from the Church in Rwanda. That same date, already an ordained Anglican priest, I also became licensed to serve in AMIA as a missionary from the Church in Rwanda. We are both under the ecclesiastical authority of my friend, the Right Reverend Doctor Todd D. Hunter, now a missionary bishop within the Anglican Mission.

Since most of the population in southern California is unfamiliar with the Anglican Church and often mispronounces the word “Anglican” as “Angelican,” the leadership secured a legal alias as The Way Christian Fellowship. An Internet address, www.findtheway.org, was also secured for the church’s new website, and the church began meeting initially at the home of Mark and Kirsten Gardner in Carlsbad.

¹⁸ “Articles of Incorporation, The Way Anglican Church.”

¹⁹ Anglicans Online, “The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886, 1888,” http://anglicansonline.org/basics/Chicago_Lambeth.html (accessed April 15, 2011).

Every Sunday evening, the Gardners, the Hamlows, the Barons, Mug Ogg, and Barbara Schipke would meet around the dinner table and have a Eucharistic service; either Kirsten or I would teach a homily based on the lectionary. Soon the group outgrew the Gardners' dinner table and moved the Sunday gathering to the Barons' home, which has a much larger living room, and began meeting Sundays at 10 a.m. During The Way's pre-launch days, the training room of Datron World Communications was available at no charge and the group decided to meet there on the first Sunday morning of each month.

Since September 2010, The Way has gathered weekly at Datron World Communications, Inc. for Sunday Worship in the training room. Every Friday at 4:45 p.m., several volunteers from The Way gather in the training room to transform the corporate setting into sacred space with altar, baptismal font, candles, and crosses. It is an amazing transition as the place moves from commerce to communion. As part of the church's teaching about the Anglican way, the leadership intentionally instructs the congregation about some portion within the liturgical service so that the parish will know the significance of symbols, lectionary, and worship.

Recent Growth and Transitional Changes

Since the beginning of The Way, there has been a small numerical growth within the parish. Part of the reason is that we are completely dependent upon the congregation inviting others to attend. Walk-in visits rarely occur because the church services are held in a large industrial complex. Deacon Kirsten Gardner and I have decided not to take a salary from The Way so the monies can be used for charitable causes elsewhere. My salary comes from the Servant Leadership Institute, and Kirsten's husband is a high-level

executive at Life Technologies, Inc. Additionally, our time is restricted from being full-time at The Way as pastors. Kirsten has completed her MA at Fuller Theological Seminary and has recently been accepted into the PhD program in Old Testament and Ethics at Fuller to study under noted scholar Dr. John Goldingay. With my duties as president of the Servant Leadership Institute, I am currently under contract to write ten books over the next decade, two of which have been recently completed (*The Art of Servant Leadership* and *The Cross and the Towel*). I also currently serve as Canon of Leadership Development for my bishop, Todd Hunter, with responsibility to oversee those ordinands seeking Holy Orders.

The leadership team has been aware from the start of Kirsten's and my schedules, so all of us agreed that God was calling to The Way a third pastor who would be paid by the Church. On April 1, 2011, Steve Matson joined The Way as its third teaching pastor. Steve will be seeking Holy Orders but already has had extensive experience within the Anglican Church, both in the Diocese of San Joaquin and the Diocese of Pittsburgh. His wife, Adelia, is a lifelong Anglican whose father, the Right Reverend Mark Lawrence, is the current Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina. Steve and Adelia have two young children, Toby and Macy.

Steve, fifteen years younger than I am, is a highly creative speaker and musician who has a great heart and style for young people, particularly Millennials and Generation Z. His Korean background brings identification with Vista's growing Asian population. The leadership of The Way intends to mentor Steve through his ordination process and pastoral maturity until he takes on the mantle of the senior pastor of the Church. Kirsten and I joyfully believe this is God's leading for The Way.

Beliefs, Values, and Assumptions

Beliefs

The purpose of The Way is set forth in the by-laws. It is “to inspire, equip, and encourage God’s people to live in God’s power in order to live out God’s vision in a world God loves; on earth as it is in Heaven.”²⁰ The Way is completely committed to the purpose, call, and mission of the AMIA.²¹ The purpose of the AMIA is to glorify God by building an alliance of congregations in North America committed to gathering, planting, and serving dynamic churches in the Anglican tradition. The call of the Mission is to reach the 130 million un-churched in the U.S. and some twenty million in Canada with the transforming reality of Jesus Christ. AMIA is committed to evangelism through church planting and fulfilling Christ’s Great Commandment and Great Commission. The Way holds the following theological beliefs, which are the same beliefs held by the AMIA:

The Anglican Mission celebrates unity in the essential elements of Christian faith, worship, life and ministry. Like trees planted at the water’s edge, our Anglican roots are nourished by three streams: the Scripture, the Sacred and the Spirit. We hold that Scripture guides our lives and is authoritative for us individually and for the Church at large. We believe the Sacred is embodied in the practices and teachings Christians have held throughout the centuries as expressed in the historic Creeds and 39 Articles of Religion. Our faith has many forms of worship including the sacraments as instituted by Jesus. We trust God’s Spirit is at work in the Church and the world, manifesting His power and preparing us for ministry.²²

²⁰ “By Laws, The Way Anglican Church,” incorporated by the Secretary of State of California, May 24, 2010.

²¹ Anglican Mission in the Americas, “Mission,” <http://www.theamia.org/mission> (accessed April 13, 2011).

²² Ibid.

Values

The AMIA states twelve values of the mission, which are shared by The Way.

These are:

1. Our Mission centers on reaching the unchurched in North America.
2. We focus on evangelism and discipling through church planting.
3. We celebrate unity in the essentials of Christian faith.
4. Our worship incorporates “ancient” and “future” elements.
5. We are not an institutional denomination.
6. Congregations are our basic missionary unit.
7. We provide assistance to new and existing churches and utilize individual coaching.
8. We have maintained a fluid organization.
9. Our structure is built on affinity as well as geographically-based Networks.
10. Our missionary bishops have flexible roles and serve as our primary vision casters.
11. We emphasize empowering and equipping lay ministry, releasing ministry to all believers.
12. We are committed to accountability.²³

In addition to those values outlined by the AMIA, The Way also holds an additional seven values deeply, which are stated on the church website:

Simple: Time is important. We embrace an understanding of time for worship, family, rest, fellowship and refreshment. We refuse to be a program-oriented church, bogged down in committee meetings and compelled to do things faster and better for a consumer age.

Creative: God has gifted us. The church should be a place that cultivates the talents and skills God gave us in the arts and sciences.

Transformative: We are broken. In our brokenness, we surrender to the truth that only Jesus Christ is “the way” to a lasting transformation.

Redemptive: God saves us. He also liberates us. We recognize the mercy God has provided to all without regard to social standing or individual circumstances.

Faithful: There is only one God. We place our hope in the God that is the author of our salvation, and who has revealed himself in Scripture.

Loving: We are to be a body. Therefore, our community should look different. It should be marked by truth and love in the way we relate to one another, authentically modeling His love for the world.

²³ Anglican Mission in the Americas, “Our Core Values,” <http://www.theamia.org.our-core-values-commitments> (accessed April 13, 2011).

Engaged: There is work to be done. We honor our calling to be a beacon of light wherever God places us, in our work or in our neighborhood, for the ministry of reconciliation.²⁴

As the senior teaching pastor and co-founder of The Way, I teach the following values that reflect the spirit of Anglicanism as a way of life to worship God. Briefly, there are five key values:

1. We are incarnational in our theology more than we are systematic.
2. We are sacramental in our spiritual formation more than we are secular
3. We are apostolic in history more than contemporary in culture.
4. We are liturgical in spiritual community ministry more than spontaneous in our community expression thereby becoming more participative in our prayerful worship.
5. We value moderation as an attribute of comprehensiveness in our Christianity more than separating ourselves into doctrinal excesses.²⁵

Assumptions

The Way is currently without apparent outward conflict and has the feeling of great inward anticipation regarding what God is doing within our community.

Theologically, The Way assumes that the liturgies, Prayer Book, the Holy Scriptures, and sacramental lifestyles will shape the congregation's beliefs about God and its understanding of God's interventions in the world. It is assumed that these tools of worship will facilitate the church's approach to and encounter with the Divine. It is assumed that these spiritual disciplines will help identify the challenges to the life of faith, train members' desires and ambitions, and orient members to the world around the church. It is assumed that the distinctive character of Anglicanism is *via media, lex*

²⁴ The Way Christian Fellowship website, "Mission and Purpose," www.findtheway.org/mission-purpose (accessed April 14, 2011).

²⁵ Tony Baron, teaching notes for the Master of Divinity class, "Anglican Parish Ministry," Azusa Pacific University Graduate School of Theology, 2011.

orandi, and *lex credenda*.²⁶ Finally, to avoid the historical abuses of Rome and Geneva, it is assumed that Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, used in their proper order, are the best ways to understand God's workings in the past and the present.

In regards to the church operations, The Way makes the following assumptions. The Way will be a church for many generations in the future with its own land and its own building. The Way will identify with others in its community according to demographics and socioeconomic status. The Way will have an ongoing relationship with Datron World Communications for the next decade. The Way will grow younger and develop a healthy children's and youth program. The Way will develop leaders to serve in all domains as a witness for Jesus Christ. The Way will remain in the AMIA and a member of the Anglican Communion. The Way will always have strength in the teaching and healing ministry of the Church. The Preaching Strategy for Developing Christlike Character will utilize the rhythms of the Church calendar and the lectionary. And finally, Kirsten Gardner, an ordained deacon, and I will serve as mentors to Steve Matson in his professional and personal development as he moves toward Holy Orders and senior pastorate.

²⁶ *Via media* means "the middle way." *Lex orandi, Lex Credenda* means, "the way of praying is the way of belief."

CHAPTER 2

PAST AND PRESENT STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER

Strategies for Developing Christlike Character within the AMIA

The AMIA was established as a missionary outreach of the Anglican Church of the Province of Rwanda in 2000. It started when an Episcopal theological scholar, John Rodgers, and a very prominent Episcopal pastor, Chuck Murphy, were consecrated by Archbishops Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda and Moses Tay of South East Asia in Singapore on January 29, 2000. Their consecration was in response to the theological liberalism of the Episcopal Church in the United States.¹ The roots of the AMIA go back to 1997 when thirty priests, led by Fr. Chuck Murphy of All Saints' Church in Pawley's Island, South Carolina, released a paper entitled, *The First Promise*. The document criticized several policies, recent actions, and more importantly, fundamental Christian teachings, and reached the conclusion that the Episcopal Church no longer advocated the "truth of the gospel."²

¹ Anglican Mission in the Americas website, "The Anglican Mission: Highlights of the First 10 Years," <http://www.theamia.org/identity/our-story/highlights-of-the-first-10-years> (accessed August 22, 2011).

² Anglican Mission in the Americas website, "The Anglican Mission: It Began with A Promise," <http://www.theamia.org/identity/our-story/more-anglican-mission-history> (accessed August 22, 2011).

Although none of the AMIA documents speak directly about developing strategies for Christlike character, one can learn indirectly through the structures within the AMIA. The AMIA's leadership began with Chuck Murphy who is the presiding ecclesiastical authority and designated by the Province of Rwanda as the Primate Vicar. The Council of Missionary Bishops, currently nine in the United States and one in Canada, assists the Primate Vicar in church leadership.³ The Executive Director, currently the Venerable H. G. Miller, III, serves the AMIA at the Headquarters in Pawley's Island as the chief operating officer with all administrative staff reporting to him.⁴ It is also within H.G. Miller's role to serve as the Director of Leadership Development within the AMIA. His leadership development team includes the Rev. Dr. Canon Allen Hughes, Canon Missioner and Director of Leadership Coaching, The Rev. Dr. Robert Grant, Director of Clergy Formation, and Patti Angulo, Administrative Assistant.⁵

Aspects of Leadership Development

Focusing upon Matthew 9:37 and Luke 10:2, the AMIA Department of Leadership Development is "committed to identifying, equipping and releasing lay and ordained leadership based on a biblical model. We take seriously Jesus' evaluation that

³ Anglican Mission in the Americas website, "Canonical Charter for Ministry of the Anglican Mission in the America," http://www.theamia.org/am_cms_media/theamcharterforministry.pdf (accessed August 22, 2011).

⁴ Anglican Mission in the Americas website, "Current Leaders" page, <http://www.theamia.org/leadership/our-structure/current-leaders> (accessed August 22, 2011).

⁵ Anglican Mission in the Americas website, "Leadership Development" page, <http://www.theamia.org/leadership/leadership-development/> (accessed August 22, 2011).

the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”⁶ It is the AMIA’s belief that missional movements, to be successful, must have quality leadership. With over 130 million unchurched in the United States, the goal of lay and clergy leadership development is critical to assist the various congregations in North America. Since the ecclesiastical authorities within the AMIA are committed to developing both lay and clergy leaders, they have taken several steps to fulfill their mission.

Leadership Coaching Process for Clergy

The Reverend Canon Dr. Allen Hughes, Canon Missioner and Director of Leadership Coaching for the AMIA, earned his BA from the University of South Carolina, MDiv from the University of the South, and DMin from Asbury Theological Seminary. Hughes has planted two churches and had an active college ministry before accepting his current role as Canon Missioner and Director of Leadership Coaching.⁷ Hughes has been trained and certified as a Leader Breakthru Coach by noted church leadership specialist and President of Leader Breakthru, Terry Walling. A frequent national speaker on church leadership, Walling currently serves as adjunct faculty in the Doctor of Ministry program at several theological seminaries, including Fuller Theological Seminary.⁸

Leader Breakthru and the AMIA have united in developing a coaching program that will help the AMIA build stronger leaders and create a movement of “risk-taking

⁶ Anglican Mission in the Americas website, “Leadership Development” page.

⁷ Ed Hird, AMIA Conference, <http://edhird.wordpress.com/tag/dr-allen-hughes/> (accessed August 15, 2011).

⁸ Leader Breakthru website, “About” page, <http://leaderbreakthru.com/about/terry-walling.php> (accessed August 15, 2011).

leaders and churches.” The coaching program is strictly on a volunteer basis but every missionary bishop and bishop candidate within AM has received the benefit of this program. Included in the program is an assessment phase that not only focuses on strength determination professionally but also on holistic life formation.

Licensing Lay Pastors to Serve as Church Planters and Catechists

Under the auspices of the Department of Leadership Development is a category entitled Licensed Lay Pastors. The AMIA website states the purpose of this role:

The Anglican Mission believes that every Christian is created for ministry, gifted for ministry and needed for ministry. We are, therefore, committed to equip, empower and release the faithful to use their spiritual gifts to glorify God and to build up the Body of Christ (Romans 12; I Corinthians 12-13). The Anglican Mission is committed to identifying and training emerging leaders who are committed to Christ and to reaching their generation with the Gospel. This will require of those seeking leadership in the Anglican Mission an authentic faith, Godly character, and a servant’s heart (Luke 22:27; Romans 12; I Corinthians 12-13).⁹

The three key features of spiritual formation mentioned are descriptions of Christlike character: authentic faith, Godly character, and a servant’s heart (John 17:1-5; Mark 2:5-12; 10:45). The requirements for the license includes completion of an application, agreement to a criminal record background check, receipt of abuse/misconduct prevention training, support of the AMIA vision and values, and approval by the bishop for service attesting to the person’s spiritual qualifications.¹⁰

Within the application, the applicant must provide a brief narrative of “spiritual history including baptism, confirmation, church membership, significant encounters with

⁹ Anglican Mission in the Americas website, “Licensed Lay Pastors Guidelines,” <http://www.theamia.org/leadership/leadership-development/licensed-lay-pastors-guidelines> (accessed August 15, 2011).

¹⁰ Ibid.

God, leading of the Holy Spirit, current participation in public worship and your devotional life.”¹¹ The spiritual mentoring of the candidate is the responsibility of the local Rector or the Network leader. This mentoring process continues throughout the entire term of the license. How and when the mentoring is conducted is not stated in the process of discernment.¹²

Establish Mission Networks with Primary Responsibility of Mentoring

Since the AMIA is a missionary movement the model of oversight is not based solely on geographical grounds like a diocese, but on affinity with the bishop. These affinities are called Mission Networks which are comprised of a cluster of congregations working collaboratively in assisting local ministry leaders and their churches. Currently there are twenty networks in the United States and it is their responsibility to provide the necessary tools for strategic planning and spiritual formation.¹³

The Way Christian Fellowship is under the Mission Network called “The Churches for the Sake of Others.” Known more popularly as C4SO, this Network is under Bishop Todd Hunter and the Network leader is the Rev. Canon Ellis Brust. My role is the Canon for Leadership Development and Spiritual Formation. The mission of C4SO is founded on Matthew 28:19-20: “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then

¹¹ Department of Leadership Development, AMIA, “Application for License Lay Pastor,” 4.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Anglican Mission in the Americas website, “Mission Networks” page, <http://www.theamia.org/action/mission-networks> (accessed August 15, 2011).

instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."¹⁴

The Churches for the Sake of Others (hereafter, C4SO) primarily is a movement of church planters, initially on the West Coast of the United States but now represented nationally. The goal is to plant two hundred churches over the next twenty years. Todd Hunter, the missionary bishop overseeing C4SO, is an accomplished church planter who has served as president of The Vineyard Churches and Alpha USA. Canon Ellis Brust, the Network Leader, served as Executive Director of the Anglican Mission before H.G. Miller, III, and now is a church planting pastor in Mission Viejo, California. My primary responsibility as the Canon of Leadership Development and Spiritual Formation is to provide individual mentoring, to provide group training in academic and non-academic settings surrounding Anglicanism including Anglican Spiritual Formation and Leadership, and to assist the bishop in special projects.

Develop Mission Initiatives

The final aspect for leadership development is through the AMIA's Mission Initiatives. With the overarching goal of reaching 130 million unchurched for Christ in North America, six initiatives have been launched: Hispanic Initiative, Asian Initiative, C4SO Initiative, Prayer Initiative, Student Ministries Initiative, and Worship Initiative. The initiative among Hispanics is primarily focused on Colorado, Arizona, California, Texas, and Florida with the goal of educating and engaging believers to reach Hispanics

¹⁴ Churches for the Sake of Others, <http://www.c4so.org/locations> (accessed August 15, 2011). Scripture taken from Eugene Peterson, *The Message Bible: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2003.).

with the Gospel. The Asian initiative was established by Bishop Silas Ng in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada. Richmond is a suburb of Vancouver, widely recognized as the “New” Hong Kong with its growing population. The Student Ministry Initiative was established to train leaders and their churches to go on college campuses sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Prayer Ministry and the Worship Ministry Initiatives were designed to help mentor believers into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. The Worship Ministry Initiative is led by Andy Piercy, who served as worship leader at the famous Holy Trinity Brompton in England before coming on staff for the AMIA.¹⁵

Evaluation of Leadership Development

There is much to be commended in regards to the AMIA’s approach in developing leaders toward Christlikeness. Chuck Murphy started with a dream, a blessing from Rwanda, and no money to begin the work. In ten short years, there are over 160 churches in the AMIA and a new church plant starting every two weeks. Most of the activities and monies associated with the AMIA are directed to reaching the unchurched for Jesus Christ. One might assume that the AMIA’s view of the Church is that it should be more instrumental in bringing people to Christ than ontological in helping people be like Christ. But that is not the case. Based on my association with the AMIA and my close work with the Primatial Vicar and several missionary bishops, I would suggest that Christlikeness is the most important witness for making the AMIA attractive to the unchurched. Much of the responsibilities for spiritual formation lies as it

¹⁵ Anglican Mission in the Americas website, “Mission Initiatives” page, <http://www.theamia.org/action/mission-initiatives> (accessed August 15, 2011).

should, at the local church level. But the AMIA seeks to provide training and assistance to help leaders become not only more skilled, but also more Christlike.

Strategies for Developing Christlike Character within The Way Christian Fellowship

Whereas the AMIA's primary purpose is to plant churches in North America, The Way's mission is as a church plant "to inspire, equip, and encourage God's people to live in God's power in order to live out God's vision in a world God loves; on earth as it is in heaven."¹⁶ The members of the church's Leadership Council (more traditionally called the Vestry in Anglican circles) and The Way's teaching pastors—Kirsten Gardner, Steve Matson, and myself—are committed in developing Christlike character within themselves and the faith community. This group initially made an investigation not only of the continuous narrative of the people of God in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, but they also undertook a study of the Apostolic and Patristic Fathers and how they as a community practiced their faith.

This historical investigation led the group to seven reasonable markers about the early followers of Jesus Christ. First, the early communities of the Church were undeniably ritualistic. From the Christian initiation of baptism, to the liturgical services similar to their Jewish brothers (Acts 13:2), to the ongoing rhythm of prayer in the hours, to the days of spiritual discipline in acts of fasting, the early Church was ritualistic.

The second observation was that the early Church was uncompromisingly moral in its practice. The commands from the Lord Jesus Christ reflect this in Matthew 5:20,

¹⁶ "Articles of Incorporation, The Way Anglican Church," incorporated by the secretary of State of California, May 24, 2010.

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven,” and in Matthew 5:48, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” These words of Jesus are then confirmed the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:1-2, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. They are again confirmed by the Apostle Peter in I Peter 1:15-16, “Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct, for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

The third observation is that the early Church communities were unmistakably intellectual. The writer of most of the canonical letters in the New Testament, Paul of Tarsus, was a scholar that studied under the famous Jewish Sanhedrin, Gamielel. Tarsus, in the first century, was as famous for intellectual studies as it was for commerce. The Apostolic Fathers and the Patristic Fathers were not only men of immense faith, they were deep intellectuals, knowing numerous languages, understanding the pluralism of Roman society, and willing to debate some of the finest pagan scholars on the subjects of Jesus, Christianity, Trinitarianism, and Gnosticism.

The fourth historical mark of the early Church through the Patristic period was that they were unapologetically Trinitarian, believing in one God and three persons. God is one but not alone. The gradual understanding of this truth was exhibited in the Jewish Apostle Thomas as he recited daily the ancient prayer of the Great Sh'ma in Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord, And you shall love the

Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might,” and then without conflict saw the Resurrected Christ and proclaimed, “My Lord and My God” (John 20:28). Before there was a formal teaching by the Ecumenical Councils on the Trinity, the Christian liturgy was Trinitarian.

The fifth historical mark of the early Church through the Patristic period was that they were unquestionably scriptural. For the Apostolic and Patristic Fathers, the Holy Bible was a book about Christ (Luke 20:27). For the early Church, the Scriptures were a source of God’s revelation and instruction.

The sixth historical mark of the early Church that informed The Way was that the Church was impressively loving. The Church was characterized by acts of sacrifice and charity to those in need. Love was the key virtue of the Church (I Corinthians 13) and it is the one distinctive mark by which the world will recognize the disciples of Jesus (John 13:35).

The final mark that informed The Way of the early Church through the Patristic period was that the Church was undeniably Eucharistic. The Great Thanksgiving was the central act of Christian worship and established the source and sustenance of the Christian life. The early Church had a distinctive belief in the “Real Presence” of Christ at the Eucharist. Bishop Ignatius of Antioch, the third bishop consecrated in the early Church, who was martyred between 98 AD and 110 AD, wrote, “The Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ who suffered for us.”¹⁷ Justin Martyr wrote in 150 AD:

¹⁷ “Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, Chapter 7,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999), 77.

This food we call Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake except one who believes that things we teach are true, and has received the washing for forgiveness of sins for rebirth, and who lives as Christ taught us. For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink, but as Jesus Christ our savior who became incarnation by God's word and took flesh and blood for our salvation. So also we have been taught that the food consecrated by the word of prayer which comes from him, from which our flesh and blood are nourished by being renewed, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus.¹⁸

The Eucharist, to Apostolic and Patristic Fathers, is a sacrament of unity and the moment of truth where we see the world as it really is in Christ.

The Historical Markers Assistance in Christlikeness

The strategies outlined by The Way were helped by the historical markers of the early followers of Jesus. All these markers were intended to help the early Church as a faith community to become more Christlike. Like the early followers of the Resurrected Jesus, the primary corporate expression of worship was on Sunday. It was decided that Sunday at The Way must contain many of the elements of the early Church to enhance spiritual formation toward Christlikeness for the congregation.

Therefore, two key parts of the Eucharistic Worship Service weekly are reenacted weekly: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of Holy Communion. Our Anglican heritage supports this type of Worship and it is in alignment with the other historic churches of Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox Church. Because many of our members are dechurched, unchurched, or non-liturgical as evangelicals, they lacked critical information to make this experience meaningful. Therefore, it was critical for the teaching pastors to explain in detail the Scriptural support and the apostolic history for

¹⁸ "The First Apology of Justin Martyr – Chapter LXVI," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999), 185.

the liturgy. Although the liturgy has ancient roots, the music is contemporary, supporting the tastes of the faith community. In the teaching, the pastors have been intentionally incarnational in their approach to the teachings as opposed to simply providing systematic information about liturgy.

The liturgy of the Word centers on the Bible. Like the ancient liturgy, the teaching pastors conducted a series of biblical readings interspersed with prayers and Psalms, followed by the exposition of God's Holy Word. The pastors made a commitment to continue the traditional readings of the Church based on the lectionary calendar. The readings provide a unity of thought from Old Testament through the first reading and the Psalms to the second reading in the New Testament. The last reading was the Gospel, the very words of Christ himself to his Church. The preaching of the text was not designed to be clever, but faithful to each passage and relevant to the congregation.

The focus of this ministry focus paper is to implement a strategy for the development of personal spiritual transformation among parish members through preaching, utilizing the traditional church year and the lectionary. Although the teaching pastors were not opposed to special series through a book of a Bible or a subject relevant to the needs of the congregation, the pastors were convinced that spiritual formation was best served in the rhythm of the church year. Most evangelical churches simply base their preaching year on a secular calendar in which Mother's Day gets more attention than Pentecost Sunday or Ascension Sunday. The church year provided for The Way another tool to engage the people toward spiritual formation.

Because the goal is incarnational Christianity instead of “head-knowledge alone” Christianity, the teaching pastors were committed to teaching and practicing the sacramental lifestyle. Although not fully implemented yet, the congregation is being taught to understand and practice the Divine Hours for spiritual formation. Additionally, the pastors teach and practice the historic Sacraments of the Church: Holy Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Ordination, Holy Matrimony, Reconciliation of the Penitent, and Unction. The Sacraments, known as “mysteries” by the Orthodox Church, are “outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.”¹⁹

Because The Way is a church plant and a small congregation, the other three strategies used for spiritual transformation are small groups, Alpha Course, and outside social service. Currently, three small groups meet weekly within North County that focus on relationship support, prayer, and a study on a Book of the Bible or the sermon the previous Sunday. The Alpha Course is an internationally acclaimed course started by Holy Trinity Brompton in England, which focuses on the Christian faith and exploring the meaning of life. Over 11 million people in the world, including both Protestant and Catholic, have completed the course. The Alpha Course contains fifteen talks by Nicky Gumbel on different aspects of the Christian faith which are followed by a discussion where one has the freedom and safety of asking questions and engaging with others about the important issues of life.²⁰ Finally, The Way engages in small projects within the community where the church has a track record of accomplishments. In a personal

¹⁹ *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Publishing, Incorporated, 1979), 857.

²⁰ Alpha International, *The Alpha Course Manual* (London: Holy Trinity Brompton, 1993), 5.

meeting with the Mayor of Vista, Judy Ritter, I asked her which areas we could best serve the community in. As a result of the meeting, the congregation has provided food to the homeless, provided dog and cat food to the pets of the elderly, worked on a house of a person below the poverty line, and provided food to school children in a government housing section.

It is the conviction of the pastoral team that the entire person (body, soul, spirit) must be engaged if genuine transformation toward Christlikeness is the goal. The rhythm of the movements of the Worship Service—including standing, sitting, kneeling, and hands lifted in the orans position—is an important part of the incarnational process along with the study of God’s Holy Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.

Internal Strengths and Outside Opportunities for The Way Christian Fellowship

The Way has been blessed with many internal strengths and outside opportunities. Upon reflection, the church’s internal strengths include: experienced but diverse teaching pastors with a record of parish ministry success; dedicated leadership counsel who are committed to the vision, mission, and values of this community; use of facilities for worship at no cost; and a higher than average giving ratio for a church of its size in this community.

Experienced and Diverse Teaching Pastors

The Way has called three persons to serve as its teaching pastors. Each one is uniquely gifted as a preacher and teacher. I serve as the Rector of The Way and senior teaching pastor. The Rector of the church serves as the official leader of the Leadership

Council and the spiritual head of the local congregation. My background includes nine years of graduate work in theology and psychology, as well as experience planting a church with five couples near Dallas, Texas that grew to 250 people and had a newly built facility within three years. I am an ordained priest in the Anglican Church, an adjunct faculty member of the Graduate School of Theology at Azusa Pacific University, and author of six books. I currently serve on the Strategic Leadership Team for the Primatial Vicar of the Anglican Mission in the Americas and am Canon for Leadership Development and Spiritual Formation for Bishop Todd Hunter. At age 56, I perceive that I am trusted by the fellow teaching pastors and the congregation as a stable visionary committed to the long-term existence of this parish to future generations. I am blessed with Bobbi, my wife, three married adult children, and two grandchildren.

Deacon Kirsten Gardner is also one of our teaching pastors at The Way. Kirsten is a graduate of the University of California in Berkeley and holds an MA in counseling. Additionally, Kirsten recently graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary with an MA in theology. Kirsten received a full scholarship to study under noted Anglican scholar John Goldingay in the Fuller PhD program in Old Testament. Kirsten was ordained as a deacon while serving as my associate at St. Anne's for several years, focusing primarily with the Women's Ministry and Healing. Kirsten Gardner will soon be ordained as a priest within the AMIA and will remain on staff during her studies at Fuller. Kirsten was born and raised in Berlin, Germany. She is a gifted communicator and Bible teacher, loves the biblical languages, and is an astute theologian with a heart for people. At age 42, Kirsten is married to an executive at a Fortune 100 company, has a daughter at USC studying biology, and a teenage son in high school.

Steve Matson is The Way's third teaching pastor who is currently in the aspirant phase of the ordination process within AMIA. He was born in Korea but raised in the United States and has no marked accent. Steve is married, has two young children, and has had a track record of success ministering to youth and young adults at Episcopal and Anglican churches in the Diocese of San Joaquin in California and the Diocese of Pittsburgh. While Kirsten and I planted the church, it was always our conviction that The Way needed a third full-time teaching pastor that would make the church plant relevant to younger families and take this congregation on to the next generation. Steve Matson is a dynamic communicator, incredibly humorous, and utilizes videos in his sermons. At this time, Steve also serves as The Way's worship leader.

The uniqueness of the team helps it to relate to different genders, ages, and races. The high level of education helps the team relate to the corporate community that attends the church. Additionally, Kirsten and I receive no salary from the congregation in an effort to help the congregation be unburdened. Other than a small stipend for a bookkeeper, Steve Matson is the only full-time paid pastor at The Way.

Dedicated Leadership Council

The Leadership Council was formed to be servant-leaders for the parish, assisting the teaching pastors in the vision, mission, and values of the parish along with the administrative aspects that are necessary for any congregation. The Leadership Council members all have similar backgrounds in that they were part of the community at St. Anne's and are very mature dedicated followers of Jesus. As a council, they are all contemplative Christians, believing strongly in prayer, the gifts of the Spirit, and the

ancient-future emerging work of The Way. Nearly all are professionals with graduate degrees, including two who are graduates of Fuller Theological Seminary. At this time, the unity, love, and mutual respect of the Leadership Council is evident and all have expressed that God is doing something unique within this Parish.

Use of Facility for Worship

The Way worships on Sunday and meets on Wednesday for Alpha at Datron World Communications, Inc. in Vista, California. Art Barter, the Chief Executive Officer and Owner of this \$200 million communications corporation, is a faithful believer in Christ who attends New Venture Christian Fellowship in Oceanside, California. Art Barter has graciously allowed The Way to use the multi-purpose room at no charge and has supplied chairs for the services as well. I have served as Art Barter's executive coach and spiritual mentor since the purchase of the company in 2004. Upon leaving St. Anne's in September, 2009 after seven and a half years as their rector, I accepted the position of President of Servant Leadership Institute, a division of Datron.

The multi-purpose room is primarily used for staff meetings, trainings, and special events. The room can hold as many as three hundred people but can easily be divided into sections for much smaller groups. Every Friday in the late afternoon, a team of volunteers from The Way transform the multi-purpose room into a liturgical sanctuary. If the church was to rent a facility for its worship services, the rate within Vista is between \$1,500 and 2,000 dollars a month. An additional benefit of meeting at Datron is the close proximity to the employees within the corporation. Many have expressed

interest in The Way and currently four families attend The Way based on the contact at Datron.

Higher than Average Giving Ratio among Congregants

Although there are students and those with low incomes attending the parish, many within the congregation would be considered affluent, earning significantly above \$100,000 per year. Although I am not privy to the financial details of each congregant by choice, the church's weekly giving is over \$1,000-1,500 dollars a week with sizable gifts of \$60,000 given by two different parishioners. With a weekly congregation of thirty to thirty-five on a Sunday, this is excellent. The Way has three policies concerning giving. One, an offering is not taken at the church service but there is a giving box in the fellowship section of our facility. Two, the pastors intentionally do not teach on the tithe, based on a belief that it was not reflective of the early Church writings; but the biblical admonition is to give generously within one's capacity. Third, 50 percent of the gifts are designed to be distributed outside of the parish and not used for maintenance within the Church.

Outside Opportunities for The Way Christian Fellowship

Along with the internal strengths, The Way also has several outside opportunities. These include a possible merger with another congregation, purchase of land at below cost, and the absence of an ancient-future emerging work that is Anglican within North County. Each of these opportunities places The Way in a potentially beneficial situation.

Possible Merger

The Church of the Hills is a non-denominational congregation in San Marcos pastored by Rev. Raymond van Plestan. San Marcos, California is the next community east of Vista, and this congregation meets only about five miles away from Datron in a newly developed housing area called San Elijo Hills. Rev. van Plestan, a sixty-five-year-old graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, is from South Africa and is an experienced church planter. His current church plant within this new housing area meets at the local high school. The current attendance for the Church of the Hills is close to one hundred and has reached a high of two hundred in past years.

In recent years, Rev. van Plestan has been drawn to the liturgical expression of worship and made first contact with me two years ago. It was then that I began to mentor him on the Anglican expression of faith, including the spirit of Anglicanism. Recently, we have begun a conversation regarding having two congregations on one site with the eventual goal of a merger. The Way's Leadership Council has met with Rev. van Plestan, and I have met with their Board for initial conversations. The current plan is certainly open to any changes by the Holy Spirit.

Purchase of Land

The current Board at the Church of the Hills has recently decided that they could no longer afford the property they purchased several years ago in San Elijo Hills. They were able to purchase the property at 50 percent of land value because the developers wanted a church on that site. They still owe \$450,000 on the land but cannot afford the monthly payment. The provision was in the contract that the developers have first right

of refusal for the property if sold and the property must be sold to them at the purchased rate of \$650,000.

The Way has a benefactor who is willing to pay the \$450,000 for the land provided that the controlling interest of the land falls into the church's current leadership structure. If this is to be completed successfully, a non-profit parent company, Church of the Hills, will have both The Way and the congregation under Rev. van Plestan as separate divisions.

Absence of Anglican Emerging Work

Within the corridor of Highway 78 (Escondido to Oceanside) there are a significant number of churches. The four largest churches are North Coast Church (an Evangelical Free Church in Vista), North Coast Calvary Chapel (Carlsbad), New Venture Christian Fellowship (Oceanside) and Emmanuel Faith Community Church (Escondido). All of these churches are non-liturgical, traditional evangelical environments.

The current Anglican churches in North County (non-Episcopal) are Grace Anglican Church in Oceanside and Church of the Resurrection in San Marcos. Both churches are meeting in warehouses, after leaving their facilities during the Episcopal-Anglican split. Both congregations are traditional in their liturgical services using full vestments, robed choirs, and traditional Prayer Books. The average age of the congregants is in the sixties.

The Way determined to begin a new work that is liturgical, but modern in approach, innovative in the use of liturgy using different Prayer Books, and designed to draw the population described in Chapter 1 of this project. As far as we know, there are

no works starting in North County like this one, which is a great opportunity for The Way.

Inside Challenges and Outside Threats for The Way Christian Fellowship

In spite of its core internal strengths, there remain several significant inside challenges and outside threats for the new parish. For example, one inside challenge is the church's current location, as it is located in a business park, away from neighborhoods and not easy to find. Secondly, the current members of the parish live outside the five-mile radius of the worship center, and some live as far away as fifteen miles away. Also, the current members do not fit the economic, educational, and racial demographics of the community, which is predominately blue-collar, non-college educated, and Hispanic. The Way has only one Hispanic family in the congregation at this time. Additionally, the congregation invites their friends to the church, but they live also live a significant distance from the meeting place. Third, the current policy of giving 50 percent of the church's revenue to outside concerns is not sustainable in a church this size, especially if the church is concerned about supporting future staff, securing land, and eventually building.

The outside threats to the well-being of the parish are twofold: first, the zoning laws within Vista which are not conducive to new church works; and second, the name itself, "Anglican," which is unfamiliar to many. Regarding the zoning laws, it is clear to the leadership of the church that The Way will need to move outside the business park, and the leaders are looking at opportunities to do so. Carlsbad and the San Elijo area within San Marcos fit the church's current demographics better. Even though the

Anglican Communion is the largest Protestant denomination in the world and third largest Christian religious body, the evangelical population of Southern California is more familiar with non-denominational churches or Calvary Chapel-affiliated congregations than the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church name is itself new within the greater San Diego area as many of the new plants are simply from the Episcopal Church. The identity change was important to the leadership of The Way because the Episcopal Church is often associated with theological liberalism and advocates progressive views on marriage and sexuality.

PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

The ministry challenge outlined in the previous two chapters clearly points out a need for an Anglican presence in the greater Vista area. But need alone is insufficient in God's kingdom for participation. In God's economy, skill sets or availability are not the reasons one should engage in a needed project. God's call alone is the reason an individual or a faith community should engage in a particular mission. The Scriptures are replete with the damage caused by acting without God's call and in his timing. For example, Moses acted hastily, even though the need was great for the Jewish people, and his skill sets certainly, from a human perspective, allowed him to be a person of influence (Exodus 2:11-4:20). The prophet Isaiah certainly was aware of his limitations to God's calling, but it was God's call, not man's need, that made Isaiah respond, "Here I am Lord, send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Opportunity, ability, and desire may all be there for the child of God, but God's clarion call is essential so that one does the work in the power of the Holy Spirit instead of his or her own efforts. We believe we have heard that clarion call for The Way to inspire, equip, and encourage God's people for God's vision in a world God loves.

The literature review is designed to assist in being faithful to that call as followers of Jesus. The literature review will have three parts: the ancient and contemporary literature related to spiritual formation, historical and contemporary revisions of the lectionary, and expository and lectionary preaching. Because the project literature review seeks only to identify up to seven resources critical to the topic, additional resources will be mentioned briefly to complement the primary resources in order to provide a fuller explanation on how lectionary preaching enhances Christlike spiritual formation.

Review of the Literature Concerning Spiritual Formation

The literature related to spiritual formation will focus on two types: ancient and contemporary. Within the ancient literature, *The Letters of St. Antony* will be reviewed at length, and others will be discussed briefly. Within the contemporary literature, two books by Dallas Willard will be discussed: *Divine Conspiracy* and *Renovation of the Heart*.

Ancient Literature Review on Spiritual Formation

The Letters of St. Antony provide a glimpse of patristic early Christlike spiritual formation, particularly the seminal development of monasticism. According to Jerome, Antony died in 356.¹ According to Athanasius, Antony died at the age of 105, making his birth in 251 or 250 A.D. From Athanasius's biography on the *Life of Antony*, one can determine that Antony sold all of his possessions at the age of twenty to live as an ascetic, and at the age of thirty-four moved to the desert, where he lived until he left at the age of

¹ Hieronymus (Jerome), *Chronicon*, in *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint*, ed. Samuel Rubenson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 42.

fifty-four. With the Arian controversy and vast persecutions, Antony visited Alexandria to defend Athanasius and then withdrew to the interior wasteland for two years. The only other substantial date that can be determined is when Antony was visited by Pachomian monks shortly after the death of Pachomius in May 346, a little before Bishop Athanasius's second exile return in October of that year. Samuel Rubenson, in his book, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of the Saint*, contends that the Church viewed Antony as an ecclesiastical authority of monasticism and a spiritual "Abba" of several monastic communities.²

What makes Antony remarkable for this literature review on spiritual formation is that he was not known as a powerful theological thinker, established bishop, or a distinguished politician attempting to win the favor of the Church. Instead, Antony's fame spread in his lifetime beyond his home country of Egypt because his thoughts and lifestyle was considered by the Church as "the ideal of the real Christian way of life."³ Of his seven letters written to the various monastic communities, the first letter is most distinctive because Antony provides the reader the way to purify the mind, soul, and body for God. His other letters speak more of salvation, dispensations, and dangers associated with the world. The structure of the first letter, written in a similar style of the Apostle Paul's epistles, has five key components: God's calling; the method the Holy Spirit uses in leading others to repent; the three "motions" related to the body; the method the mind uses to purify the body; and a discussion of the purification of the soul. Rubenson's outlines the structure as shown in figure 1.

² *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of the Saint*, ed. by Samuel Rubenson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 42-43.

³ *Ibid.*, 9.

Subject	Verses
The three modes of God's calling	1-17
The natural law	2-8
The written law	9-14
The afflictions	15-16
The way the Spirit guides a man to repent	18-34
The ascetic practice	18-25
The restoration of man's original constitution	26-34
The three motions in the body	35-45
The first belongs to the original nature and is good	35-36
The second comes from greed and gluttony	37-40
The third comes from the devil	41
The need to control the motions in obedience to the Spirit	42-45
The way the mind purifies the members of the body	46-71
The partnership of Spirit and mind	46-49
The purification of the eyes	50
The purification of the ears	51-52
The purification of the tongue	53-58
The purification of the hands	59-60
The purification of the belly	61-65
The purification of the genitals	66-68
The purification of the feet	69-71
The purification of the soul	72-78
The passions of the soul apart from the body	72-74
The compassion of the Creator for him who repents	75-78

Figure 1. The Key Components of Antony's First Letter

Source: *The Letters of St. Antony*, 54.

What is remarkable about the letter is that Antony makes so many references to both the Old and New Testaments in support of a new way of living in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Antony describes three ways God brings people under repentance: the law of love (promise); the written law; and the law of affliction. Using Abraham as the prime example of obedience to the law of love, Antony indicated that is the best way to respond

to God's call. Antony writes about Abraham, "And he went without hesitating at all, but being ready for his calling. This is the model for the beginning of this way of life. It still persists in those who follow this pattern. Wherever and whenever souls endure and bow to it they easily attain the virtues, since their hearts are ready to be guided by the Spirit of God."⁴

It is remarkable that in the seven letters the word "knowledge" and words similar to it are used abundantly, and the word "faith" is never used. For example, Antony uses the following words related to knowledge in his letters: γνῶσις ("knowledge"), νοῦς ("mind"), λογικός ("rational"), and οὐσία ("perception"). Antony, in his letters, is not referring to the absence of faith but a kind of faith that is characterized by insight, perception, and the correct mindset. The book of Proverbs would use the word "wisdom." Antony expresses the thought that the virtuous life is within each individual and begins with self-knowledge. Genuine self-knowledge begets the capacity to know God. In essence, virtue and knowledge are one and the same to Antony. Antony writes, "Then the guiding Spirit begins to open the eyes of the soul, to show it the way of repentance that it, too, may be purified. The mind also starts to discriminate between them and begins to learn from the Spirit how to purify the body and the soul through repentance. The mind is taught by the Spirit and guides us in the actions of the body and soul, purifying both of them."⁵

Antony describes the servant of God as intellectually rational and morally discerning in Letter 2, "Every rational being, for whom the Savior came, ought to

⁴ *The Letters of St. Antony*, Letter 1, vv. 5-8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter I, vv. 26-28.

examine his way of life and know himself and discern between evil and good, so that he may be freed through his coming. For those who are freed by his dispensation are called the servant of God.⁶ In his third letter, Antony describes a sensible person as one who knows himself and by that knowing also knows the ways of God for this world. He states, “A sensible man who has prepared himself to be freed at the coming of Jesus knows himself in his spiritual essence, for he who knows himself also knows the dispensations of his Creator, and what he does for his creatures.”⁷ In his last letter, Antony writes that a “wise man has first to know himself, so that he may then know what is of God.”⁸

Rubenson would describe Antony’s theology of self-knowledge in more Platonic terms, indicating this self-knowledge will lead to genuine knowledge and salvation.⁹ Antony makes great use of Scriptures, reason, and experience in defending his position on the godly life and makes little references to the traditions of the Church. This pursuit of self-knowledge is a moral, spiritual, and intellectual exercise of wisdom for the follower of Christ. In essence, to be set free to live a pure life, one must go back to the restoration of his or her original constitution of true self-knowledge.

Another key thought emerges in Antony’s letters. The concept of unity, almost describing the collective unconscious described by Jung, emerges in his understanding of

⁶ *The Letters of St. Antony*, Letter 2, vv. 25-26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter 3, vv. 1-2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter 7, v. 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

Christlike spiritual formation. This unity is God and a person's spiritual being exists through the oneness of God.¹⁰ Rubenson explains,

The importance of the concept of unity is manifest throughout the letters. The original unity in essence of all that is spiritual is based on the fact that all rational nature was originally made in the image of God's mind, which is Christ. Christ, the head of creation, is also the source of unity. The essence of Christ's mission in his descent to the world is to gather all men back to unity, a unity manifest in the metaphor of the Church as a body. This unity with one's fellow men, and with God in Christ, is repeatedly drawn upon in the letters to stress the need for love. As members one of another we must love one another; if we love our neighbor we love God and if we love God we love ourselves.¹¹

A lack of unity was the cause of the fall of Adam. Because humankind is "easily moved away from unity, the first impulse within humanity is pride."¹² This lack of stability away from unity within God causes two psychological impairments: "ambivalence and insecurity."¹³

Again, one sees the Platonic thought in Antony's arguments about the mind and the alignment with Origen's theology. Most evangelicals like Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, or James Wilhoit would not be in substantial disagreement that Christlike spiritual formation must be aligned with Christ and that the mind is an important and essential ingredient of that formation. However, when one reads the letters of Antony, the theological view of humankind is different from that of the evangelicals mentioned above in that Antony describes a Platonic dualism between the spiritual and the body.

¹⁰ *The Letters of St. Antony*, Letter 3, v. 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹² *Ibid.*, Letter 6, v. 109.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 67.

According to Antony, one's spiritual essence is hidden in the body, but is not part of the body, since one is purely spiritual in his or her original condition.¹⁴

In verses 35-45 of Antony's first letter, he describes this lack of unity as "three motions" in the body. The body is not considered evil by Antony; it simply needs to be restored to the original condition. The motions become passions through pride which turn the motions into evil misdirection and lack of control. These motions, also described as "movements" (κινήσεις), have three levels: natural urges controlled by the soul, urges caused by gluttony and greed; and urges produced by demonic presence. Antony writes,

I believe that there are three movements in the body. There is a natural, inherent movement, which does not operate unless the soul consents, otherwise it remains still. Then there is another movement as a result of stuffing the body with a multitude of food and drink. The heat of the blood, caused by excessive eating, stirs up the body, which is now moved by gluttony. . . . The third movement comes from the evil spirits, tempting us out of envy and seeking to divert those who attempt to sanctify themselves.¹⁵

Antony believed the body can be transformed through repentance and ascetic practices in order to transform back the body to the original spiritual state in identity and unity with God. The key in Antony's first letter toward Christlike formation is "repentance." According to Antony, there are three "gates" to repentance: law of nature, written law, and afflictions. One can enter through any gate, but repentance must be the process, along with the ascetic practices, for purity, knowledge, self-control, and Christlikeness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The writings of Antony are consistent with the theological thinking on spiritual formation by other ancient writers. In particular is Gregory the Great's book, simply

¹⁴ *The Letters of St. Antony*, 68.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter 1, vv. 35-37, 41.

entitled *Pastoral Care*. Upon the death of Pope Pelagius II in 590 AD, the abbot Gregory became the next servant-leader over the Catholic Church. The focus of his book is upon those who are ordained as priests and it is an apologetic text based on his own reluctance to accept the position as the Bishop of Rome. Since the whole purpose of one's creation, salvific redemption, and grace-filled reconciliation is that he or she is fully united with God in every facet of life, it is essential according to Gregory the Great that one understands the dynamics associated with that transformation (2 Corinthians 3:18; Hebrews 12:14). The theme of unity and repentance can be found throughout the four sections of his book. Gregory the Great's work falls into four sections: the requirements and difficulties of the pastoral office; the inner and outer life of a faithful pastor; the ways to teach effectively one's congregation; and the importance of self-evaluation and self-care. In Latin, *Pastoral Care* is translated as *Liber Regulae Pastoralis*. The word *regula* is used to designate "an order of life for a religious society"¹⁶

The thinking of Antony also parallels the work of Thomas a Kempis (1380-1471) in his classic work, *The Imitation of Christ*. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, read *The Imitation of Christ* daily for his spiritual formation. Anglican priest and evangelist John Wesley thought this work was so important that he translated the book into English so that many in North America and England could read it. Thomas a Kempis writes about the unity of Christ, the need of repentance, and the importance of the engaged mind in the spiritual formation process. He writes, "[Jesus said,] 'Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness,' . . . These are Christ's own words by which He exhorts us to

¹⁶ Gregory the Great, *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, no. 11: St. Gregory the Great—Pastoral Care*, trans. and annotated by Henry Davis, S.J. (New York: Newman Press, 1950), 9.

imitate His life and His way, if we truly desire to be enlightened and free of all blindness of heart. Let it then be our main concern to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

Christian mystics like Bernard of Clairvaux, Frances De Sales, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, or Catherine of Siena write very similarly as well. Ralph Martin, in his book, *The Fulfillment of All Desire: A Guidebook for the Journey to God Based on the Wisdom of the Saints*, highlights the thoughts of these writers. He writes that to know and love God as one is known and loved by God must have three progressive stages in Christlike formation: the purgative way; the illuminative way; and the unitive way.¹⁸

The Contemporary Literature Review on Spiritual Formation

There is no question that the extensive writings of Dallas Willard have transformed the evangelical landscape for Christlike spiritual formation. Most substantial books on spiritual formation, from an evangelical perspective, either quote heavily from Willard or seek his endorsement through forewords. He has been the prophetic voice for the contemporary Church to move from an instrumental salvific vocation of bringing people to heaven to one of ontological significance of bringing heaven on earth by imitating Christ. Willard’s book, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*, was the book of the year for *Christianity Today* in 1999 and in 2003. The same magazine, originally founded by Billy Graham, called another one of Willard’s

¹⁷ Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1949), 1, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/Kempis/imitation.txt> (accessed October 12, 2011).

¹⁸ Ralph Martin, *The Fulfillment of All Desire: A Guidebook for the Journey to God Based on the Wisdom of the Saints* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2006), 13.

books, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, the best book on spirituality.¹⁹

Since 1966, Willard has been professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California. I personally had the privilege of being one of his Doctor of Ministry students at Fuller Theological Seminary recently. The course was co-taught with Keith Matthews, chair and professor of pastoral ministry at Azusa Pacific University Graduate School of Theology. It is the purpose of this literature review to address these two landmark contemporary books in light of the thinking of Antony and the other Christian mystics concerning Christlike spiritual formation.

The Divine Conspiracy

The Divine Conspiracy was birthed because Willard was convinced that modern-day Christians seemed unable to connect their lives with the clear teachings and lifestyle of Jesus. Perhaps the greatness of the book can best be identified with its simplicity, “to follow Jesus,” and its depth concerning understanding the mission of the Church surrounding the Gospel, the Kingdom of God present today, and the Sermon on the Mount. Willard writes,

It is my hope with this book to provide an understanding of the gospel that will open the way for the people of Christ actually to do—do once again, for they have done it in the past—what their acknowledge Maestro said to do. Perhaps the day will come when the “Great Commission” of Matthew 28:18-20 would be fully and routinely implemented as the objective “mission statement,” of the Christian churches, one-by-one and collectively.²⁰

¹⁹ *Christianity Today*, April 1999, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1999/april26/9t5074.html> (accessed September 15, 2011); *Christianity Today*, June 2003, <http://christianitytoday.com.com/ct/2003/june/4.42.html?start=1> (accessed September 15, 2011).

²⁰ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1998), xv.

This book was initially designed to complete a trilogy on the spiritual life for followers of Jesus Christ. His first book, *In Search of Guidance*, was about developing an intimate conversational relationship with God as one journeys in life seeking his direction. His second book in the trilogy, *Spirit of the Disciplines*, written more in the genre of Richard Foster's classic, *Celebration of Discipline*, was designed to provide followers with ways by which they could be fully empowered by Christ through spiritual disciplines. This third and final book in his trilogy was to help the reader understand that the very center of the Gospel is discipleship, and believers are now called to live as "apprentices of Jesus living in His kingdom."²¹

The divine conspiracy, according to Willard, is that Jesus Christ "slipped into our world through the backroads and outlying districts of one of the least important places on earth and has allowed his program for human history to unfold ever so slowly through the centuries."²² This conspiracy by God, outlined by Willard in ten chapters, is structured in the following manner. The first three chapters present the contrasts between the current thinking of the world, including a significant population of contemporary Christians, and the viewpoint of Jesus on the kingdom of God. The next four chapters utilize the Sermon on the Mount as the centerpiece of Jesus' theology about the good life, God's rule, and the participation of believers. Although in every chapter there are significant applications, the last two chapters provide not only a curriculum for Christians to follow but also a clarion call to rediscover the hidden life in God communally and individually.

²¹ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, xvii.

²² *Ibid.*, 13.

In the first chapter, Willard makes the point that there is “no recognized moral knowledge in our society today that can foster moral development.”²³ So society is ill equipped to define a good person or know even what is true and right; thus, people simply resorts to slogans and opinions in forming identity and establishing their own kingdoms. In contrast to the intellectual meaninglessness, Willard suggests Jesus as “God’s doorway into the life that is truly life.”²⁴ In the midst of the world’s narcissistic downward spiral of self-destruction, Willard suggests that the biblical record is clear that God is available to meet “present human need through the actions of Jesus.”²⁵ The redemption of our kingdom is through the kingdom of God.

Chapter two is one of the most effective chapters in how contemporary Christianity has confused justification with sanctification and misused discipleship as simply as tool of “sin management.” This confusion has led many contemporary Christians to separate life from faith, belief from action, and heaven from earth. It is in this chapter that Willard introduces the concept of heaven on earth as opposed to most of the popular thinking that Christians simply go from earth to heaven after they die.

In order to live beyond one’s self-kingdom and into the rule of God, in chapter three Willard encourages his readers to share the view of Jesus about the world. He writes, “Until our thoughts of God have found every visible thing and event glorious with his presence, the word of Jesus has not yet fully seized us.”²⁶ The kingdom of God

²³ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

(heaven) is always present if one desires it. In this chapter Willard corrects some misconceptions of God and humankind that have hindered believers in understanding the Kingdom of God. In similarity with Antony and along with sacramental theology of the human being, Willard writes, “I am a spiritual being who currently has a physical body. I occupy my body and its environs by my consciousness of it and by my capacity to will and to act with and through it. I occupy my body and its proximate space, but I am not localizable in it or around. You cannot find me or any of my thoughts, feelings, or character traits in any part of my body.”²⁷

In chapter four, Willard states that the Sermon on the Mount is the most concise statement on how to live in the kingdom of God. In my personal experience of reading this chapter, I understood for the first time that the Beatitudes are not a grouping of attitudes that Christians ought to have, but that Christ was telling people that the kingdom was available to everyone, regardless of emotional, physical, or financial standing. This new insight has transformed the way I have thought about the Kingdom of God. Willard writes,

We have already indicated the key to understanding the Beatitudes. They serve to clarify Jesus’ fundamental message: the free availability of God’s rule and righteousness to all of humanity through reliance upon Jesus himself, the person now loose in the world among us. . . . This fact of God’s care and provision proves to all that no human condition excludes blessedness, that God may come to any person with his care and deliverance.²⁸

As Willard writes in chapter five, “Jesus “plunges immediately into the guts of human existence” as he talks about living a different kind of life even in the midst of

²⁷ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 75.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

tension, conflict, attraction, and distraction. This kind of life is different from the life lived and espoused by the religious leaders of the first century. Willard outlines the Sermon on the Mount in this chapter.²⁹

Chapter six discusses the sequence of warnings Jesus makes about the practices and attitudes of those who want to trust in realities other than the kingdom of God. Willard primarily addresses two particular deceptions: first, placing one's trust in one's own reputation, and second, placing one's trust in remuneration. This chapter focuses on investment.

Chapter seven discusses how people use self-determination, control, and power. Instead of judging, condemning, or slandering, followers of Jesus are called to be a community of lovers who are in conversation with Christ on a daily basis, trusting him completely and living lives before others without condemnation. It is within this chapter that Willard discusses the theology of prayer and, in particular, the Lord's Prayer.

Chapter eight focuses on three aspects of being a disciple of Jesus Christ: what it means to be a disciple; how one becomes a disciple of Jesus; and finally, how one makes a disciple of Jesus.³⁰ Willard writes, "And as a disciple of Jesus I am with him, by choice and by grace, learning from him how to live in the kingdom of God. This is the crucial idea. That means, we recall, how to live within the range of God's effective will, his life flowing through mine. Another important way of putting this is to say that I am learning from Jesus to live my life as he would live my life if he were I.)"³¹

²⁹ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 138.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

In chapter nine, Willard addresses the issue of the lack of effective programs for training people for Christlikeness in the local church. He writes, “The fact is that there now is lacking a serious and expectant intention to bring Jesus’ people into obedience and abundance through training. That would be discipleship as he gave it to us.”³² Within this chapter, Willard outlines some practical ways churches can engage with their congregations on Christlike spiritual formation. He discusses the 12-Step program for alcoholics as a spiritual formation movement and speaks of the necessity of spiritual disciplines to become Christlike.

Before moving on to the next chapter, it should be noted that Willard’s call for effective programs have been heard. Two of the most prominent books on the scene today in spiritual formation have been designed with the faith community in mind. The first book is by noted Wheaton scholar, James C. Wilhoit, entitled, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*. Willard himself claims that Wilhoit is addressing the central problem within the contemporary Church. In the foreword of the book, Willard writes,

James Wilhoit has written a book of special urgency for our times. In it he addresses the central problem facing the contemporary church in the Western world and worldwide, the problem of how to routinely lead its members through a path of spiritual, moral, and personal transformation that brings them into authentic Christlikeness in every aspect of their lives, enabling them, in the language of the apostle Paul “to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called” (Eph 4:1, NASV).³³

The other book that Willard has recently promoted on this subject is James Bryan Smith’s *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Willard writes on the

³² Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 313.

³³ James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 9.

jacket of this book that it is “the best practice I have seen in Christian spiritual formation.”³⁴ Willard encouraged Smith to create a curriculum for Christlikeness. Smith writes,

In 1998 I began working with [Dallas Willard’s] simple blueprint for a course in learning to live as Jesus taught, and slowly created a curriculum. In 2003 I asked the church leadership board of Chapel Hill United Methodist Church in Wichita if I could invite some church members to go through this curriculum with me. They agreed, and I led twenty-five people through the thirty-week course. Midway through that year I began to suspect that Dallas was right. Genuine transformation into the character of Christ is possible.³⁵

The final chapter of Willard’s book is a look into the future. It is not speculation about the future, but an understanding for the contemporary Christian about the promises of God about one’s future. Using the biblical term, it is the believer’s “blessed hope.” Within the prevailing contemporary pessimism that often surrounds evangelical Christians about the world and its future, Willard instead writes in optimistic terms in light of God’s plan, justice, and redemption.

The Renovation of the Heart

The Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ is critical in the literary review for spiritual formation because it provides a tactical plan for spiritual transformation. A genuine renovation of the heart, according to Willard, must have three dimensions for the transformation to be successful: vision, intention, and means. The distinctive difference between the two award-winning books is that Willard, in *The Renovation of the Heart*, writes in detail how the indispensable parts of the personality

³⁴ James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009), book jacket.

³⁵ Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life*, 13.

have to adjust in Christlike spiritual formation. Will alone does not work for spiritual transformation.³⁶

Willard acknowledges that chapter five is the crux of the book. Chapter five speaks of this three-fold pattern (vision, intention, and means) so succinctly that it actually provides some clarity to the writings of the Antony and the Christian mystics. Antony's entire seven letters indirectly speak of vision, intention, and means in order to be like Christ.

Vision, not will, explains Willard, is the critical first step for Christlike spiritual formation. This vision is provided by God and made plain by God through the Scriptures (Luke 4:43; 2 Peter 1:4; I John 3:1-2; Colossians 3:1-17; and Romans 8:35-39). One's calling as an apprentice of Jesus always starts with the heart. Willard writes, "For him [Jesus] and for his Father, the heart is what matters, and everything else will then come along. And the process of inward renovation starts from the stark vision of life in the kingdom of God. If we are concerned about our own spiritual formation or that of others, this vision of the kingdom is the place we must start. Remember, it is the place where Jesus started."³⁷ The vision of kingdom life through complete trust upon Christ makes it possible for the follower of Jesus to intend to live in the Kingdom as Our Lord did on this earth. Intention is a decision to do it and to follow through with that commitment.³⁸ Finally, the kingdom vision and decisive intention to live in the Kingdom obedient to the

³⁶ Dallas Willard website, "Conversation with Dallas Willard about Renovation of the Heart," interviewed by Lyle SmithGraybeal for *Perspectives*, a publication of *Renovaré*, October 2002, <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=86> (accessed September 15, 2011).

³⁷ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 86.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

Master as apprentices now will lead believers to successfully seek out the means to accomplish the goal.

Willard then, in chapter six, develops the importance of right thinking (thoughts) in spiritual formation with particular attention the power of ideas and images. In chapter seven, he introduces the blessings and complications associated with feelings for the follower of Christ. Every healthy human being needs to love and be loved. However, if that internal need is only at the feeling level, then psychological “dis-ease” occurs in oneself and in one’s relationships with others. Willard concurs when he writes,

When we confuse the condition with the accompanying feeling—peace, for example, with the feeling of peacefulness—we very likely will try to manage the feelings and disregard or deny the reality of the conditions. That way lie such things as failing in love with love and most of the well-known addictions. The person who primarily wants the feeling of being loved or being in love will be incapable of sustaining loving relationship, whether with God or with other humans.³⁹

Before leaving this literature review, Willard’s last chapter is worth noting for it speaks of local congregations and spiritual formation. Willard believes that “spiritual formation in Christlikeness is the exclusive primary goal of the local congregation. . . . What characterizes most of our local congregations, whether big or little in size, is simple distraction.”⁴⁰ James Wilhoit puts it this way: “Spiritual formation is the task of the church. Period. It represents neither an interesting, optional pursuit by the church nor an

³⁹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 123.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 235.

insignificant category in the job description of the body of Christ. Spiritual formation is at the heart of its whole purpose for existence. The church was formed to form.”⁴¹

Review of the Literature Concerning the Lectionary and Preaching

The review of the literature related to the lectionary and preaching will be preceded by a brief history of the use of the lectionary in the Church. Then, critical texts for both expository preaching and lectionary preaching will be reviewed. For expository preaching, Haddon Robinson’s *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* and John Stott’s *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* will be discussed. For lectionary preaching, *Preaching the Lectionary: The Word of God for the Church Today*, by Reginald H. Fuller and Daniel Westberg,⁴² and the twelve-volume work, *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary*, edited by David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, will be reviewed.

History of the Use of the Lectionary in the Church

Before conducting a literature review concerning preaching, it would be wise to consider the historical use and contemporary revisions of the lectionary. In a presentation to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod General Pastoral Conference on January 6, 1998, Alexander Ring, senior pastor of Parkland Lutheran Church in Washington state,

⁴¹ James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 15.

⁴² Reginald H. Fuller and Daniel Westberg, *Preaching the Lectionary: The Word of God for the Church Today* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006).

responded to the growing trend to move away from lectionaries.⁴³ It is clear through his research that the Christian parishes of the first century learned a great deal from the worship practices of the Jewish synagogue. One such development was the use of a lectionary, a reading of Scripture called the *miqra*. The meaning of the word *miqra*, explains Ring, is a “calling together,” but in time the calling together was for the reading, and sometimes the teaching, of Holy Scripture. The word is used twice in Nehemiah 8:8: “So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.” The context of Nehemiah chapter eight does mention the exact book being read and explained, but it is most likely one of Moses’ books in the Pentateuch. Ring reports that Ezra and his associates read from the book of the Law for five to six hours that day to all the men and women who were old enough to understand. The hierarchical sitting on the wooden platform was designed so that all would be able to see the readers, and perhaps this was the forerunner to similar platform seating in the synagogue (Nehemiah 8:1-5).

The synagogues in the first century would read two Scripture readings during the service. The first was always from the Torah, divided into 150 parts to be read in a three-year cycle known historically as the *lection continua* by the Church. The second lesson was from one of the Prophets. The weekly divisions were known in Hebrew as *sedarim*, with the beginning of each section noted with a *samekh*. During their time in captivity in

⁴³ Alexander Ring, “Why the Historic Lectionary?” Bethany Lutheran College website, <http://www.blc.edu/comm/gargy/gargy1/AlexRing.gpc.html> (accessed September 16, 2011).

Babylon, the tradition was to read the Torah completely through in one year, and the new divisions established were called the *parashoth*.⁴⁴

This practice of assigned reading based upon the lectionary during a service was evident when the Isaiah scroll was given to Jesus at the synagogue in Nazareth to read and instruct (Luke 4:16-21). The scrolls were generally made by gluing together about twenty long strips of papyrus, creating a very long strip of about ten yards in length, on which scribes wrote in columns, sometimes on both sides (Isaiah 34:4; Jeremiah 36:23; Ezekiel 2:10). The scrolls were often kept in a special place in the synagogue and handed to the reader by the president or special attendant.

The public reading of Scripture was not only the mark of the Synagogue, but also the distinctive mark of the early Church. The Apostle Paul instructs Timothy to continue the practice of lectionary reading, which would also include the preaching and teaching of that selected passage (I Timothy 4:13). The Greek word Paul uses for “public reading” in I Timothy 4:13 is *αναγνώσει*, which is used in the Old Testament Septuagint to mean “selected reading of the day.”⁴⁵

In fact, the Apostle Paul instructs two churches to read his letters publicly to the parish, using the same Greek word for “selected reading.” The first of these is to the Colossians: “And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea” (Colossians 4:16). And the second is to the Thessalonians: “I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them” (I Thessalonians 5:27).

⁴⁴ Ring, “Why the Historic Lectionary?” 2 and 10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

As a result, as early as the AD 50s and early AD 60s, selected readings of the Old Testament also included New Testament epistles during the gatherings of the early Church. After the Gospels were written, they were also added to the public readings of Scripture. In AD 150 Justin Martyr reported, “On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.”⁴⁶

Other than the synagogue readings, where there seemed to be some pericope uniformity, the early Church did not have a set calendar for readings until the Church year was developed. Instead of *lectio continua*, the bishops would select the passages that were more reflective of the Church year, sometimes using sequential selections with a book within the Bible and sometimes not. The credit for the historic lectionary belongs to Jerome, who translated the Bible into a Latin vernacular called the *Vulgate*. Jerome (342-420 AD), as secretary to Pope Damasus, wrote the *Comes Hieronymi* as the first recorded lectionary; it is possible that he simply copied a written lectionary from another language which was a product of an earlier church period.⁴⁷

A few centuries later, Alcuin (735-804 AD), an English priest, served as an advisor to King Charlemagne. Alcuin, under orders from Charlemagne, took the Gregorian sacramentary, the standard Roman altar book containing the pericope, the propers for the church year, several types of masses and prayers, and began standardizing

⁴⁶ Justin Martyr, *Apology*, in *The Ante-Nicean Fathers. American Edition, Vol. 1*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1906), 186.

⁴⁷ Ring, “Why the Historic Lectionary?” 10.

these for the Western Church.⁴⁸ In the East, the very center of Christianity was the Church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople. Their Byzantine Lectionary was not a three-year cycle, like the West, but a one-year cycle of readings that still remains unchanged since the seventh century.⁴⁹

Even at the height of *sola scriptura* and anti-Catholic sentiment of the Protestants, many Reformers accepted the lectionary and the church year as a means to teach the Christian faith. Martin Luther and his Lutheran followers did not abolish the lectionary, but only made changes to some of the readings which obscured Jesus Christ. John Calvin created a *lectio continua* as an assigned reading within the Church, and eliminated the Church year and the standard lectionary. Only Zwingli eliminated any use of the lectionary and the church year, and recommended book-by-book sermons.⁵⁰

After the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), convened by Pope John XXIII and continued under Pope Paul VI, the Roman Catholic Church produced a document on sacred liturgy which led to an adoption of a new lectionary in 1969. That lectionary was revised later by the Roman Catholic Church in 1981, still remaining a three-year cycle of Sunday selected readings. The reformation of the liturgy was to encourage greater lay participation in the Mass by encouraging diversity in the language of the Mass and how the Mass is practiced.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ring, "Why the Historic Lectionary?" 3 and 10.

⁴⁹ Byzantine Catholic Church in America, "Lectionary of the Byzantine Church," July 27, 2007, http://www.byzcath.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1383&Itemid=114 (accessed September 17, 2001).

⁵⁰ Ring, "Why the Historic Lectionary?" 4.

⁵¹ The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), <http://www.inforplease.com/ce6/society/A0850544.html> (accessed September 17, 2011).

The Roman Lectionary was the foundation for the Anglican Communion (particularly the Episcopal Church in North America) to incorporate *The Book of Common Prayer 1979*. The Common Lectionary, completed by several North American denominations and made public in 1983, was accepted by the Episcopal Church on a trial basis. The goal was to harmonize the mainline denominations to the three-year cycle of selected readings.⁵²

The Revised Common Lectionary—now in use internationally with the American Baptist Churches in the USA; the Anglican Churches in Australia, Canada, England, and South Africa; the Christian Reformed Church in North America; the Disciples of Christ; the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Canada and the United States; the United Church in Canada; the United Church of Christ; and the United Methodist Church—was published in 1992. Considering the criticisms of the Common Lectionary, the Revised Common Lectionary provided several new features.⁵³ First, the revised version includes the option of semi-continuous readings of Old Testament readings: Genesis-Judges in year A, the Davidic Covenant-Wisdom Literature in year B, and the prophets (Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel and Habbakuk) in year C. Second, thematic harmony was added in that the readings of the Old Testament and the New Testament are chosen in relationship to the Church year and the Gospel reading. Third, additional readings were added that note women and their role in God’s plan, including the famous account of the woman anointing Jesus at Bethany (Mark 14:3-9). Fourth, the Synoptic

⁵² Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, The Episcopal Church, “The Episcopal Church and the Revised Common Lectionary,” brochure, 2007.

⁵³ The Episcopal Church, USA, “Revised Common Lectionary,” http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/109399_79330_ENG_HTM.htm (accessed September 17, 2011).

Gospel narratives are read in successive years with parts of the Gospel of John added every year. The 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted the Revised Common Lectionary in Denver, Colorado in July, 2000.

Expository Preaching

There is an overwhelming amount of books that have helped the preacher understand preaching to be expository, first and foremost. Anglican priest John R. W. Stott, known worldwide for his excellent expository messages, his exceptional evangelical mind, and his global heart for social and spiritual renewal, wrote this about expository preaching:

To “expound” the Word of God is so to treat a verse or a passage from the Bible as to draw out its meaning, its application and its challenge. Exposition is the direct opposite of imposition. The expository preacher comes to the text not with his mind made up, resolved to impose a meaning on it, but with his mind open to receive a message from it in order to convey it to others . . . The dearest desire of the expository preacher is so to speak as to let the Scriptures themselves speak, and so to preach that afterwards the sermon is eclipsed by the growing splendor of the text itself.⁵⁴

James Daane, who served for many years as Professor of Ministry and Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary until his retirement in 1979, would agree with Stott’s definition of expository preaching. Daane writes, “Expository preaching is setting forth neither more nor less than the truth of the biblical text. In so doing the preacher is neither philosopher nor apologete nor systematic theologian. It is not required that the truth of the text be

⁵⁴ Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 332.

made simpler than it is or rationally transparent and comprehensible according to human standards.”⁵⁵

In my evangelical circles while in seminary, the deans of expository preaching have been an American and an Englishman. The American is Haddon Robinson who received his Master of Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary and his PhD in Communications at the University of Illinois. Currently Robinson is the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and has served as their interim President. Before his time at Gordon-Conwell, Haddon Robinson was president and professor of homiletics at Denver Seminary and homiletics professor at Dallas Theological Seminary for nineteen years. Although author of several books on preaching, Robinson’s magnum opus, published in 1979 and updated in 2001, is entitled *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*.⁵⁶

The Englishman, of course, was John Stott. His magnum opus on preaching was first published in 1982 under Hodder and Stoughton in London, England under the title, *I Believe in Preaching*. Through a special arrangement, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company in Grand Rapids was able to publish it the same year in the United States under a different title: *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century*.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ James Daane, *Preaching with Confidence: A Theological Essay on the Power of the Pulpit* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1980), 50.

⁵⁶ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001).

⁵⁷ John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982).

Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages

Robinson defines expository preaching as a “communication of the biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.”⁵⁸ In this definition, Robinson indicates the following: 1) the text governs the sermon; 2) the preacher communicates a concept; 3) the concept is derived from the text; 4) the concept is personally applied to the preacher; and finally, 5) the concept is applied to the hearers.⁵⁹ In chapter two, Robinson then elaborates on the concept theory called and known worldwide as the “big idea.” His big idea (concept or theme) can be reduced to two parts: a subject and a complement.⁶⁰ The subject is the complete answer to the question, “What am I talking about?” and the complement provides the answer to the question.

From chapter three to chapter eight, Robinson provides the readers with ten stages of developing and delivering expository messages. Paraphrased here, they are: Stage One: Choose the passage to be preached; Stage Two: Study your passage and gather your notes; Stage Three: As you study the passage, relate the parts to each other to determine the exegetical idea and its development; Stage Four: Submit your exegetical idea to three developmental questions: 1) What does it mean? 2) Is it true? 3) What difference does it make? Stage Five: In light of the audience’s knowledge and experience, think through

⁵⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 21.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 21-29.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

your exegetical idea and state it in the most exact, memorable sentence possible; Stage Six: Determine the purpose of the sermon; Stage Seven: Thinking about the homiletical idea, ask yourself how this idea should be handled to accomplish your purpose; Stage Eight: Having decided how the idea must be developed to accomplish your purpose, outline your sermon; Stage Nine: Fill in the outline with supporting materials that explain, prove, apply, or amplify the points; and Stage Ten: Prepare the introduction and conclusion of the sermon. In the concluding ninth chapter, Robinson addresses transitions from one thought to another, and he discusses how to cultivate clarity in the message with short and simple sentence structures.

There is much to commend in the ten stages of sermon preparation, but there are two significant problems. First is the problem of the choosing of the text as opposed to “the text choosing you,” as the lectionary would do. And second is the concept that the “big idea” is actually an explanation of the text, which it is not. In Nehemiah 8:8, the Scriptures were read and explained. The core of the first century teachers in the early Church was not creativity, but rather faithfulness to the text in explaining the Word of God.

As to the first point, William H. Willimon, a Methodist bishop in Alabama, explains the viewpoint of Karl Barth on preaching, and how the text selection answers the question, “Who is in charge, me or the church?” Willimon writes, “Lectionary preaching helpfully demonstrates to the congregation that we preach what we have been told to preach, that we do not select the text for our sermons on the basis of personal preference, but rather our text selects us. Although Barth has unspecified problems with the lectionary, he does seem to value it as a good discipline that keeps preachers “on the path

suggested by the church.”⁶¹ The distinguished German theologian Karl Barth himself said,

We may voluntarily follow the prescribed readings, even though much might be said against the ancient church lectionary. When following the readings we are at once compelled to say only what the prescribed text wants, and our own thoughts are held in check. Calvin calls the church the mother of believers, and a child lets its parents guide it, so a pastor may submit to what the church decides. It is not absolutely necessary, however, to stay on the path suggested by the church.⁶²

The second point surrounding the purity of the “big idea” as expository leaves one to think that interpretation of the text is subservient to the exposition of that very same text. David E. Fitch, author of *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church from Big Business, Parachurch Organizations, Psychotherapy, Consumer Capitalism, and Other Modern Maladies*, would agree that the purity of the expository message is a myth and, in truth, is quite arbitrary to the preacher and subjective to the hearer. Fitch writes,

The expository preacher therefore is arbitrating between exegetical choices as the sermon is developed as opposed to extracting the one meaning of the text. Since evangelical expository preaching assumes that we do not need a church teaching authority to interpret a text, each expository preacher is left on his or her own to make these grammatical choices “objectively” for the edification of the church. . . . The result is that there is no one determinate meaning of the text that can be explicated apart from the history of the church and interpretation. Instead, under the guise of “preaching the Word,” expository preachers have the final say on what the text shall mean for the listeners. The idea of a single “original intended, propositional meaning” proves to be a myth.⁶³

⁶¹ William W. Willimon, *Conversations with Barth on Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 74.

⁶² Karl Barth, *Homiletics*, trans. by G.W. Bromiley and Donald E. Daniels (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 94.

⁶³ David E. Fitch, *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church from Big Business, Parachurch Organizations, Psychotherapy, Consumer Capitalism, and Other Modern Maladies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 132.

Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century

“Preaching is indispensable to Christianity,” writes Anglican world leader, John R. W. Stott. This quote exemplifies the succinct and profound ways in which Stott writes about the importance of preaching.⁶⁴ The depth of analysis and breadth of historical references make this book alone a stronger theological work than Robinson’s *Biblical Preaching*. Like Robinson, Stott is a great preacher. Unlike Robinson’s more traditional evangelical associations, Stott is known worldwide for his evangelistic efforts, evangelical academic wisdom, and ecumenical heart.

His structure within the book shows the scope of his understanding of preaching. Stott begins with the legacy of preaching historically, starting with Jesus, the Apostles, and the Church Fathers, and the enormous influence they and others throughout Church history have had in the world over the last two thousand years. In chapter two, Stott successfully attempts to uncover the contemporary objections to preaching, including the early postmodern thinking regarding anti-authoritarianism and loss of trust in the concept of truth. On this topic he quotes the famous past pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, G. Campbell Morgan, a gifted preacher who supports Stott’s premise that effective preaching works in any context. Stott quotes Morgan: “Preaching is not the proclamation of a theory, or the discussion of a doubt. . . . Speculation is not preaching. Neither is the declaration of negations preaching. Preaching is the proclamation of the Word, the truth as the truth has been revealed.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 15.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

Stott provides in the third chapter his theological foundations to expository preaching. Stott provides five arguments that strengthen the necessity for preaching and the nature of preachers to be expositors (see Figure 2).

1. The Doctrine of God
 - a. God is light, pp. 93-94
 - b. God has acted, p. 94
 - c. God has spoken, pp. 94-95
2. The Doctrine about Scripture
 - a. Scripture is God's Word Written, pp. 96-100
 - b. God still speaks through what he has spoken, pp. 100-103
 - c. God's Word is powerful, pp. 103-109
3. The Doctrine of the Church
 - a. The Church is the creation of God by his Word, pp. 109-113
 - b. God's new creation (the Church) is as dependent upon his Word as his old creation (the universe), pp. 114-115
4. The Doctrine of the Pastoral Ministry
 - a. Jesus Christ still gives overseers to his Church, pp. 116-124
5. The Doctrine of Preaching
 - a. Expository Preaching Sets limits to the Text, pp. 126
 - b. Expository Preaching Demands Integrity to the Text, p. 127-129
 - c. Expository Preaching Identifies the Pitfalls of Forgetfulness and Disloyalty, pp. 129-132
 - d. Expository Preaching Gives Us Confidence to Preach, pp. 132-133

Figure 2. Stott's Five Arguments for the Necessity of Expository Preaching

In chapters five and six, Stott provides practical guidance on the preacher's study habits and, in particular, the necessity and practice of sermon preparation. The chapters provide little information on "delivery, elocution and gesture."⁶⁶ However, his comments on choosing the text, meditation upon the text, determining the dominant theme,

⁶⁶ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 9.

arranging the material, and concluding the sermon preparation with introduction and conclusion is in the same genre as Robinson's great work.

Stott himself, in his introduction, explains that chapters three, four, seven, and eight are the heart of his message. He writes,

I want to put first things first, and because I believe that by far the most important secrets of preaching are not technical but theological and personal. Hence Chapter Three on 'Theological Foundation for Preaching' and Chapters Seven and Eight on such personal characteristics of the preacher as sincerity, earnestness, courage and humility. Another particular emphasis I have made, born of growing experience and conviction, is on 'Preaching as Bridge-building' (Chapter Four). A true sermon bridges the gulf between the biblical and modern worlds, and must be equally earthed in both.⁶⁷

Because of the theological foundations outlined, historically and exegetically in the book, there is much to commend the reader to this book as a classic on preaching. For the theological student learning about preaching, both Robinson's book and Stott's book are necessary in understanding the foundation and formulas surrounding expository preaching.

Lectionary Preaching

The two works that have received the greatest endorsement within the North American Anglican Communion have been *Preaching the Lectionary: The Word of God for the Church Today*, by Reginald H. Fuller and Daniel Westberg,⁶⁸ and the twelve-

⁶⁷ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 10.

⁶⁸ Reginald H. Fuller and Daniel Westberg, *Preaching the Lectionary: The Word of God for the Church Today* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006).

volume work, *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary*, edited by David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor.⁶⁹

The first work was initially intended for Roman Catholics to assist them in their preaching, but now is used in more mainline Protestant denominations since the Roman Catholic Church has not officially endorsed the Revised Common Lectionary. The authors, Fuller and Westberg, are both Anglo-Catholic Episcopal priests and seminary professors. The authors indicated that it was their desire to help the preacher prepare homilies that would be exegetically sound and practically relevant to the parish.⁷⁰

The multi-volume work, *Feasting on the Word*, was designed to help the preacher through the Church year and the lectionary readings from four perspectives: theological, pastoral, exegetical, and homiletical. Each column, in parallel construction, was written by different authors but focused on the same lectionary text. Thus every Sunday, congregants will receive the theological, pastoral, exegetical, and homiletical ideas of the Old Testament, the Psalms, New Testament, and the Gospel. The general editors, David L. Bartlett, American Baptist professor of the New Testament, and Barbara Brown Taylor, Episcopal priest and adjunct professor of several seminaries, provide guidance to the ecumenical cast of professors and preachers.

The advantages of lectionary preaching are many, including the ability to not be motivated by secular consumer events like Mother's Day or Father's Day, or even by tragedies. Willimon reflects on this idea:

⁶⁹ David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, general eds., *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008-2011).

⁷⁰ Fuller and Westberg, *Preaching the Lectionary*, ix.

Shortly after the events of September 11, 2001, I edited a collection of sermons by campus ministers that were preached the day after that tragedy. Most of those sermons, including my own, were reflections on that event; most were therapeutic attempts to console people who were in grief. Notable exceptions were the sermons by the Roman Catholic campus ministers at Notre Dame University. Two of their sermons simply announced the prescribed lectionary text for the day and proceeded to explicate the text, “as if nothing happened.” I found their freedom exhilarating. The lectionary had enabled them to refuse giving the perpetrators of the 9/11 tragedy yet another tragedy: the forsaking of the church’s important biblical basis.⁷¹

In addition to avoiding circumstantial and sometimes secular holidays, lectionary preaching places the Church, not the pastor, in charge of spiritual formation through the biblical text. The pastor is simply a servant-leader in submission, along with the congregation, to the text. Willimon writes,

The text itself also has a vested interest, namely *to create and to critique a new people*. There is power in preaching from the canonical text. That’s why there are few things more important for a preacher than to preach from the Common Lectionary. Most of our people are under the impression that we preach what’s on our mind. . . . No. In preaching from the Lectionary, we demonstrate that we preach what we have been *told*. We make visible that our preaching is the result of our having borne the burden of the church’s book. We make clear our authority. We make clear our authority.⁷²

It can be further argued that the faithful use of the lectionary can provide a theological balance between the Church to be relevant and faithful. The danger for the contemporary Church is simply to be “faddish” so that many will go much like many of the world’s people are attracted to clothing fads or new television programs. I suspect that many of the new names of churches are simply branding that is designed to be a marketing ploy. Recently, Campus Crusade for Christ has changed its branding; they would like simply to be called “CRU” (pronounced Crew).

⁷¹ Willimon, *Conversations with Barth on Preaching*, 72.

⁷² William H. Willimon, *Peculiar Speech: Preaching to the Baptized* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 13.

George Lindbeck has argued that at the heart of the current “crisis” of biblical authority are not the questions and debates about inerrancy or inspiration. Rather, at the heart of the “crisis” is the gap between past and present, what God said then and what God says now, which is typically described as the need for the church to be “relevant.” Lindbeck thus advocates a critical retrieval of classical, pre-modern scriptural practice that articulates “the liturgically embedded Christological and Trinitarian reading of the Hebrew Scriptures.”⁷³

The faithful use of the lectionary helped the Church of England develop an Anglican catechism for congregations that assisted their priests with their sermons. John Wesley, often considered the founder of Methodism, was a lifelong Anglican and an ordained priest. Wesley believed in the lectionary and the Book of Homilies developed by the Methodist Church. In his book, *Christian Preaching*, Michael Pasquarello writes,

It is impossible, however, to understand Wesley’s vision and practice of preaching apart from the ecclesial tradition, the Church of England, that was of primary importance in nourishing his faith and understanding. The standard collection of Anglicanism’s theological teachings was the two *Book of Homilies* published under Edward VI and Elizabeth, formularies to which Wesley was ever eager to confess his allegiance. . . . During the latter years of his ministry, after returning from a tour of Methodist societies throughout England and Ireland, Wesley reported: The book, which next to the Holy Scriptures was of greatest use to them in settling their judgment as to the grand point of justification by faith, is the book of Homilies.⁷⁴

The lectionary, the preaching based on the selected biblical readings in the *Book of Homilies*, provided the Church of England with necessary tools in evangelism and catechism.

⁷³ George Lindbeck, as quoted in Michael Pasquarello, III, *Christian Preaching: A Trinitarian Theology of Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 141.

⁷⁴ Michael Pasquarello, III, *Christian Preaching: A Trinitarian Theology of Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 102-03.

At the conclusion of this literature review, it is important to point out that the liturgy, along with the lectionary, was a necessary part of Christlike spiritual formation for the early Church, the patristic periods, the medieval period, and the post-Reformation period. It can and should be a necessary part of Christlike spiritual formation today as well. Father Jeremy Driscoll ties this conviction to the “Rule of Faith” when he writes, “The liturgy, therefore, gave rise to both the interpretive framework and the interpretation of the Christian Bible, the apostolic witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ through the medium of Scripture according to the pattern of the *regula fidei*, or Rule of Faith.”⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Jeremy Driscoll, “Uncovering the Dynamic *Lex Orandi – Lex Credendi* in the Baptismal Theology of Irenaeus,” *Proc Ecclesia* 12, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 214-15.

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGY OF CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER

Developing a theology of Christlike character can be a difficult undertaking for a pastor influenced by the many different theological schools of thought. Rudolf Bultmann, a German Lutheran, believed that we can know almost nothing about the person and character of Jesus. He writes, “It is impossible to re-pristiniate a past world picture by sheer resolve, especially a mythical world picture, now that all of our thinking is irrevocably formed by science. A blind acceptance of New Testament mythology would be simply arbitrariness; to make such acceptance a demand of faith would be to reduce faith to a work.”¹ Similarly, Gunther Bornkamm, form-criticism proponent and German theologian, agrees with that assessment: “We possess no single word of Jesus and no single story of Jesus, no matter how incontestably genuine they may be, which do not contain at the same time the confession of the believing congregation or at least are embedded there in. This makes the search after the bare facts of history difficult and to a large degree futile.”² As an evangelical within the Anglican tradition, I have a higher

¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, ed. by Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 3.

² Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 14.

regard for the authority and accuracy of the New Testament representing the character of Jesus Christ than do the scholars quoted above. The witness of the New Testament concerning Jesus of Nazareth may more resemble, as Jaroslav Pelikan puts it, “a set of paintings . . . than it does a photograph”; nevertheless the Gospel writings are the most accurate portrait we have available.³

What Kind of Person Was Jesus Christ?

“What kind of person was Jesus Christ?” has been the most important question to be answered during the last two thousand years. The right answer or a wrong response to that question has dramatic implications that will change the course of one’s present world and the nature of one’s future world. Christianity is nothing without the person of Christ; for a historical Jesus lies at the very core of the Christian faith.

“Who do you say that I am?” was the very question Jesus asked his disciples (Matthew 16:15). The four Gospels, in their own distinctive narratives, answer that question of the person of Christ even more fully than Peter’s concise God-inspired response. Jesus was declared in the Gospels as the Messiah (Mark 8:29); Son of God (Matthew 16:16); prophet (Luke 24:19; 6:14), Rabbi (John 1:49); King (John 1:49b), Son of Man (Mark 14:62) and Savior (John 4:42). The universal Church through the centuries has recognized that Jesus Christ is fully and completely divine while at the same time he is fully and completely human.

John’s Gospel affirms that Jesus is fully and completely God. John writes, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And

³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 9.

the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1, 14, ESV). John also records Thomas’s answer to Jesus: “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28, ESV). The Apostle Paul writes to the Romans, “To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen” (Romans 9:5). And the Apostle Paul writes to the Philippians, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:5-7). Paul also writes to Titus, “Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). The Apostle Peter writes of himself, “Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:1).

Along with acknowledging the full divinity of Jesus Christ, the universal Church also recognized that Jesus was fully and completely human. He had a human body that experienced hunger, pain, thirst, exhaustion, and death (John 4:6; 19:28; Matthew 4:2; Luke 23:46). He expressed human emotions of anger, love, and sadness (Mark 10:21; 11:15-17, John 11:32-36). He had human experiences related to growing up, learning, dealing with temptation, and working (Mark 1:13; 6:3; Luke 2:46-52).

Jesus of Nazareth was fully and completely God and man, distinct in nature but completely united in one person. The Ancient ecumenical Creeds testify of this truth. Thomas Oden, the eminent theology and ethics scholar at Drew University, writes,

It is hard to think of a single person who has affected human history more profoundly than Jesus of Nazareth. This alone would make his story significant. Yet this is not the primary reason he is studied. He is not investigated as Alexander the Great or Napoleon would be – for their colossal power or dominance. His influence is not outwardly measured in terms of worldly power, but transforming power. Historical study cannot ignore the history of Jesus. His footprints are all over human history, its literary, moral, and social landscape, and on every continent. Who has affected history more than he? No other individual has become such a permanent fixture of the human memory. He has been worshiped as Lord through a hundred generations.⁴

What Is Christlike Character?

The Greek and Hebrew words for “character” initially made reference to a “graver,” a tool used for engraving or the person using the tool. It has the idea of a figure stamped, an exact copy or representation. God commands the prophet Isaiah to write with a man’s *kheret*, which was a stylus used for engraving letters (Isaiah 8:1). Aaron, in building the golden calf, used an “engraving” tool (Exodus 32:4). The word “character” came into the English language in the fourteenth century via Latin and Old French.⁵ The Greeks also used another word, *dokime*, which means something “that which has been tested and found worthy.” In a moral sense, character is a stable and durable set of values that causes a person to be trusted to act consistently in those values.⁶

Our Lord Jesus Christ provides us a glimpse of self-revelation as he describes himself as “gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29). As the Apostle Paul is defending his ministry to the Corinthians, he describes the character of Christ as

⁴ Thomas C. Oden, *Classic Christianity* (New York: Harper One, 1992), 214.

⁵ Word-Origins.com, s.v. “character,” <http://word-origins.com/definition/character.html> (accessed August 15, 2011).

⁶ Kathleen A. Farmer, *Character, The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 583.

“meekness and gentleness” (2 Corinthians 10:1). The seven famous “I am” passages in the Gospel of John speak more metaphorically of his salvific divinity than his humanity: 1) “I am the bread of life” in John 6:35, 48, and 51; 2) “I am the light of the world” in John 8:12 and 9:5; 3) “I am the door of the sheep” in John 10:7 and 9; 4) “I am the good shepherd” in John 10:11 and 14; 5) “I am the resurrection and the life” in John 11:25; 6) “I am the way, the truth, and the life” in John 14:6; and 7) “I am the true vine” in John 15:1.

However, to be those things listed above, even metaphorically, would indicate a person of service, love, and trustworthiness. One can gain additional information about the character of Christ in the narrative of the request by James and John to sit in places of special honor when Jesus establishes his kingdom (Mark 10:35-45). Jesus affirms to all of the apostles present that leadership in God’s kingdom is by service to others. Jesus states in Mark 10:43-45, “But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus clearly demonstrated the servant’s heart by his death on the cross for humankind, and he demonstrated the servant’s heart by his life, most vividly in the washing of the disciples’ feet (John 13:1-20). As a follower of Christ, becoming a servant is part of the character one is developing in spiritual formation. Jesus states, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you

if you do them” (John 13:14-17). Christ’s vivid demonstration of humility in service is also captured by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:5-11. In poetic structure, Paul writes of Jesus’ servant’s heart by tracing the glorious preexistence, the subsequent humble incarnation and death, the miraculous resurrection, and back to the glorious ascension of our Lord in order to encourage the Church of Philippi to greater humility, love, and service for the sake of others.

Another example of the character of Christ was his humble obedience to the Father in Heaven. Jesus was obedient to his calling of death on the cross (Philippians 2:8; Romans 5:19; Hebrews 5:8), and he was obedient to his calling in life in living out his mission (Luke 4:18-19), preaching the good news of the Kingdom (Luke 4:43), and doing the will of the Father (John 4:34). After the Sabbath healing of a paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus responded to the threats of the Jewish authorities saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise” (John 5:19).

Another example of the character of Christ is the interesting dialogue between Pilate and Jesus about the kingdom. The Apostle John writes in his Gospel,

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world – to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. (John 18:36-37).

For Christ to be a witness of the truth would mean that the character of Christ is trustworthy.

In the Transfiguration scene in Luke 9:28-36, the Father's voice comes out of the cloud to Peter, John, and James saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" The Apostle Peter, speaking in Solomon's Portico, encouraging the "men of Israel" to repent and come to Christ, quotes Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15, which states, "The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from you brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you" (Acts 4:22). The prophet, of course, is Christ. Christ can be trusted because he is trustworthy.

Michael Green, Oxford professor and evangelist, in his marvelous little book, *Who Is This Jesus?* writes,

One thing, though, is certain. The Jesus who meets us in the pages of the four Gospels is very different from the picture many have of Him. He is nothing like the "gentle Jesus meek and mild" of the children's stories. He is not the miserable holy man who never laughs. He is not the fearsome judge who watches to see if we are enjoying ourselves and then tells us to stop. Nor is He the lifeless figure in the stained-glass window. Jesus, as the Gospels reveal Him to us, is radiantly alive and supremely attractive.⁷

Green describes Jesus as a person who was great company for adults and children, who made God real to people, whose life was worthy to model as an ideal for humanity, who was an authoritative teacher whose actions were equally powerful, and who was unafraid of life and free to express his universal unselfish love for humanity.⁸

In describing Christlike character, one would be remiss to not mention that the Holy Spirit guided Our Lord Jesus Christ in his earthly life. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at his baptism (Luke 3:22). Jesus was described as "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1). After reading from the scroll of Isaiah in his hometown synagogue, Jesus

⁷ Michael Green, *Who Is This Jesus?* (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1992), 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 9-14.

testifies that the “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” (Luke 4:18, 22). The Apostle Peter, proclaiming the Gospel to Cornelius and his family, mentions “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power” (Acts 10:38). Even during the wilderness experience when Jesus was tempted by the devil, he was led by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1). The Holy Spirit was part of the engraving of Jesus’ character.

Christlike Character in a Contemporary Person

Filled with limited self-determination, unmet expectations, the need to be loved and to love another, and mixed often with neuroses, anxieties, and fears, the human personality is very complex. The complexity within is only complicated by the complexity from the outside as technology is constantly changing the way human beings live life. Three considerations come to mind: Is it possible for a person living in the twenty-first century to manifest the Christlike character that was modeled in the first century? Secondly, do the Scriptures desire for followers of Christ to manifest Christlike character? And finally, what does that Christlike character look like for us today? After considering these questions, this section will address how the Church, preaching, and spiritual disciplines each have a role in developing Christlike character.

Christlike Character Is Possible Today

Indeed, Christlike character is possible today. There is a great movement afoot in the twenty-first century by Christian teachers to remind believers that Jesus did not teach so much on how to get into heaven as much as he tried to teach people how to put heaven into their lives. On my shelf alone are books written by Dallas Willard, Richard Foster,

James Bryan Smith, and Ralph Martin that clearly articulate the fact that Christlike character is not only possible, but necessary for a follower of Jesus.⁹

Both the Catholic and Protestant scholars listed above agree that Christlikeness is possible in the twenty-first century. These scholars are also in alignment with the thought that the price of not being Christlike is actually higher for the human being than trying to live the life of Christ. James Bryan Smith puts it this way: “The question is not, ‘What will I have to give up to follow Jesus?’ but rather, what will I never get to experience if I choose not to follow Jesus? The answer is clear: we will forfeit the chance to live a good and beautiful life.”¹⁰

The Scriptures Desire That Believers Be Christlike

Indeed, the Scriptures teach that one should be Christlike. Jesus, in the well-known Sermon on the Mount, creates a challenge to his disciples and a standard for the disciples to follow: “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:20 and 48). Our Lord Jesus Christ calls his disciples live lives not in outward conformity but with pure hearts. The Kingdom of Christ calls disciples to the right kind of living from the inside out because

⁹ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002); Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1998); Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2006); Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988); James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009); Ralph Martin, *The Fulfillment of All Desire* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2006).

¹⁰ Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life*, 31.

the new life, often called eternal life, produces transformed hearts and different motivations.

One of the dominant themes of Jesus' activity in his earthly ministry was the calling, developing, and guiding his disciples to be like him. The word "disciple" occurs 260 times in the New Testament, most often within the four Gospels and the Book of Acts. *Mathetes*, the Greek word for "disciple," and its derivatives, were used to designate a learner or someone who learns. Willard and others have described a disciple of Jesus as "an apprentice to Jesus."¹¹ He continues, "But if I am to be someone's apprentice, there is one absolutely essential condition. I must be with that person. This is true of the student-teacher relationship in all generality. And it is precisely what it means to follow Jesus when he was here in human form. To follow him, meant in the first place, to be with Him. If I am Jesus' disciple that means I am with him to learn from him how to be like him."¹²

Not only did the Gospels reflect the calling of the disciples by Jesus (Mark 1:14ff; John 1:43-51), the Gospels also revealed three key aspects of discipleship. First, disciples as apprentices are to be with their teachers (Mark 3:14; Luke 9:18; 22:56). Second, disciples as apprentices receive special teaching apart from the normal population (Mark 4:33-34; 10:23-45; 11:12-26; 13:1-37). Finally, disciples as apprentices were expected to be like their teachers and serve as a ministry extension of the teachers (Matthew 9:35-11:1; Mark 6:7-13, 30; Luke 9:1-10; 10:1-12).

¹¹ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 281.

¹² *Ibid.*, 276.

In order to be adept to do or become what the teacher is, the apprentice must be with the master-teacher. In this case, the master-teacher lives “on earth as it is in heaven.” In essence, the disciples were learning from Jesus how to live in the kingdom of God; so, in turn, the first disciples of Jesus will produce disciples and teach them how to live in the kingdom of God (Matthew 28:19, 20).

The Book of Acts chronicles the activities of the first disciples, now called apostles (“sent ones”), making disciples of Jesus from Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans while teaching them about the kingdom of God (Acts 2;8:1-25;10). Every letter in the New Testament speaks of the ontological necessity of being like Christ. Like the theological concept of eternal life, being Christlike has different descriptions, such as “godliness” or the various forms of “to be sanctified” (I Timothy 2:2; 4:7; 6:6; 2 Timothy 3:12; Titus 1:1; 2 Peter 1:3 and 6; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12; Romans 6:19 and 22; I Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2.)

The Apostle Paul was very clear when speaking to the disciples of Jesus at Corinth of his spiritual responsibilities to them. He writes, “I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ” (I Corinthians 4:14-18). Similarly, the Apostle writes to the Corinthian Church, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (I Corinthians 11:1). The Apostle Paul encouraged the Colossian Church with the same mission: “If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-4).

What Christlike Character Looks Like Today

It is clear that Christlikeness is not in reference to appearance or maintaining the same cultural artifacts of first century Palestine. Although there are references in the Scripture concerning outside appearance, the primary biblical focus has been on the inside of the person. Philip Schaff, editor of *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*, writes,

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity . . . following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. . . . They marry, as do all; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives.¹³

The ultimate distinctive of Christlike character is the “with-God life.” In the General Introduction in *The Renovare Spiritual Formation Bible*, the authors write, “The with-God life that we see in the Bible is the very life to which we are called. It is, in fact, exactly the life Jesus is referring to when he declares, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly’ (John 10:10, KJV). It is a life of

¹³ *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*, ed. by Philip Schaff, Christian Classics Ethereal Library online, www.ccel.org/ccl/schaff/anf01.iii.ii.v.html (accessed August 28, 2011).

unhurried peace and power. It is solid, serene, simple, radiant. It takes no time, though it permeates all of our time.”¹⁴

The “with-God life” strongly suggests an interactive, engaging, and transforming relationship with one another because of close proximity. The Apostle Paul actually articulates the fact that the closeness of that relationship goes beyond being next to each other; the “with-God life” implies being within each other, as in an incarnational relationship. Paul writes, “My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 4:19). Paul suggests that to have Christ formed in you, the follower of Jesus is characterized by a life led by the Holy Spirit, not by the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:18). Paul, then, contrasting these two kinds of lives, lists the kind of fruit produced when one is led by the Holy Spirit as Christ is being formed within him or her: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22,23). This outward evidence of the inward reality is correctly called the “sacramental life.” The fruit of the Holy Spirit, also known as “the Spirit of Christ” in Romans 8:9, is the outward mark of character that reflects the inward person dwelling in Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ uses the metaphor of fruit and vine in describing that same relationship: “Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. . . . My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples” (John 15:4-5, 8).

¹⁴ Richard Foster, *The Renovare Spiritual Formation Bible* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2005), xxxii.

For the contemporary follower of Jesus, the applications can be as varied as the contexts of their environments. Whereas self-control can cross similar generational applications like eating and drinking, for the twenty-first century person, that fruit now also applies to their self-control of the iPhone, tweeter account, or Facebook instead of dealing with cattle, horses, and farming. All the fruit described applies to every human being regardless of gender, age, status, or race. How that fruit is applied simply changes naturally with the context.

The Role of the Church in Developing Character

In understanding character development, the Church itself is an important theological idea. Depending on the various views of the participants within the Church, and the many critics outside of the Church, the Church may have scandalous or sacred character. For some proponents of the Church, it can be seen equally as both scandalous and sacred.¹⁵

The Apostles' Creed states that that the Church is “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church,” implying strongly that this faith community is the Holy Spirit-empowered continuation of the embodied universal presence of Jesus on earth. In various places in the New Testament, the Church has been called “the temple of the Holy Spirit” (I Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:19-22); “the family and flock of God” (John 10:16; Ephesians 2:18; 3:15; 4:5; I Peter 5:2-4), “God’s Israel” (Galatians 6:16); and “the body and bride of Christ” (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7, 21:2,9). The Church appears in local parishes, each one a version in miniature of the Church as a

¹⁵ Tony Baron, *The Cross and the Towel* (Tucson, AZ: Wheatmark Publications, 2011), 43-51.

whole (I Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 1:22-23; 3:6: 4:4; Revelation 2:1). The New Testament record makes clear that all followers of Jesus are shaped by the local faith community, receiving and being guided by her nurture and discipline, and that those who are not part of the community spiritually impoverished themselves (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 10:25). N.T. Wright, retired bishop of Durham within the Anglican Communion, believes the Church first identified itself as an “alternative” family with baptism and the Eucharist as the most prominent demonstrations in worshipping Jesus.¹⁶

The mission of the Church is simply the believers’ committed participation in God’s own mission to the world for the redemption of all of his creation. The resurrected Jesus engaged his disciples with an imperative to make disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20). Because the living God makes himself known in Jesus Christ, it is imperative for the immediate eleven apostles and later the entire Church to make disciples (learners or apprentices) who live and who call others to live according to teachings of Jesus throughout the world. The lack of attention to this primary mission of the Church has caused its members to look inward for purpose, creating places of fellowship designed simply for self-maintenance. In other words, this kind of lifestyle within the Church has created a lazy eye toward mission and a lukewarm non-Christlike assembly.

¹⁶ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 448-49.

If, as stated above, the mission of the Church is believers' committed participation in God's own mission to the world, then spiritual formation (Christlikeness) is the singular task of the local parish. In his excellent book on the Church and spiritual formation, Wilhoit writes,

Our charge, given by Jesus himself, is to make disciples, baptize them, and teach these new disciples to obey his commands (Matthew 28:19-20). The witness, worship, teaching, and compassion that the church is to practice all require that Christians be spiritually formed. Although formation describes the central work of the church, and despite a plethora of resolutions, programs, and resources, the fact remains that spiritual formation has not been the priority in the North American church that it should be.¹⁷

The Church, in order to be the body of Christ, must start and form ontologically before it can become instrumentally useful in the world. The problem, according to Willard, is that "no current denomination or local congregation has a concrete plan and practice for teaching people" how to obey all the commands Jesus has given in the Great Commission.¹⁸ The Church, rightly implemented theologically, is designed to be a community of apprentices centered upon the person of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the Church's role is significant in character development.

Unfortunately, the Church in North America has created more "characters" than those that have manifested the spiritual character of Christ. As a result of this, at times members of the Church have been more enamored with positional power and professional status, than the Jesus' lifestyle of the cross and the towel.

¹⁷ James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 15-16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

The Role of Preaching in Developing Character

The reason more Christians do not have Christlike character is because the Church has lost her sole mission of making disciples. Willard considers the function of the preacher in Christlike spiritual formation:

The pastor is the teacher. If you're going to pursue spiritual formation, the preacher must be committed to it – you cannot plow around the pulpit. Time after time you'll see one or two members of a church get very involved in spiritual formation, but if the guy who does the preaching isn't sold on it, it doesn't take root in the congregation. I can tell you that spiritual formation will flourish in any congregation where the pastor takes the lead, understands the gospel of the kingdom of the heavens, preaches it, and then coaches people in their spiritual lives.¹⁹

The preacher, before he or she can lead, must be a follower and a servant. The preacher must be a follower of Jesus and a servant of the Word of God. Since the Scriptures are God's reliable and authoritative revelation of himself, so all spiritual formation toward godliness or Christlikeness must start and be sustained by it. Believers are commanded to study, emulate, and instruct others about the truth of God's Word (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Ezra 7:10). God's Word is described as "living and active" designed to deeply infiltrate and transform our lives (Hebrews 4:12-13). Although God has revealed himself in natural revelation through nature and conscience (Romans 1:18-23; 2:14-16), he has given clarity through his special revelation, the written Word.

Often the task of the preacher is a difficult one. Willimon tells a story of a disgruntled congregant leaving his church on Sunday and saying to the bishop, "I know that you would not intentionally hurt anyone with what you say from the pulpit, but I was hurt by what you said today in your sermon." Willimon responded, "Where would you

¹⁹ Dallas Willard website, "Conversation with Dallas Willard about Renovation of the Heart," <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID+112> (accessed August 31, 2012).

have gotten the notion that I would not want to hurt you? I'm a preacher. Some infliction of pain comes with the job!"²⁰

The preacher is of great concern to the writers of Holy Writ. Peter addresses the problem of false teachers and the destructive effects of their teachings upon the congregation. He writes, "But false prophets also rose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinion. They will even deny the Master who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Even so, many will follow their licentious ways, and because of these teachers the way of truth will be maligned" (2 Peter 2:1-2). They are called "selfish and greedy" (Isaiah 56:10-12), "unmindful of the flock of God" (Ezra 34:2-4), and "distorters of truth and savage wolves" (Acts 20: 29, 30). The Apostle Paul, as he leaves the elders of Ephesus to go to Jerusalem, says to them, "I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to you and teaching you publicly and from house to house . . . for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:20, 27).

The Apostle Paul calls these false teachers "perverts of Christ's gospel" (Galatians 1:7), "money motivated" (Romans 16:17-18), "deceptive" (Eph. 4:14); "unstable" (I Timothy 1:6-7), "fable lovers" (2 Timothy 4:3, 4), and "truth resisters" (I Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:8). Additionally, the Apostle Paul believed that the prevalence of these false teachers would increase until Jesus Christ returns (I Timothy 4:1-3; II Timothy 1:14, 15; 4:3-4). The Apostle John confirms Paul's statements that

²⁰ William H. Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 141.

there are many false prophets attempting to mislead, and in some cases, succeeding in misleading God's people (I John 4:1-3; Revelation 2:2, 14, 20).

It is through preaching that the Church proclaims the Good News (Acts 1:1-5; 2; 13:16-41; 17; 19:20). The Apostles, in response to the Hellenists being neglected in the distribution of food, appointed seven men to solve the problem so the Twelve could devote themselves "to prayer and to serving the word" (Acts 6:4). When the word of God continued to be communicated faithfully, the Scripture states that "the disciples increased greatly" (Acts 6:7).

Preaching was the definitive spiritual gift used in making disciples for Christ (Romans 10:8-10; 14-17). Of course, the rhetoric of preaching had many other descriptive phrases in the New Testament, including words of boldness, proclamation, bringing good news, teaching, witnessing, conversing, prophesying, and exhorting (Mark 16:15; Acts 2:40; 4:31; 15:35; 17:3; 17:18; I Corinthians 14:37; II Corinthians 1:23; Philippians 1:8; Titus 1:9; 2:15).

Willard has said that the pulpit is the "greatest influencer in the world."²¹ This is reminiscent of the famous words of Melville's classic, *Moby Dick*:

The pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world. From thence it is that the storm of God's quick wrath is first descried, and the bow must bear the earliest brunt. From thence it is that the God of breezes fair or foul is first invoked for favorable winds. Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow.²²

Preaching has a critical dimension to character development for those that are in the parish and seek to follow as apprentices the Master, Jesus Christ.

²¹ Dallas Willard, in lecture for the course, "GM720 Spirituality & Ministry," Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center, Sierra Madre, California, June 6, 2006.

²² Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), 43-44.

The Role of Spiritual Disciplines in Developing Character

Since spiritual formation unto Christlikeness is a transformational process, attending a local assembly or listening to the words of an effective preacher engaging with the Word of God is not enough for the follower of Jesus. There is a pattern of life, an intentional well-directed effort of spiritual disciplines put forth by the apprentice of Jesus, which will provide greater access and conformity to the likeness of Christ. Spiritual disciplines are much like the physical disciplines of a professional athlete. The physical disciplines—diet, exercise, sleep, stretching, team practices, video observation of the opponent, and other unseen activities—are designed to only increase the capacity of the athlete during the real action, the game itself. The disciplines are not the game; but the effort provided in these private and sometimes communal areas enhance the ability to play the game well.

As it is in sports, the same is true in regards to spiritual formation and its role in developing Christlike character for the follower of Jesus. The Apostle Paul even uses the phrase “work out” in describing the spiritual disciplines necessary to follow the will of God: “Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). The Apostle Paul indicates his desire to increase his spiritual and physical capacity through disciplines for the sake of the gospel, writing,

Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one.

So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified. (I Corinthians 9:24-27)

Paul, in exhorting his son Timothy in the faith, tells him to “train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (I Timothy 4:7b-8). It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul, committed to a life of spiritual disciplines, tells Timothy in his very last letter before his martyrdom that he has “fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

The writer of Hebrews, speaking of the great faith of the saints of old, uses the athlete analogy of listening and obeying his running coach: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2a). So it is with little wonder that spiritual disciplines are a necessary ingredient for the child of God who seeks to follow Jesus and become Christlike. Although spiritual disciplines have been advocated by apostolic teachings, the patristic fathers, and many of the mystics in the historic churches, evangelicals were relatively newcomers to the spiritual disciplines. The fathers of spiritual formation for evangelicals have been Richard Foster and Dallas Willard. Foster, Quaker by conviction, and Dallas Willard, ordained as Southern Baptist and now worshiping at a Vineyard Church, have provided evangelicals a theological language they could understand about the necessity of spiritual disciplines. Both esteemed professors of long-standing tenure at different institutions and colleagues at Renovare, they have mentored many other leaders and have encouraged other evangelical

institutions to either provide classes on spiritual formation or provide entire degree programs on the subject (including Talbot School of Theology, Azusa Pacific University Graduate School of Theology, Westmont College, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Wheaton College). Foster's and Willard's seminal books on spiritual disciplines have provided the evangelical Church better language to grasp what have been long-standing Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican teachings on spiritual formation and Christlikeness.

Christlike character, to be fully developed for the contemporary follower of Jesus Christ, must be Holy Spirit-infused, ecclesiastically engaged, Word of God-incarnated through the proclamation of gifted preachers, and internally disciplined so that the apprentice can have the necessary capacity to become like Jesus. The next section will present the strategy for developing Christlike character at The Way.

PART THREE

STRATEGY

CHAPTER 5

THE RECTOR'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER

On the Feast of St. Columba, June 9, 2001, I was ordained a priest in the “One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church” by the then Episcopal Bishop of San Diego, the Right Reverend Gethin Hughes at St. Paul’s Cathedral in San Diego, California. My ordination six months earlier as a Deacon, in which capacity I served at St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church in Rancho Penasquitos (San Diego) as an Associate Pastor, provided a glimpse of how the Anglican tradition, American style, developed Christlike character.

Raised as a baptized and confirmed Roman Catholic, I was familiar with many of the liturgical practices and ecclesiastical terms within the Episcopal Church. However, I later transitioned to classic evangelicalism. My initial ordination was in the Evangelical Free Church of America and I subsequently pastored in Calvary Chapel settings. Thus, at the time of my ordination in the Episcopal Church, I was decades removed from the ancient traditions.

In my evangelical tradition, based upon my education at Talbot and Dallas Seminaries from 1976-1981, the pastor’s role was primarily a teacher of God’s Word. During the time I was in seminary, the models advocated as ideal pastors were John MacArthur and Chuck Swindoll. Both were highly effective preachers at very large

churches that taught God's Word primarily through expository methods within books of the Bible. I will never forget the large stone monument in front of Dallas Seminary engraved with the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word." Very little was taught about the pastoral care side of ministry and spiritual formation was not even a term that was used during my theological education. A class with Professor Howard Hendricks at Dallas Theological Seminary entitled, "The Principles and Practices of Discipleship," was the closest my education came to spiritual formation. I also was influenced by several Navigators, and as a result Bible memorization was a significant part of my development as a Christian.

Perhaps due to my youth or even my undeveloped spirituality, my impression of spiritual maturity and Christlikeness was focused more on how much one knew about the Bible than how one lived in life. Certainly, living a pure life was important, as it was taught by every professor. But the way to live the pure Christlike life seemed to come more from cognitive awareness than incarnational application. Hence, the pastor-teacher, as explained in Ephesians 4:11-12 by the professors, was "to equip the saints for the work of ministry." The pastor's job was to teach for forty-five minutes, the congregation's job was to listen on Sunday, and during the week the pastor studies God's Word.

When the Holy Spirit moved me from the Calvary Chapel setting to the more Eucharistic setting within the Episcopal Church, I was stunned to realize that the preaching ministry time was only eight to twelve minutes (though sometimes twenty) and that the preaching segment of the worship service was not the summit of the gathering community. Not only that, the preacher used a lectionary that was seasonal and based on the ancient church calendar rather than teaching verse-by-verse.

The nomenclature often used for seminary students still seeking ordination or ordained clergy within the Anglican Church is often different from that in evangelical circles. Instead of pastoral intern, I was a postulant, and later, an ordinand. Once ordained, as a deacon and later a priest, my first assignment pastorally would place me as a curate. My primary responsibility would be as an assistant to the rector or vicar (the senior pastor), learning the various aspects of pastoral care for the parish. Occasionally, the curate was given the responsibility of preaching in the worship service. Once the bishop believes the curate has enough experience in a local church setting, the curate may seek a position of rector or vicar. A title of “vicar” indicates that the church is still a mission of the diocese receiving financial support. Therefore, a vicar is completely under the authority of the Bishop, who can remove the vicar at any time. A title of “rector” indicates that the parish is completely self-supporting, and the bishop can only remove the individual under some violation of Canon Law. In this paper, the term “rector” will be used to stand for either a rector or a vicar.

Not only is the nomenclature different, but the intentionality of pastoral ministry is also distinctively different. As pastor of an evangelical church, I was viewed often in the same context as laity, except with the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. My evangelical ordination was not a significant experience, often a given after receiving the Masters of Divinity degree from seminary. My initial Evangelical Free Church ordination was only a little more complicated than my Calvary Chapel ordination that was placed in my mailbox by a member of the Elder Board. The primary issue under review by the ordaining committee was whether I believed the theological distinctives of the denomination, especially in the area of eschatology. Although previously ordained by a

Christian church body, the Episcopal Church did not recognize my ordination as valid. Ordination is considered valid when the ordaining body is part of the historic, apostolic churches of the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Anglican communions. The diocese recognized the theological graduate degrees but felt that my seminary education needed additional formation academically, so I was informed that I needed six additional Anglican classes at the Episcopal Theological School at Claremont.

Finally, the theological view of oversight for the Anglican priest goes beyond the local congregation. Historically, the parish was identified by locality, usually a village or small town in England. The parish was the church of the entire community and the priest-in-charge had spiritual oversight for the total community, even when they did not attend the church on Sunday. In essence, much of the rector's responsibilities to the community could be characterized as chaplaincy, tending to births, deaths, and weddings.

This chapter will seek to make the shift from a chaplain model unintentionally advocated within Anglican pastoral traditions to a more missional model for the senior-level parish priest. The preaching ministry is both a priestly and prophetic function, along the Old Testament and early Church traditions. The rector's preaching role is to inspire, equip, and encourage others so that they will follow Jesus Christ regardless of one's life circumstances or station. The rector must lead by modeling Christlike behavior and by providing effective biblically centered messages from the pulpit in order to assist the parish to make the necessary life transitions for Christlike spiritual formation.

The Rector as Priest and Pastor

For the evangelical, the word “priest” unfortunately has negative connotations. This is likely due to the “historic” theological wounds between the Protestants and the Catholics nearly five hundred years ago during the Reformation. But the word “priest” should not be feared.

First of all, Jesus himself is considered our “high priest” in Hebrews 8:1. In Hebrews 7, Christ is described as superior to the high priest Aaron, for Jesus was sinless, unchangeable, and perfect. The author of Hebrews writes,

Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted about the heavens. Unlike the other high priest, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priest those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. (Hebrews 7:23-28)

Additionally, according to the Apostle Paul, Christ as priest satisfies God’s justice, pacifies God’s wrath, justifies the sinner, and sanctifies the believers (Romans 3:24-28; 5:1,9; I Corinthians 1:30).

Another reason the evangelical should not fear the word “priest” is that all followers of Christ are called by God as priests. In Revelation 1:5-6, the Apostle John writes, “To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” Or as the Apostle Peter writes in his first letter to believers, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may

proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (I Peter 2:9). A few verses earlier, he invites the followers to fulfill their calling as a “holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ” (I Peter 2:5).

The final reason the evangelical should not fear recognizing the word “priest” is that it has been the terminology of the apostolic Church from the beginning for a presbyter, or an elder (I Timothy 3:1). In one example, Ignatius, fellow disciple with Polycarp of the Apostle John, acknowledges the threefold office of the Church—bishops, priests/presbyters, and deacons—in his letter to the Church at Magnesia. He writes, “Since, then, I have had the privilege of seeing you, through Damas your most worthy bishop, and through your worthy presbyters Bassus and Apollonius, and through my fellow-servant the deacon Sotio, whose friends may I ever enjoy, inasmuch as he is subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ.”¹ The ancient traditions—Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican—all recognize the three major orders of the Church: bishop, priest, and deacon.

“Pastor” More Correct Than “Priest”

John Stott, recently deceased, ordained a priest “in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church,” writes about how the term “priest” has unfortunately been misunderstood: “‘Priest’ is unfortunately ambiguous. Those with knowledge of the etymology of English words are aware that ‘priest’ is simply a contraction of ‘presbyter,’ meaning ‘elder.’ But it is also used to translate the Greek word, *χιερεθς*, a sacrificing

¹ “Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians,” in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 59.

priest, which is never used of Christian ministers in the New Testament.” Stott then explains why he believes that the term “pastor” is actually more correct than “priest”:

To call clergy “priests” (common as the practice is in Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican circles) gives the false impression that their ministry is primarily directed towards God, whereas the New Testament portrays it as primarily directed towards the Church. So “pastor” remains the most accurate term. The object that it means “shepherd,” and that sheep and shepherds are irrelevant in the bustling cities of the twentieth century, can best be met by recalling the Lord Jesus called himself “the Good Shepherd,” that even city-dwelling Christians will always think of him as such, and that his pastoral ministry (with its characteristics of intimate knowledge, sacrifice, leadership, protection and care) remains the permanent model for all pastors.²

While the apostolic ministry was designed for the universal Church, the primary focus of the eldership/priest (πρεσβυτεροι) was in the local congregation. The early Church typically assumed the role of the overseer (that is, “bishop,” επισκοποι) to be a type or paradigm of the shepherding Christ (John 10:1-16; I Timothy 3:2; I Peter 2:25).

The believers were instructed to highly honor the bishop. Ignatius writes in his letter to the Magnesians,

Now it becomes you also not to treat your bishop too familiarly on the account of his youth, but to yield him all reverence, having respect to the power of God the Father, as I have known even holy presbyters do, not judging rashly, from the manifest youthful appearance of their bishop, but as being themselves prudent in God, submitting to him, or rather not to him, but to the Father of Jesus Christ, the bishop of us all.³

Similarly, in Ignatius’s letter to the Trallians he exhorts the church to be subject to the bishop “as to Jesus Christ,” and to the presbyters “as to the apostles of Jesus Christ.”⁴

² John Stott, *Between Two Worlds The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 117.

³ “Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians,” 60.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

It is true that the earliest of church formation regarded bishops and priests/elders as the same office, but it is quite clear that very early in the process the presbyters would choose a bishop to provide regional oversight. Jerome, author of the Vulgate (the original translation of the Bible in Latin), lived during the last stages of the old Greco-Roman civilization. In his Letter 146 writing to Evangelus, Jerome speaks to the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon. He writes,

When subsequently one presbyter was chosen to preside over the rest, this was done to remedy schism and to prevent each individual from rending the church of Christ by drawing it to himself. For even at Alexandria from the time of Mark the Evangelist until the episcopates of Heraclas and Dionysius the presbyters always names as bishop one of their own number chose by themselves and set in a more exalted position.⁵

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, in his book, *The Christian Priest Today*, writes, “First, the priest is the teacher and preacher, and as such he is the man of theology. He is pledged to be a dedicated student of theology; and his study need not be vast in extent but it will be deep in its integrity, not in order that he may be erudite, but in order that he may not be simple.”⁶ The rector must be a priest, not in the Old Testament sense of the order of Aaron, but a wise leader with experience in the ways of God. The priest is an office within the Christian ministry, along with the bishop and deacon. The only question remaining is similar to the statement that the American Puritan and prolific writer Cotton Mather wrote his students at Harvard, “It will be one of

⁵ “Jerome’s Letter 146 to Evangelus,” in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6: Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, ed. by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999), 288.

⁶ Michael Ramsey, *The Christian Priest Today* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publication, 1972), 7.

the great wonders and employments of eternity to consider the reasons why the wisdom and goodness of God assigned this office to imperfect and guilty man!”⁷

Therefore, Stott is correct when he asserts that the priest would be better suited in the contemporary world to be called a “pastor.” Since all believers are called to be ministers, that term seems ill-suited for the pastor. Stott writes, “Moreover, in seeking to reestablish this truth, it would be helpful simultaneously to recover for these overseers the New Testament designation ‘pastor.’ ‘Minister’ is a misleading term because it is generic rather than specific, and always therefore requires a qualifying adjective to indicate what kind of ministry is in mind.”⁸ Stott again, in reference to the Apostle Paul’s address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, notes that terms “elders,” “pastors,” and “overseers” refer to the same people (Acts 20:17, 28). Stott writes,

“Pastors” is the generic term which describes their role. In our day, in which there is much confusion about the nature and purpose of the pastoral ministry, and much questioning whether clergy are primarily social workers, psychotherapists, educators, facilitators or administrators, it is important to rehabilitate the noble word “pastor,” who are shepherds of Christ’s sheep, called to tend, feed and protect them.⁹

Responsibilities of a Rector as Pastor of a Parish

In a nutshell, the responsibility of a rector as pastor of a parish is to live well, rule well, teach well, love well, listen well, and pray well. The ordination of the priest reflects this synopsis and describes accurately the role of a pastor within his or her parish. The boldface type has been added for emphasis. During the presentation of the ordinand:

⁷ Cotton Mather, *Student and Preacher* (London: Charles Dilly, 1781), iii.

⁸ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 117.

⁹ John Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 323.

Has he been selected in accordance with the canons of this Church? And do you believe his **manner of life** to be suitable to the exercise of this ministry?¹⁰

During the examination of the ordinand:

Now you are called to work as a **pastor, priest, and teacher**, together with your bishop and **fellow presbyters**, and to take your share in the councils of the Church. As a priest, it will be your task to **proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ**, and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts. You are to love and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. You are **to preach**, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God's blessing, to share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration of the mysteries of Body and Blood, and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you. In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ's people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.¹¹

In the examination, the ordinand is also asked if her or she will pattern his or her life according to the teachings of Jesus Christ, persevere in prayer, minister the Word of God, and be diligent in the reading and study of Holy Scripture.¹² The rector is called by God and the family of God to serve as priest and pastor to the Church. The implication of that calling is a life that lives in Christ, and lives out Christ to his or her faith community and to the world.

The Rector as Prophet and Preacher

Like the word "priest," the word "prophet" is viewed with a skeptical eye within evangelical circles. While the sentiment towards "priest" may reflect for the evangelical an anti-Catholic bias demonstrated historically through the Reformation into present

¹⁰ *The Book of Common Prayer*, 526.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 531.

¹² *Ibid.*, 532.

times, the word “prophet” often connotes an authoritative level of communication that borders on inerrancy and infallibility.

Even the esteemed Anglican priest and scholar John R. W. Stott states that the preacher is not a prophet. He writes,

First, the Christian preacher is not a prophet. That is, he does not derive his message from God as a direct and original revelation. Of course, the word “prophet” is used loosely by some people today. It is not uncommon to hear a man who preaches with passion described as possessing prophetic fire; and a preacher who can discern the signs of the times, who sees the hand of God in the history of the day and seeks to interpret the significance of political and social trends, is sometimes said to be a prophet and to have prophetic insight. But I suggest that this kind of use of the title “prophet” is an improper one.¹³

Later on in this section, Stott reinforces his conviction that a preacher is not a prophet when he states, “The essential characteristic of the prophet was neither that he foretold the future, nor that he interpreted the present, activity of God, but that he spoke God’s word. . . . No revelation is given to him; his task is to expound the revelation which has been given once for all. . . . This gift is no longer bestowed upon men in the Church.”¹⁴

Yet in his commentary on the Book of Acts, Stott recognizes a universal prophetic ministry that goes beyond the foundational office of prophets. Regarding the phrase, “and they will prophesy,” in Acts 2:18, Stott writes,

This seems to be an umbrella-use of the verb “to prophesy.” As Luther put it, “Prophesying, visions and dreams are all one thing.” That is, the universal gift (the Spirit) will lead to a universal ministry (prophecy). Yet the promise is surprising because elsewhere in Acts – and in the New Testament generally – only some are called to be prophets. How then shall we understand a universal prophetic ministry? If in its essence prophecy is God speaking, God making himself known by his Word, then certainly the Old Testament expectation was that in New Covenant days the knowledge of God would be universal, and the

¹³ John Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait: Some New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

New Testament authors declare that this has been fulfilled through Christ. In this sense all God's people are now prophets, just as all are also priests and kings. So Luther understood prophecy here as "the knowledge of God through Christ which the Holy Spirit kindles and makes to burn through the word of the gospel," while Calvin wrote that it "signifies simply the rare and excellent gift of understanding." In fact, it is this universal knowledge of God through Christ by the Spirit which is the foundation of the universal commission to witness (Acts 1:8).¹⁵

Another dilemma within Stott's narrow definition of "prophet" involves his comments concerning the prophet Agabus and the disciples at Tyre. Agabus, mentioned first in Acts 11:27ff and now in Acts 21:10ff, is described by Stott as similar to the Old Testament prophets. But Stott has a problem clearly explaining the apparent conflict in the prophetic words received by Agabus and Paul through the Holy Spirit. Agabus clearly states in Acts 21:11 that he is speaking the words of God through the Holy Spirit and Luke indicates that Agabus "through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world." Yet the Apostle Paul tells the Ephesian presbyters/priests that he was compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem (Acts 20:12-13). The Apostle Paul, by going, ignored the prophecy of Agabus and also ignored some disciples in Tyre who urged him "through the Spirit" not to go (Acts 21:4, 11). The passages read as follows. In Acts 21:3b-4, "We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem." In Acts 21:9, "We reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied." Then in Acts 21:10-11, "After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us,

¹⁵ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 74.

he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, 'The Holy Spirit says, "In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

Stott answers the apparent conflict by writing,

The better solution is to draw a distinction between prediction and prohibition. Certainly Agabus only predicted that Paul would be bound and handed over to the Gentiles; the pleadings with Paul which followed are not attributed to the Spirit and may have been the fallible (indeed mistaken) human deduction from the Spirit's prophecy. For if Paul had heeded his friends' pleas, then Agabus' prophecy would not have been fulfilled!¹⁶

Stott sees Agabus's prophetic word as not being fulfilled, hence the comment regarding prediction and prohibition. On the contrary, Agabus's prophecy is fulfilled immediately in Paul's arrest and self-defense in Acts 21:18-23:35. The prophecy is not to be taken in wooden literalism, but more metaphorically that the Jews in Jerusalem were responsible for the arrest of Paul by the Gentile Romans.

A third dilemma within Stott's narrow definition of "prophet" involves his comments concerning the prophecies of the disciples in Tyre toward the Apostle Paul. In Acts 21:4, the disciples "thought the Spirit" urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem, yet Paul felt led by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem. The answer to this difficulty leads only to human speculations, but it is clear that Luke, the author of Acts, did not see the apparent conflict. Perhaps the prophetic ministry is broader than Stott's narrow definition and allows for human involvement of the divine revelation, much like the dual authorship of Holy Scripture.

¹⁶ Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 333.

In I Corinthians 14, the Apostle Paul describes the gift of prophecy as a ministry of edification, designed to strengthen, encourage, and comfort the Church (I Corinthians 14:3-5). Gordon D. Fee, described by Eugene Peterson as “one of our truly master exegetes,” asserts that New Testament prophecy has similar characteristics of the Old Testament prophets but is also distinctively different.¹⁷ Fee writes,

All the textual evidence suggests that prophecy was a widely expressed and widely experienced phenomenon, which had as its goal the building up of the people of God so as to come to maturity in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16). . . . Since Paul saw prophecy as evidence for the fulfillment of God’s eschatological promises, he undoubtedly also saw the New Testament prophets as in the succession of the legitimate prophets of the Old Testament. This explains in part why all such prophecy must be discerned, just as with those in the Old Testament. But the *nature* of the new prophecy was also understood to be of a different kind, precisely because of the church’s present eschatological existence. A prophet who speaks encouragement to the church in its between-the-times existence speaks a different word from the predominant word of judgment on ancient Israel.¹⁸

This paper aligns more closely with the writings of the United Methodist Bishop, William H. Willimon, concerning the role of pastors as “prophets.” Willimon believes pastors, like prophets, are called to witness and speak for God. In his chapter, “The Pastor as Prophet: Truth Telling in the Name of Jesus,” Willimon writes,

I therefore had misgivings about including in this book a chapter devoted specifically to the pastor as prophet, for I do not want to underwrite the misconception that it is possible to be a pastor who is not a prophet. A pastor is not an ex-prophet who has lost his teeth. Because pastors are called to witness, in all that they do and say, to the truth that is Jesus Christ, all pastoral activity must be “prophetic.” Furthermore, the goal of the prophetic pastor is the constitution of a prophetic community (“Would that all God’s people were prophets”). . . . The primary source of such prophetic conviction, security, and faith is the church’s Sunday worship, where the truth keeps being refurbished by a fund of imaginative

¹⁷ Eugene Peterson, as quoted in Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1996), back cover.

¹⁸ Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, 172.

images, metaphors, and the judgment and forgiveness whereby we are enabled to live the truth in a world of lies. Embodiment of truth is prophetic worship.¹⁹

The role of a pastor certainly includes a prophetic component. A. W. Tozer, the great Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor and writer, often was described as a “prophet” behind the pulpit. The speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., both in the pulpit and on the streets, were considered prophetic. The Holy Spirit has provided to the world a prophetic community to bring people back to God. Prophesied by Joel 2:18-31, initiated by Acts 2:11, the Church serves the world as a prophetic community, including pastors who have a primary prophetic role. The pastor in the prophetic role behind the pulpit must discern God’s revelation so that he or she disciplines himself or herself to honestly communicate the Scriptures ecclesiastically, socially, economically, theologically, and politically. The purpose of prophetic preaching is spiritual formation toward Christlikeness in order that believers inspire, equip, and encourage a prophetic community. This kind of preaching is courageous truth-telling filled with love, regardless of cost. Many pastors in the Anglican tradition are simply benign parish priests trying hard not to offend. The prophetic pastor for whom God calls is to be honorably human and exceedingly honest as God’s voice to the people of God.

The Rector as Preacher

Most evangelicals do not have a problem seeing the pastor in the role of “preacher.” In fact, most contemporary evangelical church services are comprised of twenty minutes of singing (often defined as “worship”) and forty minutes of preaching. The preaching ministries within many Episcopal churches, or in some areas within the

¹⁹ Willimon, *Pastor*, 251.

Anglican tradition, have often been more eucharistically oriented than proclamation-oriented.

The rector is not only a prophet, but a proclaiming servant of the Word of God. He or she is a preacher. This preaching ministry is observed in the Gospels with the ministry of Jesus; is demonstrated by the apostles and others in the Book of Acts; is encouraged by the apostles in the epistles; and is reflected through church history, especially in the Reformation, both English and Continental. The liturgy and sacramental impact of the Eucharist is obvious for most Anglicans. But it is also true that the “liturgy of the Word” is as sacramental and as important for the priest. The priest must be the celebrant of the living Word and a preacher of the written Word. If the rector as parish priest ignores the role of preaching, trust in God is diminished in the faith community.

Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation, wrote,

Three great abuses have befallen the service of God. First, God’s word is not proclaimed: there is only reading and singing in the Churches. Second, because God’s word has been suppressed, many unchristian inventions and lies have sneaked into the services of reading, singing and preaching and they are horrible to see. Third, such service of God is being undertaken as a good work by which one hopes to obtain God’s grace and salvation. Thus faith has perished.²⁰

The Apostle Paul speaks of preaching as important and necessary. He asserts that it may be counted as foolishness, or at times ridiculed, but that the preacher must never be ashamed of preaching that is centered on the cross of Christ. He writes, “Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward? Just this: that in

²⁰ “The Sermon on the Mount,” in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 21, ed. by J. Pelikan and H.T. Lehmann (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1967), 114.

preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it (I Corinthians 9:16-18, NIV). The Apostle Paul emphasizes preaching again when he writes to the Romans, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” (Romans 10:14-15, NIV). In his letter to the Galatians, he clarifies the fact that the Gospel, the subject of his preaching, comes from God: “I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up” (Galatians 1:11, NIV). Finally, to the Corinthians Paul clearly describes the essence of his preaching: “We preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength” (I Corinthians 1:23-25, NIV).

The rector, with the goal of Christlike spiritual formation for his or her parish, must be a prophet and a preacher to reach that goal. The pastoral care portion of ministry of a rector has often been primarily hospital visitation or home calls to those who have missed church. But certainly pastoral care includes the pulpit ministry and the task of spiritual formation toward Christlikeness.

Preaching Issues

This chapter has demonstrated that the preaching ministry is both a priestly and prophetic function, along the lines of the Old Testament and early Church traditions. The

rector must be a priest, as well as a pastor, to the flock of God. The rector must also be a prophet and a preacher. The final aspect within this chapter that needs to be addressed is the various preaching issues related to the rector. A fuller explanation of the lectionary and church year for the rector will be addressed in the next chapter. There are four preaching issues that need to be addressed: content and the importance of study; character and the personal life; communication skills and the gift of teaching; and finally, chemistry and the knowledge of the parish. These preaching issues must be addressed by the rector before he or she can be effective in the church that goes beyond the chaplaincy model.

Content and the Importance of Study

The rector must be a lifelong lover of learning to be an effective preacher of God's Holy Word. The rector, to be an effective communicator, must be energized by the thrill of new information and he or she must apply that information to his or her life. The rector must be a student of God's Holy Word and also a student of human behavior. The preacher is the bridge between the truth expressed in holy writ and the truth exposed in human imperfection. Stott, in his chapter entitled, "The Call to Study," appropriately writes,

There is no doubt that the best teachers in any field of knowledge are those who remain students all their lives. It is particularly true of the ministry of the Word. "None will ever be a good minister of the Word of God unless he is first of all a scholar" (John Calvin). Spurgeon had the same conviction. "He who has ceased to learn has ceased to teach. He who no longer sows in the study will no more reap in the pulpit."²¹

²¹ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 180.

There are a number of tools that can help the rector in preparing sermons for his or her parish. For example, the twelve volume work, *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary*, assists the rector in studying the selected readings of the Church year from theological, pastoral, exegetical, and homiletical perspectives. One can also see sample lectionary sermons on www.preachingtoday.org or www.esermons.net if he or she would like ready-to-deliver sermons. However, in using this method the rector will not only hinder his or her own spiritual development, but stifle the Christlike spiritual formation of the parish. Alan of the Isles in his *Summa de arte praedicatoria* writes harshly to those priests who do not study:

O vile ignorance! O abominable stupidity! It imposes silence on a prelate, it renders mute the watchdog, the shepherd; it is a frog which, when placed in the dog's mouth, takes away his power to bark. The prelates of our time occupy the chair of the master before they have known the student's bench; they receive the title of teacher before they have worn the gown of the pupil; they would rather stand over than stand with; they prefer the riches of unearned honors to the rewards of dedication. One who teaches without doing contradicts Christ.²²

A learner is an insatiable student of God's Word, open to the teaching of the Holy Spirit under the authority of Christ, and prioritizes his or her schedule accordingly to properly serve God's people with holy food and drink. For most clergy, time is valuable and being "busy" is truly a four-letter word that overwhelms and eventually swallows teaching time. The Rector must be willing to discipline his or her schedule to fit the high priority of study. After all, the office of overseer must be "apt to teach" (I Timothy 3:2).

²² Joseph M. Miller, Michael H. Prosser, and Thomas W. Benson, *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 168.

Character and the Personal Life

Most seminary graduates are surprised when the church they expected through their theological studies and the church they received in pastoral ministry are so different. Most churches are also surprised when the pastor they expected and the pastor they received are so different. Character, whether it reflects an institution or a person, is an imprint of authenticity in which one can trust. The rector may be a professional only in the sense that he or she has something to “profess,” implying a witness in life and deed. The rector also is called to servant leadership, a vocation where God and God’s Church recognizes this unique anointing from the Holy Spirit.

The Rector’s character of a servant-leader is often manifested by his or her decisions, desires, and deeds. These characteristics are reflected for the rector and the community of God in the fruit of the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) versus the manifold deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-23). In describing the position of overseer and presbyter, the Apostle Paul uses terms that indicate someone above rebuke, faithfully married, calm, sensible, reputable, and generous, not addicted to wine, and free from the love of money (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Willimon quotes Augustine as the great bishop of Hippo links one’s baptismal covenant with character. Willimon writes, “Just as a Roman soldier was tattooed as a sign of his membership in the Roman army (*character militia*), so Christians, signed with the cross in baptism, have been indelibly stamped with the cross (*character dominicus*). This character, the cross, indelibly determines our character.

Through the vicissitudes of time, and place, and changes in personality, this character persists.”²³

The most essential aspect of character is humility. Stott agrees with this assessment in his statement that along with sincerity, earnestness, and courage, the preacher of God’s Word must manifest the character of humility.²⁴ The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, also stresses the importance of humility:

Divine humility is the power which comes to make the human race different. . . . All Christians are called to be humble. But the ordained man sets forward the gospel and the sacraments whereby their humility is sustained, and leads them in the way of humility as their pastor. He acts with Christ’s commission and Christ’s authority, and what can humble him more than to be the steward of the mysteries of the God who humbled himself?²⁵

Also focused on one’s character, Athanasius of Alexandria, writing in the early fourth century, believed Christlike character formation for the priest is necessary to effectively interpret the Word of God: “For the searching and right understanding of the Scriptures there is a need for a good life and a pure soul . . . to guide the mind to grasp . . . the truth concerning God the Word.”²⁶

Communication Skills and the Gift of Teaching

The majority of textbooks related to homiletics believe the rector or senior pastor must be an effective communicator and teacher of God’s Holy Word. These books also

²³ William H. Willimon, *Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 35.

²⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 320.

²⁵ Ramsey, *The Christian Priest Today*, 77.

²⁶ St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (New York: Macmillan Publications, 1946), 90.

stress that the skill of communicating can be learned. Certainly, the gift of teaching includes effective communication skills that have been prepared, polished, and practiced.

Haddon Robinson, often considered the dean of evangelical preachers, has ten stages in the development of a message. They are: selecting the passage; studying the passage; discovering the exegetical idea; analyzing the exegetical idea; formulating the homiletical idea; determining the purpose; deciding how to accomplish this purpose; outlining the sermon; filling in the sermon outline, and preparing the introduction and conclusion. Robinson's last chapter in his book *Biblical Preaching* is entitled, "How to Preach So People Will Listen." The chapter is more about the delivery of the message than the development of that message. In a practical manner, Robinson discusses grooming and dress, movement and gestures, eye contact, and voice delivery.²⁷

Stott also believes that the key to effective communication for the biblical teacher is preparation. In his book, *Between Two Worlds*, Stott suggests six stages of sermon preparation: choose the text; meditate on it; isolate the dominant thought; arrange your material to serve the dominant thought; add the introduction and conclusion; and finally, write down and pray over your message.²⁸

The encouragement to be an effective communicator of God's Word is found also in the early Church as the Apostle Paul gives Timothy, his presbyter in Ephesus, an apostolic charge: "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience

²⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 201-22.

²⁸ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 213-55.

and instruction” (2 Timothy 4:1-2, NASB). Two chapters earlier, the Apostle Paul had encouraged Timothy’s preparation in sharing God’s word when he said, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:2).

The purpose of the gift of teaching is designed to fulfill the goal of the Church in Christlike spiritual formation. Paul writes, “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Chemistry and the Knowledge of the Parish

Rarely do the books on homiletics address the importance of knowing one’s parish. It is often felt that the itinerant ministry of preaching can be as effective as a resident pastor of some length of ministry service within the congregation. In my own experiences, however, I found the opposite to be true. My preaching improved in effectiveness after I had lived with my parish through childbirth, confirmation, marriages, divorces, funerals, meals, laughter, and tears. My illustrations are more vivid in style and they more directly address the needs of the congregation than even the sermons of a powerful preacher who does not know the congregation. Certainly there are universal human needs that anyone can speak of with authority, compassionately, and effectively. But only the resident pastor, living with the pains and joys of the parish life, has the

potential to effectively hit the target individually and collectively. The preacher's effectiveness lies in trust between pulpit and parish, between character and adversity, between prayer and preaching. Chemistry is less technique than trust.

CHAPTER 6

THE PREACHING STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a preaching strategy for the faith community at The Way with a focus upon Christlike spiritual formation. This chapter will seek to highlight the rhythm of the church year as a tool for spiritual formation and the distinct advantages of utilizing the lectionary in preaching. The heart of the chapter will be a new proposed preaching vision for The Way that would create an educational alignment with all the ministries within the parish. At the end of the chapter, several measurement tools that may be used by The Way in the future will be considered in order to determine the effectiveness of this intentional effort related to preaching.

The Advantage of the Liturgical Church Calendar

Calendars are designed to mark, observe, designate, commemorate, or celebrate ordinary events or special occasions. For the secularists, the calendar may remind them that the football season has arrived, a key birthday is observed, vacation time is here, or a national or consumer holiday is coming. Those who desire to follow God have noted the secular calendar, but historically have followed a different calendar of events as most important to their spiritual formation. For example, pre-exilic Israel observed seven

annual feasts: Passover, The Feast of Unleavened Bread, The Offering of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, The Feast of Trumpets, The Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Booths (Leviticus 23; Numbers 28-29; Deuteronomy 16:1-17). Some of these events invited fasting and others feasting, but all the dates served as redemptive moments that recognized God's deep involvement with his people.

Those who desire to walk as apprentices of Jesus may observe secular dates in the United States, but Christlike spiritual formation for the believer has always been on a different clock, a unique season where the "Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven" is observed. Historically, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, following the examples of earlier Jewish brethren, has long used the seasons of the year as an opportunity to provide teaching opportunities in word and deed in order to form the lives of believers in conformity with the ways of God.

The Church calendar year provides the parishes an opportunity to discuss, reflect, and respond to our faith in Christ in a comprehensive way. The planned and purposeful way of the Church calendar creates the concept of sacred time which provides an important tool in Christlike formation for both children and adults. Whereas the definitive event for the Jewish festivals surrounds the exodus from Egyptian slavery, the defining aspect of the Church calendar is the person of Jesus Christ. The sequence of the Christian calendar provides an annual spiritual pilgrimage for the parish in Christlike formation and a narrative for the preacher to paint the world in God's colors that are more real, vivid, and creative.

Similar to the Jewish tradition, the Church calendar year has seven significant narratives that can be divided into two significant periods of time for the believer. These

two significant times both begin with reflection and preparation and end with calling and commission. The two major areas of sacred time are: 1) Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany; and 2) Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost. The rest of the church calendar is considered the eighth day in God's kingdom, or "ordinary time." This phrase comes from the word "ordinal," which means counted time where believers live out the mission of the Church to the world. In essence, the ordinary time is the Church's contemporary living out of the "Book of Acts."

For the preacher of God's Word, the church year provides a wonderful opportunity to communicate God's Good News in a variety of ways. In addition to hearing the Word, one can see the various liturgical colors, one can both see and hear stories that are demonstrated, one can smell the candles, and one can even at times taste the experience. Spiritual formation toward Christlikeness is more than simply verbal proclamation and Christian music.

The Church Year

At this point in the chapter, each part of the Church year will be described. The descriptions here will be abbreviated explanations of the seasons. At the end of this chapter, the preacher's opportunities with each part of the Church year will also be presented.

The Church year does not begin with New Years' Day but with the Season of Advent. Advent is a period of reflection that starts nearest to the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, celebrated on November 30th. It means that the Church year could start as early

as November 27th or as late as December 3rd, and this important inaugural Church season of Advent will have four Sundays before Christmas Eve.

Advent is from the Latin word *adventus* which means “coming.” The Latin is a translation from the Greek word, *παρουσια*, which often is used in Scripture for the coming of Christ. For the followers of Jesus, Advent also serves a dual role of teaching believers to prepare for the second coming of Christ while venerating the First Coming. It is a period of hope and anticipation with the primary sanctuary color of purple which suggests not only the royalty for the King of kings, but also a period of preparation and penitence.

After the Advent season is the Christmas season. This remains today for the secularists as an annual holiday from work and still very popular for sharing gifts with our loved ones and friends, particularly with our children. This day is noted for consumerism; however, for the follower of Jesus the Christmas season commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, a celebration of the incarnation of God to the world. The Advent time of waiting for the arrival of Jesus has ended, and now the redemptive King has arrived. The Christmas season in the Church calendar year is a short twelve-day period of celebration starting on Christmas Eve, December 24th, and ending the day before Epiphany on January 5th.

The season of Epiphany is celebrated in the Anglican tradition and most Western apostolic churches on January 6th. Epiphany is designed to be the climax of the first cycle. Epiphany means “to reveal; manifest; make known.” The revealed incarnate Jesus Christ is made known to the world and is biblically demonstrated in the narrative of arrival of the non-Jewish wise men, often described traditionally as three kings, bringing

gifts to visit the Christ. Both Christmas and Epiphany are represented by the colors of white and gold, which are sacred, celebratory colors. Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany complete the first cycle of the Church calendar year.

The second cycle of the Church calendar year starts with Lent, another period of time that spans forty days for preparation and reflection in the believer's journey with Christ. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, and this season will culminate with Holy Week, highlighted by the celebration of Easter, and then Pentecost.¹ Ash Wednesday is one of the two recommended "special acts of discipline and self-denial," demonstrated by the followers of Christ in prayer and fasting. The other day is Good Friday.² Lent prepares the community for Easter. The "forty days of Lent" is connected with many biblical narratives, including Jesus's time in the wilderness in preparation of his mission. Most of the secular world in the United States has heard about the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, which means in French, "Fat Tuesday." It is a time of celebration to clean out the foods in your storage, particularly meats, in preparation for Ash Wednesday and the Season of Lent. The Way celebrates "Fat Tuesday" with a dinner and a laughter-laden talent show with all ages participating. Ash Wednesday's name comes from the early Church's ancient practice of placing ashes on believers' foreheads as a sign of humility for the penitent. This symbol of mourning serves as a reminder that the sin of the world brought death.³

¹ *The Book of Common Prayer*, 264.

² *Ibid.*, 17.

³ *Ibid.*, 264-65.

The color of Lent is purple, reflecting royalty and suffering. Traditionally, during Lent, the Church does not conduct marriages nor does it place flowers in the sanctuary. The only days of the Church year on which black is the liturgical color are Good Friday and Holy Saturday during Holy Week. On Maundy Thursday (preceding Good Friday in Holy Week), a biblical narrative of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples is spoken, and the story is literally demonstrated by the parish as members wash one another's feet. Red is the color for Maundy Thursday.

Holy Week is the last week of Lent. For me personally it is the most powerful experience in my spiritual formation besides the Eucharistic meal. The Passion story of Jesus is communicated in word and deed by the parish and the pastor. Palm Sunday, usually noted as the sixth Sunday of Lent, observes the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem that was marked with waving palm branches and proclamation that the Messianic King had arrived into the holy city of Jerusalem.⁴ The liturgical colors for Palm Sunday are red—the color of the Church, the Holy Spirit, the blood of Christ, and the martyrs of the Faith. Holy Thursday, known also as Maundy Thursday, notes the last night of Jesus in the upper room, the bringing of the new commandment of Jesus to love one another, and concluding with the narrative to the arrest of Jesus in Jerusalem.⁵ Good Friday is usually observed without the Eucharist and with a simple service recalling his death on our behalf.⁶ The Easter Season, including the Easter Vigil and Easter Day, celebrates God's redemptive story from the Old Testament to the New Testament,

⁴ *The Book of Common Prayer*, 270-71.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 274-75.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 276-82.

culminating in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This season is met by the parish with joy and celebration. The colors are white, symbolizing resurrected victory over sin and death, and gold, symbolizing the light of the world by the Lord of lords and King of kings.⁷ The placement of flowers around the church and the flowering of the Cross mark the church with life and joy, particularly following the starkness in Lent. The preacher truly has to make an effort to make his or her sermons a boring experience for the parish. Unfortunately, many have succeeded. The Easter season continues to the coming of Pentecost, where the liturgical color is red for the Holy Spirit and the Church. It is during this period of time that churches teach on the power of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives in order to fulfill the mission of the Church.

Along with the Church calendar, the Church year also consists of two phases of feasts and holy days. The first progression is dependent upon the movable date of Easter and the second progression is dependent upon the permanent date of December 25th, the birth of our Lord Jesus. The sequence of all Sundays of the Church year depends upon Easter Day. Easter Day, the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection, always occurs the first Sunday after the full moon that falls on or after March 21st. Therefore Easter can never occur before March 22nd or after April 25th.⁸ The Principal Feasts observed in most of the Anglican Communion are seven; four are movable dates and three have fixed dates. All seven Feasts have significant theological implications for the followers of Jesus Christ. The seven feasts are: Easter Day, Ascension Day, The Day of Pentecost,

⁷ *The Book of Common Prayer*, 285-95.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

Trinity Sunday, All Saints' Day (November 1); Christmas Day (December 25); and Epiphany (January 6th).⁹

The Three-year Lectionary and Creating the “Big Idea”

The Way teaching staff consists of Pastors Kirsten Gardner, Steve Matson, and me. We are committed to utilizing the Church year, including the Principal Feasts, and the church lectionary as a spiritual formation tool in developing our parishioners as apprentices of Jesus Christ. Currently we divide the teaching responsibilities evenly between the three of us, so it is important for us to understand the spiritual formation that is needed for each individual and the ecclesiastical direction to which our faith community has been called. Because we are a new church plant and have fewer than fifty attendees on a Sunday, the teaching pastors have a good grasp of the spiritual maturity of the congregation.

There has been no debate throughout church history that the Church (Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, Reformers) is constituted by Word and the Sacrament. From the Apostle Paul to Justin Martyr to John Calvin, the Church has made the Word and Sacrament inseparable and foundational in the worship of God.¹⁰ Preaching through a lectionary—reflecting the seasonal aspects of the Church, the special feasts days of the Church, and continuity of the people of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament—helps provide deeper and more comprehensive formation toward Christlikeness. All Scripture certainly is designed to form people's lives, but combined

⁹ *The Book of Common Prayer*, 15.

¹⁰ Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 63-65.

with the formation of the lectionary narrative and Church calendar year within the interpretative community, Christlike formation is more likely to be widely distributed in body, soul, and spirit.

Fitch believes that the evangelical community needs to return to lectionary preaching and the public reading of Scripture if it is to return to the faithful reading of the Word of God. He writes,

Let us evangelicals return to the practice of the lectionary. Let us learn the practice of reading three or four readings for each Sunday, one from the Pentateuch, one from the Psalms or the Prophets, one reading from the Epistles, and of course, one reading from the Gospels. In this way we can resist the de-narratizing of the text a la expository preaching. Instead, by reading a lectionary each Sunday, we will be forced to view the primary text for the sermon in its context of the whole narrative of God in Christ. Such a lectionary forces the preacher to refer to the other texts or at least interpret the one text in light of the other texts. And likewise when the congregation hears all the readings performed, they rightfully receive that we as his people are being invited into the whole narrative of God down through history.¹¹

If the fruit of a life in Our Lord Jesus Christ is a life living out Christlikeness, then it behooves the preacher to utilize the lectionary that is most reflective of understanding Christ in the continuity of God's divine revelation. Willimon reinforces Fitch's comments above when he writes,

As pastors, we need to be clear about our source of authority. One way to do that is to preach from scripture, specifically, to preach from the ecumenical lectionary. A pastor wishes to preach, say, on abortion. But the pastor is troubled because she knows that the congregation is deeply divided on this issue. To preach on abortion sounds as if the preacher is simply airing her own opinions. Clerical authority thus becomes express as, "We indulge our preacher by giving her the right to speak for fifteen or twenty minutes on her own opinion of what's right." The very act of reading and preaching from scripture is a deeply moral act in our age, a reminder of the source of pastoral authority. When the preacher uses the lectionary, the preacher makes clear that he or she preaches what he or she has

¹¹ Fitch, *The Great Giveaway*, 147.

been told to preach. This is important because it makes clear that the story forms us. This is the church's way of reminding itself of how it subverts the world.¹²

The lectionary provides the necessary guardrails to provide spiritual safety on a bridge toward Christlikeness.

In addition to the three-year lectionary, the “big idea,” which Robinson advocates as a central theme in preaching, is also significant. The big idea, also known as the thesis or proposition, is often connected by teachers of homiletics to the main verb in the passage. Of course, a parable or a narrative passage does not always accommodate the preacher for that definitive verb. John MacArthur writes, “I ask myself questions like, ‘What is the primary message of the passage? What is the central truth? What is the main expositional idea?’”¹³ MacArthur's preaching goal is to clearly explain the main point of the passage. Robinson would concur. He writes, “A sermon is constructed in three stages. First, the preaching idea is stated. Second, the flow of the sermon and its structure are determined. And third, the exegetical background material is used to fill out this structure as the sermon manuscript is written.”¹⁴

Upon initial observation, these perspectives seem appropriate and good since all preachers want to interpret accurately the Word of God. However, the thought of limiting the “big idea” to a question and answer within the passage does not always take into the account the greater task of the Church for Christlike spiritual formation.

Ultimately, the goal of every sermon is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

¹² Willimon, *Pastor*, 239.

¹³ John MacArthur, *Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching in Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, ed. by Leland Ryken and Todd Wilson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 87.

¹⁴ Haddon W. Robinson, *It's All in How you Tell It: Preaching First-Person Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 49.

The following passages from the Church year will reflect the ultimate “big idea” that honors the passage as well as the intentional formation process for the Church year, and incorporates the continuity of the story of God for the people of God. The first is for Easter Day. Since the Resurrection is central to the apostolic teaching and the basis of their faith, it becomes the believer’s blessed hope as Christians in his or her resurrection, justification, and eternal life (I Corinthians 15:14-15; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Acts 24:15). The Resurrection also represents the believer’s capacity to live in the power of the resurrected Christ (Philippians 4:13). The thrust of church teaching on Easter Day to the baptized believing community is not primarily an apologetic on the fact of the Resurrection, but a teaching on how the Resurrection impacts the lives of followers of Christ to live as resurrected Christians with the power over death and sin.

The thrust of the Easter Day message builds upon the entire Holy Week in the life of Christ. The parish has already taken a journey with the pastor of the key events surrounding Palm Sunday, the significant encounters with the Pharisees and the Scribes at the temple during the week, the final night alone with the disciples in the Upper Room and the prayers at the Garden of Gethsemane, as well as the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The parish has walked with palms, washed one another’s feet, journeyed through the twelve stations of the cross, stripped the altar bare, stayed late at night to pray for one another when other disciples sleep, and met the stark reality of black upon black on Good Friday. The “big idea” for the Church ancient and worldwide is the “passion” of Christ: his suffering and subsequently our suffering, to be like him in this world.

The second “big idea” teaching is for Ascension Day. Whereas all Christian traditions, including evangelicals, recognize Easter Day and Christmas Day, few

evangelical communities acknowledge Ascension Day. Yet Ascension Day, which recognizes the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ departing from earth and returning to his original exalted condition, provides for the Church an important teaching opportunity. After all, Christ is now the exalted “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), ruling the entire universe sitting at the right hand of the Father. The ascended Christ poured out the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33), and now the believer’s life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). In Ascension, one’s identity is tied to the ascended Christ so one is no longer of this world, even though he or she is in it. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) becomes valid because of the Ascension. It is a sad reality when churches do not use this significant date for teaching. This neglect truly hinders Christlike spiritual formation.

The “big idea” of Ascension Day is highly significant for the Church. Ascension Day is part of the “fifty days of Easter” and highlights more than just Jesus Christ’s victory over death. The “big idea” is that Jesus is Lord of the Church and the world, which has significant impact on how believers frame their worldviews and live their lives intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally.

The third “big idea” teaching is for the Day of Pentecost. The Day of Pentecost was the fiftieth day after the Sabbath of Passover week (Leviticus 23:15-16). Occurring on Sunday, Pentecost has also been called the Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:10), the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16), and the Day of Firstfruits (Numbers 28:26). The teaching implications are immense for spiritual formation, including the birth of the Church, the empowerment of a universal Church to proclaim the Good News, and God’s presence which is available to all through the Holy Spirit. Pentecost concludes the Easter

Season and inaugurates the *kerygma*. The “big idea” certainly acknowledges the gift of the Holy Spirit, but the proclaiming message and demonstrated mission of the Church fully empowered is really the thesis of this theological encounter with God and humankind.

In addition to Easter Day, Ascension Day, and the Day of Pentecost, the other four principal church feasts are Trinity Sunday, All Saints’ Day, Christmas Day, and the Epiphany. These are the principal church feasts celebrated in Anglican, Catholic, and Orthodox apostolic traditions.

Creating New Opportunities for Engaging with the Sermon

If the goal of the preacher is to help the apprentices of Jesus learn the ways of Jesus and become Christlike in spiritual formation, then it is important to consider the ways that provide the best forum for memory, retention, and learning. Dr. David Sousa, an educational consultant, has written a book entitled *How the Brain Learns*.¹⁵ In his chapter on memory, retention, and learning, Sousa describes the “Primacy-Recency Effect” in learning. Essentially, the research has indicated that we remember best that which comes first in the teaching, the second best that which comes last in the teaching, and the least that which comes just past the middle of a teaching. Additionally, the best length for retention within twenty-four hours of a teaching is twenty minutes with eighteen minutes prime learning by the hearer. If one lengthens the teaching to thirty minutes, just ten minutes longer, the down time of learning increases to 25 percent. In evangelical circles, the average preaching time is closer to forty minutes. The learning

¹⁵ David A. Sousa, *How the Brain Learns* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2006).

down time is a full 25 percent of the talk, which is ten minutes of the forty-minute lesson.¹⁶

At *The Way*, the teaching pastors limit their Sunday morning messages to between twenty and twenty-five minutes, with the knowledge that learning of the message takes place during the liturgical elements of the service and the profound Eucharistic experience. This indicates that effective learning times for the parish are when the sermons are short and meaningful. Also, the learning season of several weeks provided by the Church calendar year (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time) support the premise of the book that lessons divided into twenty-minute segments are more productive than one continuous lesson.

The Learning Pyramid, devised by the National Training Laboratories Institute of Alexandria, Virginia, provides additional information that addresses retention of learning using different teaching methods (see figure 3).

¹⁶ Sousa, *How the Brain Learns*, 77-116.

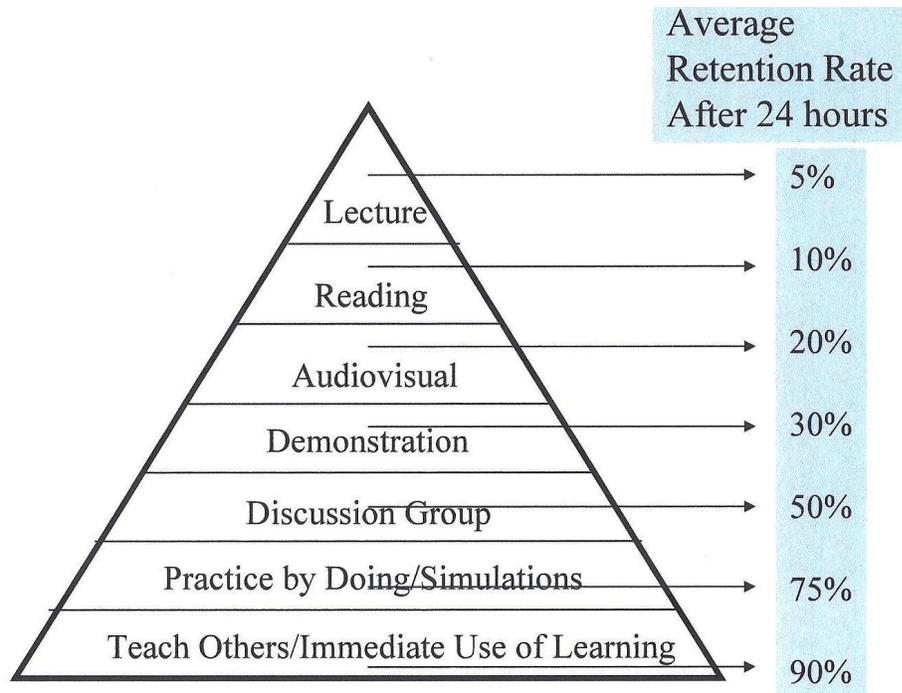


Figure 3. The Learning Pyramid
 Source: National Training Laboratories Institute of Alexandria, Virginia

Although there has been much debate within educational circles as to the average retention rate after twenty-four hours, there has been little debate that lecture alone is less effective in retention than personal practice and teaching others. This learning pyramid would suggest that the parish, in desiring Christlike spiritual formation, would do well in adapting additional pedagogical methods for engaging with the sermon.

At The Way, every sermon is incorporated in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Sacraments, including the singing and selected lectionary readings for the day. Each parish member receives an outline of the sermon notes (with no blanks to fill in) and a “Table Talk discussion guide” at the end to be used in small group settings at home or one of the church small groups. Recently, the teaching team completed a series of

messages entitled “Our City Waits: A Call to Give, Serve, and Love.” Activities after the Sunday services were provided so that the congregation could practice as well as verbalize their experiences in giving, serving, and loving. Some of the activities included cooking and serving the homeless at The Bread of Life in Oceanside, engaging in a project at Vision San Diego in order to become person of influences, and reaching out to needy members within the church. The sermon is no longer a “stand-alone” element used simply for entertainment value or inspirational moment, but part and parcel of the entire package of spiritual formation.

Establishing a Plan for Implementation

Because of the three-year lectionary, The Way teaching pastors actually know the preaching text for every Sunday. During special teaching sessions related to the specific needs of the parish, the teaching pastors meet to discern God’s voice concerning the topic that needs to be addressed for their formation. The teaching pastors’ goal is not to neglect significant events that happen in the parish or in the world, but the goal is for these experiences to be seen in light of the course of the Church year.

The teaching pastors meet weekly as a teaching team to review the text of the week as well as the weeks ahead in the season. The designated teaching pastor for that Sunday is given freedom to decide how God is leading him or her in the text, but that person receives the input and guidance of the other two pastors. Once a quarter, the team meets for a lengthier period of time to discuss how the sermons relate to the Church calendar, the liturgy, and special feasts for the Church year.

The critical time for the teaching pastors is right now. Kirsten Gardner has recently started her PhD program in Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, and I speak nationally during parts of the week. Although Steve Matson is The Way's only paid pastor, both Kirsten and I want to mentor and provide input for Steve in the teaching schedule of The Way.

Securing Measurement Tools for Christlike Character

Most parishes and congregations measure their success in the same way as does corporate America. Size and revenue mark corporate success; attendance and giving mark church success. The Way was started to inspire, equip, and encourage God's people to God's vision for a world God loves. God's vision is that his kingdom "will be done on earth as it is in heaven." God's mission became very clear to fulfill the vision by the words of Jesus in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20: "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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20, NIV).

Willard writes that the "great omission" of the Great Commission for the contemporary Church is the lack of "teaching them to obey everything" that Jesus had commanded. In an interview with *Leadership Journal* in May 2010, Willard answered questions regarding America's current church problem. When asked, "How can churches know if they are being effective at making disciples?" Willard answered, "Many churches are measuring the wrong things. We measure things like attendance and giving,

but we should be looking at more fundamental things like anger, contempt, honesty, and the degree to which people are under the thumb of their lusts. Those things can be counted, but not as easily as offerings.” Willard was then asked, “What can pastors do to change this dynamic?” He responded,

Change their definition of success. They need to have a vision of success rooted in spiritual terms, determined by the vitality of a pastor’s own spiritual life and his capacity to pass that on to others. When pastors don’t have rich spiritual lives with Christ, they become victimized by other models of success – models conveyed to them by their training, by their experience in the church, or just by our culture. They begin to think their job is managing a set of ministry activities and success is about getting more people to engage those activities. Pastors, and those they lead, need to be set free from that belief.¹⁷

The pastoral team of The Way is committed to measuring accurately Christlike spiritual formation. Currently, the pastoral team is reviewing three measurement tools to determine whether one of these tools can be of assistance to the faith community as it seeks to live in Christ and live out Christ.

The first tool being considered is called *The Christian Life Profile Assessment Tool Workbook: Discovering the Quality of Your Relationships with God and Others in 30 Key Areas*. Developed by Randy Frazee and published by Zondervan, this assessment tool is recommended highly by Willard. Willard writes in the introductory section of the workbook, “The Christian Life Profile assessment tool and the program of discipleship focused around it is by far the best corporate plan for spiritual formation and spiritual growth that I know of in the corporate setting.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Dallas Willard website, “How Do We Assess Spiritual Growth?” an interview with Dallas Willard, <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/printable.asp?artid=141> (accessed October 5, 2011).

¹⁸ Randy Frazee, *The Christian Life Profile Assessment Tool Workbook* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998, 2001, 2005).

This tool is appealing, not only because the dean of contemporary spiritual formation recommends it, but because it can be used successfully in small groups. *The Christian Life Profile* centers upon thirty core competencies divided in thirds with ten core beliefs, ten core practices, and ten core virtues. The ten core beliefs, described as “thinking like Jesus,” are titled the Trinity, Salvation by Grace, Authority of the Bible, Personal God, Identity in Christ, Church, Humanity, Compassion, Eternity, and Stewardship. The ten core practices, described as “acting like Jesus,” are titled Worship, Prayer, Bible Study, Single-mindedness, Biblical Community, Spiritual Gifts, Give Away My Time, Give Away My Money, Give Away My Faith, and Give Away My Life. The ten core virtues (emphasizing the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23), described as “be like Jesus,” are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness/Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control, Hope, and Humility.

The format includes video, lecture, and discussions in both large and small group settings. Parish members respond to 120 questions related to the ten core beliefs, practices, and virtues. Included in the process is a 360 assessment by selected friends.

The entire assessment workbook is based upon the Great Commandment, “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’” (Matthew 22:37-39, NIV). Frazee, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, is currently the senior minister of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, Texas. Frazee has served as one of the teaching pastors at Willow Creek Community Church in Illinois and senior pastor at Pantego Bible Church near Dallas, Texas.

The second tool that The Way is considering has been recommended by Menlo Park Presbyterian Senior Pastor and well-known speaker and author John Ortberg. Like Frazee, Ortberg was one of the teaching pastors at Willow Creek before he accepted the new call at Menlo Park. Ortberg holds a PhD in psychology from Fuller Theological Seminary and has been deeply influenced by his long-time association with Dallas Willard. Ortberg's tool is called *Monvee*.¹⁹ According to the information provided, this tool will provide information for the pastor about each individual participating parish member's personality traits, learning styles, and primary "put offs." The instrument is more individually customized than Frazee's community-driven tool. The process is fourfold: take the assessment, discover uniqueness, develop a plan, and grow and invite others. Particularly intriguing are the "spiritual inhibitor" aspects that can help identify what might hinder the parish member from growing in Christlikeness. The cost is higher than Frazee's program, but Ortberg's program has more features for the computer literate.

The final tool The Way is considering is the work of Dr. Todd Hall, psychologist and professor at Rosemead School of Psychology at Biola University. His *Spiritual Transformation Inventory* is designed to provide individual feedback in twenty-two areas of one's spiritual journey.²⁰ The uniqueness of this program allows additional questions to customize this assessment for each unique parish. Additionally, Dr. Hall is willing to offer individual consultation for a parish for a fee.

The Way is expected to choose one of the assessment tools during the second quarter of 2012. The reason for the delay is due to the teaching pastors' desire for full

¹⁹ John Ortberg, *Monvee*, <http://www.monvee.com> (accessed October 5, 2011).

²⁰ Todd Hall, *Spiritual Transformation Inventory*, <http://drtodhall.com/index.php/spiritual-assessment> (accessed October 5, 2011).

consensus among the Advisory Council and the desire to develop a strategy for full cooperation among parish members, as much as is possible. Most pastors often feel like they are too busy to create a preaching strategy for their parishes. However, The Way believes that in order to enhance spiritual formation toward Christlikeness, it is essential that the teaching pastors take advantage of the liturgical Church calendar and the three-year lectionary, and establish a plan for implementation and continuing assessment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The intent of this ministry focus paper is to implement a strategy for the development of personal spiritual transformation toward Christlikeness among parish members at The Way through preaching, utilizing the traditional Church year, and the lectionary. In an effort to complete the above resolution, the goal has been presented within the proper context of The Way's community in light of its brief church planting history, its longer history associated with St. Anne's, and its current beliefs and assumptions. Also presented were the demographic and socioeconomic conditions of Vista, California. Additionally, this paper has discussed past and present strategies for building Christlike character on a macro-level within the AMIA and the greater Anglican Communion, as well as considering the micro-level strategies for They Way.

The AMIA is seen more as a Church missionary society than a traditional institutional denomination. The network within which I serve under Bishop Todd Hunter is part of this Church missionary society. This provides greater flexibility and quickness in action that larger, more established organizations often lack. Even though The Way's historical roots come from a 100-year-old-plus Church, the founders themselves are committed to genuine discipleship, Christlike spiritual formation, and an outreach that is simply not designed to numerically grow the church. Of course, like any new work, The Way will have its challenges. These challenges only underscore the need for the right kind of preaching that develops the Church toward Christlike formation.

Based upon the church's contextual history and its present situation, The Way has a bright future for future generations, providing it continues with the principles and

practices of the founders within the parish in following Jesus Christ. It is bright because the parish is committed to an ontological view of the Church instead of a more instrumental view that marks most Protestant evangelical faith communities. It is the desire of this community to measure success by the depth of genuine faith instead of numbers and giving. The depth of the faith, if genuine, is always expressed in the communities served by word and deed. With fewer than fifty members, The Way is actively involved in serving the homeless, and in convening coalitions with other non-profits and for-profits to make North County San Diego deal with some of the major issues of homelessness, poverty, and medical care.

Although The Way is committed to being a contemporary church that can relate to the tastes of the community, it is also committed to teaching the ancient rhythms and using these rhythms to assist in Christlike spiritual formation. Recently, the church has decided in a few months to change its name to The Way Anglican Fellowship. It is the belief of the leadership that the word “Anglican” may cause confusion to non-denominationally saturated southern Californians, but adding “Anglican” to the church name will bring opportunities to talk about the ancient rhythms and provide a vehicle for those that may seek a deeper life. The evangelical community is responding favorably to the ancient traditions. I have witnessed this firsthand as the canon of leadership development within the AMIA as many experienced pastors from non-denominational evangelical environments have contacted me to seek more of the Eucharistic life, sacramental lifestyle, and the Anglican expression of the Christian faith. Additionally, traditional evangelical institutions of higher learning are developing academic programs for Anglicanism and chapel services that are liturgical. Bishop Todd Hunter and I are

speaking at college chapels on the ancient rhythms of Anglicanism and have conducted “Instructed Eucharists” for the students.

The other reason why The Way has a bright future is the financial ability it has to secure land and build in the near future. The possibility of merging with the Church of the Hills becomes increasingly more viable. And the significant increase in population surrounding the Vista-San Marcos area provides great opportunities for outreach.

The final reason why The Way has a bright future is the work and ministry of one of its teaching pastors, Steve Matson. Steve Matson, a postulant within the AMIA, has unique giftings from God in relating to the predominant demographic age group and ethnicity of the North County community. The entire team of teaching pastors recognizes our unique individual strengths so that we can complement one another in ministry.

Within the context of The Way, it is also important to consider the significant literature related to Christian spiritual formation, the lectionary, and preaching. Part Two of this paper discussed how Holy Scripture and the literature relate to the contextual history of The Way, particularly the development of spiritual maturity into Christlikeness.

In summation, the literature review on spiritual formation first addressed an ancient text, a series of letters written by St. Antony. Considered by both clergy and laity of his time to be living “the real Christian life,” Antony has great insights on Christlike spiritual formation. While all seven letters put together would make more of a booklet than a book, the weight of his words need to be taken seriously in regards to Christlike spiritual formation. The remarkability in the seven letters was the abundance of terms surrounding “wisdom” and “knowledge” and the absence of the word “faith.” Antony’s

faith is a kind of faith that is characterized by insight, perception, and the correct mindset. This type of thinking is certainly in line with the teachings of Jesus and the writings of the apostles. The Apostle Paul writes to the church at Colosse, “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (Colossians 3:1-2, NIV). In another church letter directed to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul writes, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things” (Philippians 3:8, NIV). Repentance is also a key thought Antony develops in his letters. Antony believed that repentance is a process developed by ascetic practices in order to attain Christlikeness by the power of the Holy Spirit in purity, knowledge, and self-control. This kind of repentance will lead to unity with God.

The contemporary literature review focused on the writings of Dallas Willard, the modern-day prophet, for Christlike spiritual formation. Willard is author of a multitude of books and dozens of articles related to spiritual formation. However, the literature review focused on his award winning books, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* and *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Willard’s three-fold sequential pattern of “vision, intention, and means” for developing Christlike practices, virtues, and mindset are a more succinct version of the writings of Antony. His book, *The Divine Conspiracy*, makes the Sermon on the Mount, and particularly the Beatitudes, more understandable, less guilt-ridden, and more grace-filled

than most teachings that border on ignoring the teachings because it is reserved in another era or an impossible task that no one but the most holy can do.

In reviewing the literature on the lectionary, the concentration was on the work of the Reverend Doctor Alexander Ring of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. His work indicated that the selected readings of the lectionary had Jewish roots and was practiced by the early Church. The contemporary literature on the lectionary concentrated on the Common Lectionary and the Revised Common Lectionary within the historical context of the Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church.

Finally, the literature review concluded with the works of Haddon Robinson and John R. W. Stott on expository preaching and the multi-volume set, *Feasting on the Word*, and *Preaching the Lectionary* on the subject of lectionary preaching. Robinson, historically a Baptist, and Stott, a lifelong Anglican, provided similar thinking about how preaching is to be done to encourage Christlikeness. Robinson's and Haddon's works did not defend the Church calendar year, the lectionary in sermon development, or the liturgy, but simply assumed the validity of these disciplines for Christlike spiritual formation.

The literature review is notably absent of scholarship that would combine the art of preaching, the necessity of spiritual formation, and the formational role of the Church year, liturgy, and the lectionary. On these three concepts together, little has been written; in my research I only found a few paragraphs by authors like David Fitch or William Willimon. It is also important to note that the evangelical's authority for preaching the Scripture book by book is distinctively different from lectionary preaching. Lectionary preaching remains under an ecumenical Church authority, whereas the decision for the

book-by-book preacher is made more independently and subjectively by the evangelical in choosing the message.

In developing a theology of Christlike character, also important to consider is the personality of Jesus Christ, including his own self-description in the Gospels. By doing so, one is able to determine the marks of Christlike character for the contemporary Christian. After completing that foundational study, it was also important to address how the local church, particularly in regards to preaching and spiritual disciplines, plays a role in developing character.

Several conclusions may be drawn from the biblical and theological foundations for developing spiritual maturity into Christlikeness. The first is that Jesus Christ expected his followers to imitate his life under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit; therefore this imitation of Christ is possible for the twenty-first century believer. Second, Christlike character is a mark of apprenticeship that is defined by attitude, practices, and virtues taught by Jesus Christ and expounded by the apostles in the New Testament; therefore Christlikeness is a process for the twenty-first century believer. Third, the chief task of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church is to make disciples; therefore the primary role of the faith community is spiritual formation toward Christlikeness. Fourth, preaching to baptized believers is designed to equip, encourage, and inspire God's people to be like God's Son in attitude, practices, and virtues; therefore preaching is a holy calling, a sacred discipline, and takes a special anointing of the Holy Spirit. Fifth, spiritual disciplines provide the necessary guardrails in following Jesus and muscular strength to increase faith, hope, and love for God and others; therefore, passing up this

opportunity for Christlikeness will hinder intimacy and empowerment for eternal life today.

The final section of this ministry focus paper was designed to develop a strategy that is in theological alignment within the context of the Vista community and the faith community at The Way. It was the goal of this section to show that the preaching ministry is both a priestly and prophetic function in order to equip, encourage, and inspire others so that they will follow Jesus and experience Christlike spiritual transformation. Lastly, a strategy was developed that will honor the rhythm of the Church year as a tool for spiritual formation, and will take full advantage of the lectionary in preaching and the other educational ministries within the parish for adults and children.

The rector is recognized as the senior pastor of the parish, and behind the bishop, the rector is considered the chief spiritual overseer. He or she is recognized as an overseer within the congregation and a presbyter whose experience with God has been demonstrated in both word and deed. The rector's life, although humanly imperfect, remains a model of Christlikeness in attitude, practices, and virtue. Filled with God's grace, peace, and love, the rector serves as a priest, pastor, prophet, and preacher as he or she listens, loves, and prays on behalf of God's flock. The rector may have responsibilities in officiating certain sacramental acts; nevertheless the rector speaks on behalf of God. Because of the nature of this sacred and high calling, the rector may have the most influential role in all of society.

Because of this influential role, preaching God's truth in God's love with God's peace is no longer optional, but mandatory for the rector. The rector remains under the authority of God and his or her bishop, to remain faithful to Holy Scripture and to the

Church. This authority is often revealed in the use of the lectionary as the bishop of the diocese, the “chief pastor,” knows that the individual parishes are teaching the same holy messages of God to spur people on toward Christlikeness. As prophet, the rector preaches justice. As priest, the rector preaches forgiveness. As pastor, the rector preaches care and correction. As preacher, the rector preaches the Good News.

Stott rightly asserts that the apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the Church, with Christ being the chief cornerstone. However, with a great deal of respect for one of my heroes of the faith, I disagree with his assessment that the apostolic and prophetic roles do not exist as spiritual gifts today within the Body of Christ. In order to adequately shepherd today in our pluralistic societies, the pastor must be a prophet as well.

The final part of this project involved measurement tools that are designed to assist the pastoral team in assessing Christlike attitudes, practices, and virtues within the flock. Over the next several months, the team will begin a study to determine which measurement tool serves best the community at The Way. However, the pastoral team also believes a measurement tool needs to be added that incorporates a more liturgical understanding of spiritual formation. All three tools mentioned in this paper are clearly low-church, free-church, evangelical projects for spiritual formation.

It is the intention of this project to make preaching a key component in the spiritual formation of the flock. This will be accomplished as the pastors of The Way use the lectionary, living out the Church year in collective and collaborative community formation. Such an approach is in contrast to much of the evangelical world, which simply uses the secular calendar, and often emphasizes the entertainment aspect of

worship and developing clergy celebrities. It is God and God alone who must be glorified.

My goal as rector is to preach so that Christlike formation occurs. I am constantly haunted by the words of Anne Rice, the metaphysical fiction writer of vampire books, who wrote, “Today I quit being a Christian. I’m out. I remain committed to Christ as always but not to being ‘Christian’ or to being part of Christianity. It’s simply impossible for me to ‘belong’ to this quarrelsome, hostile, disputatious, and deserved infamous group.”¹ The Christian life is to be marked by Christians who live in Christ and live out Christ in practices, attitudes, and virtues. To God be the glory.

¹ Anne Rice, as quoted by Mark Moring, *Christianity Today* live blog, August 2, 2010, http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2010/08/anne_rice_today.html (accessed October 21, 2011).

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