Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

IN THE SHADE OF VALLOMBROSA:
REIMAGINING CHRISTIAN FORMATION AT BIOLA UNIVERSITY
THROUGH APOPHATIC SPIRITUALITY, TRANSGRESSIVE PEDAGOGY,
AND THE LOGIC OF PRACTICE

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IN THE SHADE OF VALLOMBROSA:
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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

PATRICK R. SAIA
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ABSTRACT

In the Shade of Vallombrosa:
Reimagining Christian Formation at Biola University
through Apophatic Spirituality, Transgressive Pedagogy,
and the Logic of Practice
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Doctor of Ministry
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary
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The binding characteristic of Biola University’s theological identity represents a hierarchical spirituality rooted in “thinking biblically about everything.” As a result, Biola espouses a resolutely kataphatic spirituality that reduces Christian formation to the transmission of biblical knowledge while neglecting the formation of the whole person. This approach is regrettable in addressing the dynamics of embodiment and the role of ritualized rhythms in both the curricular and co-curricular educational pedagogy.

This project explores an alternative approach regarding Christian formation for undergraduate students at Biola. It will establish methods of habitual immersion in a combination of Christian practices. The project will also proffer meaningful change in light of three critical areas: the infusion of an apophatic spirituality, an exclusively transgressive pedagogy, and the synchronization of a Christian habitus that is reflective of a complexified theory of practice.

The body of this dissertation is divided into three parts. Part One begins with the examination of Biola’s historical and theological context. This section determines Biola’s current state regarding core practices. It will indicate my initial observations and the potential and likely resistance for a proposed alternative. Part Two will develop a foundation for sociological and theological reflection to intentionally respond to the ministry challenge. This section begins with a literature review of five diverse resources. The remainder of Part Two investigates Pierre Bourdieu’s complex theory of practice and articulates an apophatic spirituality grounded in Jürgen Moltmann’s ecological doctrine of creation. Part Three develops a ministry strategy to reimagine Christian formation at Biola. The strategy pragmatically addresses the ministry problematic by proposing a co-curricular immersion program that is robustly apophatic, pedagogically transgressive, and practically Bourdieuan. The project concludes with a summary of insights gained and highlights implications for the future of the ministry.

Content Reader: Tony Jones, PhD

Words: 289

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1 Although the words “kataphatic” and “apophatic” are traditionally italicized, because of the nature of this project, they will be presented non-italicized.
To Gioia, a valley of shade and a Sabbath of tranquility
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude for Bricolage and all those who listened along the way. Mom, Dad, Elisha, Dom, Josh, Nate, Ben, Jon, Justin, Kurtis, and John. Garrett thank you for your constant encouragement and the invitation to embrace creation. Tony thank you for taking me to the edge.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

iv

**INTRODUCTION**

1

**PART ONE: MINISTRY CONTEXT**

Chapter 1. THE HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF BIOLA UNIVERSITY

10

Chapter 2. CURRENT STATE: CORE PRACTICES AT BIOLA UNIVERSITY

30

**PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

Chapter 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

61

Chapter 4. THEORIES OF PRACTICE AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

88

Chapter 5. THEOLOGY OF CREATION AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

109

**PART THREE: MINISTRY STRATEGY**

Chapter 6. PRAGMATIC RESPONSE: e3 PROGRAM PROPOSAL

131

**CONCLUSION**

177

**APPENDICES**

182

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

202
INTRODUCTION

The *sine qua non* for the mission of the Church is discipleship.¹ Through the prism of discipleship the first Christians understood, embodied, and spread this mission. Their motivation was galvanized from Christ’s parting instructions (Mt 28:16-20). Discipleship is fundamentally a matter of Christian formation and undoubtedly reaches beyond acquiring correct knowledge and biblical information. It requires practice.

Christian formation is oriented around a constellation of holistic bodily disciplines or practices that are carefully embraced and intentionally embodied by the individual or the worshiping community.² Practices establish a whole new pattern of life in the disciple and are the seedbed of Christian formation. To be formed in the Christian tradition is a matter of developing a know-how that intuitively embraces the world in a certain way. It is less about erecting an edifice of Christian knowledge and doctrine and more about being habituated by a cluster of practices, which form a Christian comportment to the world. To understand practice in any given context, including the context of Christian higher education, it is vital to develop a theory of practice and integrate that theory with a robust theology of Christian spirituality.

Ministry Challenge

The current model of Christian formation at Biola University is inadequate in spiritually forming the lives of its students. Biola espouses a resolutely kataphatic

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² Ibid., 107.
expression of Christian spirituality and indoctrinates students by propounding a biblical worldview. This method of Christian formation is pervasively embedded in both the curricular and co-curricular educational pedagogy. It is also central to Biola’s core practices and overall habitus. Consequently, Biola’s approach to formation is fundamentally flawed and is desperately in need of reconsideration.

Furthermore, as a Christian institution of higher learning, Biola deposits distinctly Evangelical Christian ideas and beliefs in the minds of its students. Christian practice is largely reduced to the study of the Bible resulting in doctrinal analysis permeating student experience. Cultivating an Evangelical Christian perspective is the norm. Unfortunately, a robust institutional strategy that relies heavily on a practical theological method to crystalize formation does not exist. It is simply not part of the equation.

Biola’s approach to Christian education is mostly concerned with information rather than formation. Biola’s current promotional slogan is, “Think biblically about everything.” The intrinsic idea entrenched in this slogan is that Biola will educate and form students with a Christian perspective and worldview that derives knowledge from a particular interpretation of the Bible. Essentially Biola deploys a banking system of Evangelical Christian ideas that can be deposited, stored, and used at a later date to “think about everything.” However, an irreducible genius resides in practices as they have a significant shaping effect on members in a community. This is equally true for Christian


practices. Biola’s core practices are aimed at, and limited to, an exclusively kataphatic spirituality.

**Location and Target Audience**

Founded in 1908 as a Bible institute, Biola now is an institution of higher education and a member of the council of Christian Colleges and Universities.5 The campus is located residentially on ninety-five acres in La Mirada, California, a suburb of Los Angeles bordering Orange County.6 The campus is approximately sixteen miles from downtown Los Angeles.7 Formation at Biola is directly connected to its fundamentalist heritage and historical beginnings. The process in which students are spiritually formed has been left largely unexamined, and as a result Christian spirituality is reduced to acquiring a Christian perspective.

The target audience for the ministry response is Biola students in their junior year of study, approximately between the ages of twenty to twenty-one. Amongst this group, this project will seek students who are purposefully engaged in their maturation and interested in their spiritual formation and growth as emerging adults.8 The focus of the ministry response is to create a formation program which will offer students seeking a deeper and more integrated educational and theological experience. The goal is to counterbalance Biola’s otherwise exclusive kataphatic approach. Students will be invited

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7 Ibid.

on a journey of personal and spiritual discovery that goes beyond “thinking biblically about everything,” and the acquisition a biblical worldview.

**Specific Ministry Need**

Biola does not exhibit an institutional strategy for students’ holistic formation. Both the curricular and co-curricular pedagogies are fundamentally limited to transmitting Christian ideas and exclusively focused on cultivating an Evangelical Christian worldview. The educational enterprise at Biola is not inherently a matter of holistic embodied formation, nor does it meaningfully promote an integrated Christian know-how. As previously stated, the main avenue for practice at Biola is a kataphatic consumption of Evangelical spirituality. Unfortunately, immersion in holistic material practice for Christian formation and discipleship is not comprehensive throughout the institution. Biola must reimagine a framework for educating students in Christian formation and devise a robust strategy that specifically meets this need.

Biola’s department of Student Development is positioned to be a leader and pioneer in immersing students in a constellation of Christian practices. An opportunity exists to infuse ritualized rhythms to holistically form students in a counterbalanced way. Student Development not only has the responsibility of training students through co-curricular education, it is also responsible for supporting and challenging students in Christian discipleship.
Why the Topic is Important

It is tremendously vital for Biola as a Christian institution to develop a robust theology of Christian practice. This topic however is largely neglected in terms of actual strategy and lived experienced. Certainly information, knowledge, and biblical integration are critical to Christian education. Nonetheless, if holistic Christian formation is the \textit{telos} of Christian education, then embodiment of Christian practice in the context of Biola has to be reimagined. Core sites for formation must be intentionally woven throughout students’ educational experiences while also addressing the need to counterbalance an overwhelming kataphatic Christian spirituality. Therefore, the topic of reimagining Christian formation at Biola is important because it fundamentally addresses matters of practice.

Reason for Interest in the Topic

I have worked among traditional undergraduate students at Biola for a decade through the Residence Life program. Serving within the department of Student Development provided a unique vantage point to observe Biola’s co-curricular approach to educating students. It also established a line of sight into the overarching vision and goals for student formation. Upon observation, reflection, and stakeholder discussion it became quite apparent to me that a strategy was lacking in terms of a counterbalanced approached to Christian formation. I was unable to detect a methodology of formation that reached beyond twentieth-century Evangelical kataphatic spirituality.

The opportunity to implement a new and creative avenue for Christian practice at Biola is certainly possible. It is of incredible interest to me. However, addressing Biola’s
problematic will undoubtedly require a comprehensive approach that is not limited to a theological response. In order to robustly address this problematic one must also respond pedagogically and socially. Responding to the ministry challenge is by no means easy. Rather a meaningful response will involve an arduous journey of practical theological reflection and necessitate an intrepid imagination.

**Thesis of the Project**

The current model of Christian formation at Biola is inadequate for theologically training and spiritually enriching the lives of its students. Biola inculcates students by propounding a biblical worldview and fostering and overwhelmingly Evangelical kataphatic spirituality. This Ministry Focus Paper presents an alternative model of Christian formation for undergraduate students. It will address a deficient Evangelical kataphatic expression of spiritual formation and theology by immersing students in a transformational model of Christian education. This approach will inoculate students with an integrated coherent spirituality through the ongoing embodiment of material Christian practice. An immersion program will be developed in which students are exposed to a combination of Christian practices. Special attention will be given to creating a strategy for formation that is robustly apophatic, pedagogically transgressive, and practically Bourdieuan.

**Overview of Project Content**

This paper contains three major sections. Part One will describe Biola’s historical and theological context. It will examine the rise of fundamentalism in America in
response to three specific crisis events. Part One will also examine the emergence of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. This section will underscore the influence of Millenarianism, pre-millennial dispensationalism, and the Bible Prophecy Conference movement in terms of Biola’s theological identity. Next, Part One will utilize thick description to better understand the four core practices that constitute Biola’s current formational identity. This section will present my initial observations pertaining to Biola’s core practices. It will additionally highlight the role of Residence Life in reimagining Christian formation. The potential for the immersion program and possible areas of institutional resistance to the proposed ministry initiative will conclude Part One.

Part Two will establish the sociological and theological foundations for the project. Initially, five books are individually evaluated in light of the project thesis. The literature review will essentially provide insight into the focal topics of the doctrine of creation, apophatic spirituality, practice theory, and transgressive pedagogy. Part Two will then develop a theory of practice gleaning insights from the social sciences. Both Alasdair MacIntyre’s and Pierre Bourdieu’s contributions to the field of practice theory will be examined while Bourdieu’s theory will be thoroughly analyzed and developed.

Next, a Christian spirituality rooted in the doctrine of creation will form the basis of theological reflection. Theological influence will primarily be derived from Jürgen Moltmann’s, God in Creation. This section specifically examines an ecological doctrine of creation with unique attention devoted to the doctrine of the Sabbath. The doctrine of the Sabbath will establish the theological underpinnings for an apophatic Christian spirituality. Practical theological implications for practicing the Sabbath will additionally
be explored and developed. Moltmann’s ecological doctrine of creation arranges the
groundwork for implementing a non-hierarchical approach toward formation and a
transgressive pedagogy.

Part Three presents the pragmatic response to the ministry problematic. A robust
strategy of action will be developed and carefully described in terms of an innovative
immersion program proposal. The proposal includes the program summary and program
design and content. This section will specifically develop key details pertaining to the
program’s location, target audience, Leadership Community, learning structure, and core
practices. Lastly, Part Three will provide a summary and conclusion for the Ministry
Focus Project including insights gained, and implications and plans for the future of the
ministry. The path forward in reimagining Christian formation at Biola University will be
to immerse students in sustainable Christian practice. This requires an integrated coherent
approach, which demands the involvement and redirection of the whole person and whole
community.\(^9\) The cardinal element that is absolutely necessary is practice.

PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT
CHAPTER 1
THE HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF BIOLA UNIVERSITY

In order to properly understand how Biola University came to espouse a resolutely kataphatic Christian spirituality a historical sketch of the major influences that led to Biola’s inception as an institution must be developed. This chapter examines the emergence of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, which certainly did not occur in isolation. It was the result of a critical response to three core crisis events. In the midst of crisis, a simultaneous convergence of three interlocking theological factors also transpired that significantly contributed to Biola’s historic beginnings and abiding relationship to fundamentalism. In the pages that follow, the crisis events in conjunction with the interlocking theological dynamics will be explored.

Revivalism

Biola’s Evangelical heritage is directly traced through its lineage to the Great Reformation. While the transition to Western Protestant hegemony developed in Europe, it eventually crossed the Atlantic and gave rise to Protestantism in America. During the
eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Evangelical revivals spread throughout America.\textsuperscript{1} The influence of these revivals, and in particular the First and Second Great Awakenings mobilized vast numbers of Protestants and established an evangelical consciousness throughout denominational lines.\textsuperscript{2} Central to these revival movements was the proclamation of the gospel, the saving work of Christ on the cross, individual eternal salvation, and a strong emphasis on biblical authority, propositional truth, and expository preaching.\textsuperscript{3} Revivalism caused dramatic change in the landscape of American religion. Consequently, through Revivalism, Protestant Evangelicalism thrived. By the mid-nineteenth century it was the dominant expression of American religious life.\textsuperscript{4} Figures such as George Whitefield, Samuel Davis, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, and Dwight L. Moody contributed to Revivalism’s rapid expansion.\textsuperscript{5}

**The Rise of Fundamentalism in America**

Throughout the mid-to-late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, myriad events and circumstances contributed to radical complexities among the Evangelical


\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.

movement in America. One of the complexities within the movement, which is inextricably linked to Biola’s Evangelical heritage and kataphatic expression of Christian spirituality, is fundamentalism. Fundamentalism developed in the context of significant crisis. The helm of crisis included Darwinism, the American Civil War, and Liberal Modernism. To complexify matters further, the interlocking theological factors regarding a revival of Millenarianism, the introduction of John Nelson Darby’s dispensational theology, the establishment of the Prophetic Bible Conference movement, and the proliferation of Bible institutes simultaneously converged. The pages to follow will underscore both the dramatic crisis events and the convergence of theological dynamics which not only gave rise to fundamentalism but inevitably set the stage for Biola’s beginnings.

Darwinism

In 1859 the naturalist Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*. His theory of evolution by natural selection swept through the Modern world and created incredible disturbance within academic and theological discussions. Darwin’s ideas undermined the accuracy of the Bible and challenged modern scientific culture.

Evangelical theological categories rested on the foundation of biblical truth and biblical authority. If the Bible was inaccurate, then certain evangelical truth claims were subject

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to inquiry and critique. Some of these critiques included the historicity of the creation
account, humankind’s distinct image, and the synthesis between faith and reason.
Darwinian thought challenged the hallmark of the Protestant imperative, *sola scriptura*.10
Evangelicals responded by safeguarding the authoritative nature of the Bible. In response they emphasized the definable and absolute standards derived from the Bible.11 As a result, Evangelicals became increasingly concerned with the literal interpretation of Scripture. This concern was one of the primary impetuses to becoming more fundamental in their approach to biblical interpretation but also to doctrine.

In terms of Modern scientific culture, Darwinism brought about a second scientific revolution.12 Science previously enjoyed synthesis with religion, but due to the emergence of Darwinian theory science began to be approached with complete autonomy. Religion was considered spiritual, and science was not. This caused a surge in scientific investigation particularly in the disciplines of the social and physical sciences.13 The social sciences brought forth new social theories, which gave logical priority to the individual over the community.14 The social sciences also claimed that human religiosity was the product of social evolution.15 The combination of Darwinism and the advancement of the social sciences placed conservative Evangelicals on their heels. It

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12 Ibid., 20.
13 Wilkens and Padgett, *Christianity and Western Thought*, 294.
14 Ibid., 316.
15 Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 34.
required a unique theological defense including defending a particular viewpoint regarding their interpretation of the Bible. Darwin’s influence certainly led to an inestimable crisis for the Evangelical consciousness.

The American Civil War

A second crisis that disrupted Evangelicalism during the mid-to-late-nineteenth century and profoundly contributed to the fundamental movement was the American Civil War. The conflict ended in 1865 with hundreds of thousands maimed and nearly 620,000 died in combat.\textsuperscript{16} The war was a brutal stain on American history. Its outcome was quite sobering.

Prior to the Civil War, Evangelicalism rapidly expanded through Revivalism, thus embedding Protestant Christianity within the common American identity.\textsuperscript{17} Widespread enthusiasm for Evangelicalism and Protestant Christianity defined the values and assumptions of most Americans.\textsuperscript{18} By the 1850s, Revivalism was one of the main social and religious institutions in American culture. George Marsden highlights:

America, lacking many older institutions, had been substantially influenced by revivalism. The negative associations of revivals primarily with excess or with the frontier were only distant memories. Awakenings were now most respectable and even necessary signs of vitality in cities as much as in the countryside, among the educated as certainly as among the unlettered. The most immediate common memories were of the popular revivals that had swept through army camps, both Northern and Southern, but the outstanding model for renewal was the great revival of 1857-1858. These awakenings, centered in the cities, grew out of noonday prayer meetings led by businessmen and bankers. Revival was not

\textsuperscript{16} James A. Henretta, David Brody, and Lynn Dumenil, \textit{America: A Concise History} (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1999), 418.

\textsuperscript{17} Marsden, \textit{Fundamentalism and American Culture}, 3.

\textsuperscript{18} Drew Gilpin Faust, \textit{This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War} (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 172.
confined to the poor or ignorant. Most college educated Americans had attended schools where periodically intense spiritual out-pourings were expected among the student body.\textsuperscript{19}

However, a stark difference existed in the psychology of America between the antebellum and post-bellum periods. At the end of the conflict the American consciousness was more closely aligned with war, death, and uncertainty than with religion. Thousands of Civil War Americans shared in the devastating grief of the conflict. Their identification with grief would carry well into the next century.

By the end of the war, the American Protestant Evangelical identity included a profound identification with the trauma of war. The Civil War introduced mass death and raised disturbing questions about humanity. Overall it generated a sense of social anxiety. The conflict was interpreted as a true apocalyptic contest.\textsuperscript{20} Despite the fact that the US was ostensibly a Christian society, the war significantly disrupted American religion. The impact of the war on the Protestant Evangelical mind created anticipation toward a better future. It also catalyzed a renewed interest and preoccupation among Evangelicals concerning the second coming of Christ.

Liberal Modernism

The third pivotal crisis, that disrupted late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Evangelicalism was Liberal Modernism, which give birth to Protestant Liberalism. The development of Western culture brought forth completely different ways of looking at the

\textsuperscript{19} Marsden, \textit{Fundamentalism and American Culture}, 11.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 11.
world. The critical analysis and objectivism of modernity seriously affected religion.\textsuperscript{21} By the nineteenth century Western Christianity faced a theological modernization through Liberalism. This entailed integrating new critical approaches to history, the natural sciences, and literary criticism. As a historical literary document, the Bible was not exempt from such critical investigation.\textsuperscript{22} Protestant liberals embraced a new biblical criticism, which required a higher standard for intellectual respectability in terms of approaching the biblical text.\textsuperscript{23}

Liberals were interested in the reinterpretation of traditional Christian beliefs in light of modern scientific and historical knowledge.\textsuperscript{24} Through the influence of German theologians Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl, Liberalism shifted the centrality of Protestant Christian faith from the Bible to the centrality of religious experience.\textsuperscript{25} Schleiermacher proposed a sense of absolute dependence as foundational to the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{26} From the conservative Evangelical perspective, liberals modified Christianity in order to meet the intellectual standards of Modernism.\textsuperscript{27} The key issue for conservative Evangelicals was the absolute integrity and undisputed authority of the

\textsuperscript{21} Tomlinson, \textit{Post Evangelical}, 65. \\
\textsuperscript{23} Marsden, \textit{Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism}, 33. \\
\textsuperscript{24} Bruce L. Shelley, \textit{Evangelicalism in America} (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 60. \\
\textsuperscript{25} Bruce L. Shelley, \textit{Church History in Plain Language} (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1982), 422. \\
\textsuperscript{26} Marsden, \textit{Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism}, 35. \\
\textsuperscript{27} Kyle, \textit{Evangelism}, 60.
literal Word of God. Evangelicals reacted by determinedly defending fundamental doctrines, such as the inerrancy of Scripture and the deity of Christ.

In the midst of dramatic crisis, the very basis of Evangelical conviction was challenged. While Darwinism, the American Civil War, and Liberal Modernism converged so too did a series of interlocking theological dynamics. The combined convergence eventually gave birth to fundamentalism and resulted in the emergence of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. In the following section the specific interlocking theological dynamics will be developed and explored.

**Revival of Millenarianism**

In the wake of the French Revolution millennial ideology circulated widely in both Britain and the US.\(^28\) The violent uprooting of European political and social institutions caused dramatic concern that the end of the world was near. A realistic outlook of the rebellion convinced scholars of apocalyptic literature that the biblical prophecies found in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 had been fulfilled.\(^29\) The visions in both texts were interpreted as two separate portrayals of the same event by a group of Protestants known as the Millenarians.\(^30\)

The specific prophetic event examined in both texts was interpreted as the duration of papal hegemony. According to the Millenarians, the papacy came into power


\(^{30}\) Ibid.
in 538.\textsuperscript{31} In 1798 French troops, under the leadership of General Louis Alexandre Berthier, marched on Rome establishing a republic. They banished the pope, thus fulfilling the 1,260 years of tyrannical papal reign seemingly prophesied in Daniel and Revelation.\textsuperscript{32} The Millenarian tradition considered the removal of the pope at the end of the French Revolution as historical prophetic evidence of the last days.\textsuperscript{33}

The Millenarian hermeneutical approach to prophetic and apocalyptic biblical literature influenced Evangelicals in the US. It appealed to an Evangelical mindset that was interested in decoding its own history and investigating specific predictions pertaining to the second coming of Christ. Evangelicals more than ever approached the biblical text as a series of propositions which required proper arrangement and codification in order to discern God’s plans for the past, present, and future. This led to American Evangelicals becoming increasingly preoccupied with the millennium while blending it with optimism and nationalism.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{John Nelson Darby’s Premillennial Dispensational Theology}

By the mid-nineteenth-century the Millenarian movement gained significant traction in Britain and the US.\textsuperscript{35} John Darby Nelson, a leading teacher in the British

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\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 7.
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\textsuperscript{34} Sandeen, \textit{The Roots of Fundamentalism}, 43.
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Plymouth Brethren and a Millenarian, promulgated the idea that the rapture would take place before the great tribulation, rather than preluding it.\(^{36}\) Darby based his theological system, known as premillennial dispensationalism, on seven eras in human history. Darby believed that in each respective economy of time God tested humanity through different plans of salvation. However, humanity failed each test, so God intervened with devastating judgment. According to Darby, the dispensation at the present time was known as the Church age, which began with the apostles. He considered the Church age as the sixth dispensation and it too would end in divine calamity.\(^{37}\)

During a series of seven evangelical tours in the US and Canada from 1862-1877, Darby introduced and popularized his premillennial dispensationalism among Evangelicals.\(^{38}\) His singular theological system offered an explanation that located historical events within a cosmic context through careful literal interpretations of Scripture, especially end times prophecies.\(^{39}\) Darby’s vision of both world history and God’s redemptive plan was defined in absolute terms.

Although there were many theological and hermeneutical complexities associated with his dispensationalism, it was palpable to an American Evangelical audience because it offered a sense of concrete theological stability in the midst of the apocalyptic nature of the Civil War, and the growing conviction that the rapture could occur at any moment. By the 1870s prominent American Evangelists, including Moody, Billy Sunday, George


\(^{37}\) Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 68.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 71.

\(^{39}\) Marty and Appleby, *Fundamentalism Observed*, 16.
Needham, and Reuben A. Torrey all preached the premillennial return of Christ. These evangelists were ardent supporters of Darby’s premillennial dispensationalism and they influenced a large majority of conservative Evangelicals throughout America.

As the pre-millennial movement coalesced, it did not have total consensus among adherents due to a variety of viewpoints concerning specific doctrinal intricacies related to end times eschatology. However, a core consensus did exist amid dispensationalists, which emphasized a literal hermeneutic for properly interpreting Scripture. There was enough trans-denominational agreement on a literal biblical hermeneutic, yet a need and interest grew surrounding a consensus on specific interpretations of pre-millennialism and biblical end times prophecy. As a result, in 1875 a group of pre-millennial dispensationalists officially organized the Believers’ Meeting for Bible Study. It eventually became known as the Niagara Bible conference after meeting annually at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario from 1883-1897.

### Bible Prophecy Conference Movement

The Niagara Bible conference brought together like-minded pre-millennial dispensationalists and became a prototype for hundreds of conferences to follow. The interdenominational focus of the conference was primarily aimed at exploring end times Bible prophecy, Millenarianism, and Darby’s dispensationalism, but it also incorporated

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43 Ibid.

44 Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 46.
gatherings for worship and fellowship. By 1878 the Niagara Creed was created and in 1890 it was officially adopted as a teaching guide for the conference. The creed spelled out fourteen essential points of Christian doctrine affirming a host of Millenarian concerns. It included such affirmations as the verbal inerrancy of the original scriptural autographs, the pre-millennial second-advent, human depravity, and salvation by faith in Christ. The networks and ideas that emerged from the Niagara Bible conferences, “led some historians to describe it as the cradle of fundamentalism.”

The Bible prophecy movement, derived from the Niagara meetings, attracted scores of Evangelicals and created widespread enthusiasm for dispensational pre-millennialism and a fervent defense of biblicism. Leaders from the Niagara conferences were also instrumental in developing the First International Prophecy conference in 1878, held in New York City. Subsequent international conferences followed in Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia, each emphasizing a serious interest in biblical eschatology and biblical literalism.

As the Bible conference movement expanded among Evangelicals, key Millenarian and pre-millennial dispensationalist leaders decided to promote and publicize their ideology to a broader American audience with hopes of evangelizing unbelievers

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45 Sandeen, _Roots of Fundamentalism_, 273.
46 Sutton, _American Apocalypse_, 140.
47 Sandeen, _Roots of Fundamentalism_, 141.
49 Sweet, _The Evangelical Tradition in America_, 6.
50 Marty and Appleby, _Fundamentalism Observed_, 20.
and strengthening convictions of those who already were devoted to the faith.\footnote{Sandeen, \textit{Roots of Fundamentalism}, 158.} One key Millenarian leader was William E. Blackstone, a wealthy real estate developer from Chicago, an evangelist, and a friend of Moody.\footnote{Pietsuh, \textit{Dispensational Modernism}, 47.} In the same year as the first International Bible Conference, Blackstone published a book titled \textit{Jesus is Coming}.\footnote{Sutton, \textit{American Apocalypse}, 8.} In his book Blackstone presented a strong warning to the wider American and British audiences concerning the immanent return of Christ, and he insisted on a call to faith.\footnote{Ibid., 9.} The publication promoted pre-millennialism well beyond the Bible Prophecy conference movement and created a popular interest in eschatology. Over a million copies were sold and printed in over forty languages by the time of Blackstone’s death in 1935.\footnote{Ibid.}

\textbf{The Emergence of Bible Institutes}

By the late nineteenth-century the popularity of Bible Prophecy conferences catalyzed a coalition of influential evangelists, Bible teachers, and promoters of the Niagara creed to establish institutional permanence for the dispensational movement.\footnote{Marsden, \textit{Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism}, 40.} The outcome was the organization and proliferation of Bible institutes throughout America in order to train lay leaders in the fundamental doctrines of the Protestant Christian faith and to instruct biblical truth. As conservative Bible institutes emerged throughout the United States in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, three

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
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\bibitem{Marsden} Marsden, \textit{Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism}, 40.
\end{thebibliography}
institutes came to prominence in America’s major cities, namely Philadelphia Institute of the Bible, Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, and the Bible Institute of Los Angeles.\footnote{Bernard Ramm, \textit{The Evangelical Heritage: A Study in Historical Theology} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 87.} When the Bible Institute of Los Angeles was formed in 1908, it rapidly became a leading center of pre-millennial thought.\footnote{Marty and Appleby, \textit{Fundamentalism Observed}, 21.} It is by no mistake that Bible Institute of Los Angeles emerged out of a response to profound crisis and the convergence of several complex theological dynamics.

\textbf{The Bible Institute of Los Angeles}

Thomas Corwin Horton, a staunch Millenarian and Lyman Stewart, president of the Union Oil Company were the co-founders of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles.\footnote{Biola University, \textit{Biola University: Rooted for One Hundred Years Established 1908} (La Mirada, CA: Biola University, 2007), 13.} In the summer of 1905, Horton traveled to Los Angeles to meet with Stewart as a candidate for the assistant pastorate at Immanuel Presbyterian Church.\footnote{Ibid., 20.} Horton accepted the position and by January 1906 moved to Los Angeles. In his first year at Immanuel Presbyterian, Horton created and led the Fisherman’s Club, a men’s group devoted to evangelism and Bible training. His wife Anna formed a similar group for woman, known as the Lyceum Club.\footnote{Randall Balmer, \textit{Encyclopedia of Evangelism} (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 342.}

Both clubs expanded to include training classes for Sunday school teachers. Within a year Horton and Stewart began discussing the inception of a Bible training
school for the purpose of teaching the next generation of evangelists, pastors, missionaries, and laypersons. The goal was to specialize biblical training in premillennial dispensational thought and emphasize the inerrancy and infallibility of the Christian Scriptures. On February 25, 1908 the Bible Institute of Los Angeles opened its doors to thirty-five students recruited from both the Fisherman’s Club for men and the Lyceum Club for woman. Horton was named the superintendent and Stewart provided the financial backing for the institute. Together they established one of the dominant fundamentalist educational institutions of their time.

Theological Training and Publication

The educational, curricular, and publication enterprise significantly developed when R.A. Torrey joined the institute. Torrey was a graduate of Yale College and Yale Divinity School, the previous superintendent at Moody Bible Institute, and a primary editor of *The Fundamentals*. He was invited to become the new dean of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, however Torrey required two stipulations before accepting the position. The conditions included a newly founded church organized in partnership with the institute and an auditorium be built suitable for accommodating approximately four-

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62 Biola University, *Biola University*, 20.

63 Ibid., 13.


thousand people for evangelistic outreach.\textsuperscript{67} Stewart and Horton agreed, and in the summer of 1911 Torrey officially joined the institute as dean.

The educational and curricular methods Torrey implemented were very similar to the methods used at Moody Bible Institute. As one of the chief architects of fundamentalist thought, Torrey situated dispensationalism and practical Bible knowledge at the center of the curriculum. The \textit{Scofield Reference Bible}, a 1909 publication by Oxford Press, was a staple component of the curriculum.\textsuperscript{68} The \textit{Scofield Bible} reflected John Darby’s dispensationalism and provided elaborate schemes of cross-references, which placed the entirety of Scripture into the dispensationalist framework.\textsuperscript{69} Torrey also instituted a concise statement of Christian doctrine adopted by the institute through the board of directors, which remains the same doctrinal statement adopted by Biola University today.\textsuperscript{70} In addition to biblical training, practical ministry was a mandatory part of the curriculum. By 1917, the Bible institute accounted for 6,491 evangelistic outreach meetings, 17,056 Bible’s distributed, 213,650 tracks circulated, and 4,009 Christian books freely given to the public.\textsuperscript{71}

In terms of advancing the institute’s publication efforts, Torrey was instrumental in the editing and distribution of \textit{The Fundamentals}. Under Torrey’s and Horton’s

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Biola University, \textit{Biola University}, 21.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, \textit{Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies or Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 372.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Robert H. Kraphol and Charles H. Lippy, \textit{The Evangelicals: A Historical, Thematic, and Biographical Guide} (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 36.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Biola University, \textit{Biola University}, 21.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 26.
\end{itemize}
leadership the institute was also responsible for publishing *The King’s Business*, a periodical that examined theological and political issues from a conservative Evangelical perspective.\(^72\) *The King’s Business* and *The Fundamentals* were both produced by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles Press, a department of the Institute that published more than 500,000 materials on a monthly basis.\(^73\) Clearly the Institute’s publication efforts were quite active early on.

The Fundamentals

*The Fundamentals* consisted of twelve paperback volumes of doctrinal exposition on a broad defense of the Christian faith, published by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles from 1910-1915.\(^74\) Lyman Stewart conceived the idea while he attended one of the Niagara conferences in the 1880s.\(^75\) By 1909 Stewart and his brother Milton agreed to anonymously finance the publication through the institute at the expense of $300,000.\(^76\) Nearly three million copies were freely distributed to Christian denominational workers, pastors, missionaries, Christian educators, theology professors, and religious editors in the English-speaking world and became the sole point of reference for symbolizing the fundamental movement.\(^77\)

\(^{72}\) Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 144.


\(^{75}\) Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 193.

\(^{76}\) Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 119.

\(^{77}\) Krapohl and Lippy, *The Evangelicals*, 44.
The first twenty-nine articles of The Fundamentals were dominated by the defense of the Bible. In terms of substance, the doctrine of inerrancy, infallibility, and the inspiration of Scripture were significantly emphasized. This comprised nearly one-third of the publication.\textsuperscript{78} The remaining articles addressed other cardinal Evangelical doctrines, apologetics, practical biblical essays, personal testimonies, and polemics against modernism and Protestant Liberalism.\textsuperscript{79}

As one of the primary editors, Torrey chose sixty-four authors in total to contribute to The Fundamentals. A large majority of the authors were familiar with the Millenarian movement, participated in the Niagara conferences, had affiliation with premillennial dispensationalism, and were loyal biblicists.\textsuperscript{80} Ultimately, The Fundamentals clarified and reaffirmed the non-negotiable essentials of orthodox Christianity and is the epitome of fundamentalist belief. Due to its direct affiliation with The Fundamentals, the institute became a leading visible icon for promoting biblical truth and fundamentalist orthodoxy.

\textbf{Biola College and Biola University}

Within the next generation many Bible institutes in America became four-year colleges.\textsuperscript{81} After World War II, education in America dramatically shifted. The standard for entrance into the professional work force was a baccalaureate degree. Mission boards also expressed the need for students who were well trained not only in biblical studies,

\textsuperscript{78} Sandeen, \textit{Roots of Fundamentalism}, 204.

\textsuperscript{79} Carpenter, \textit{Revive us Again}, 7.

\textsuperscript{80} Sandeen, \textit{Roots of Fundamentalism}, 199.

\textsuperscript{81} Marty and Appleby, \textit{Fundamentalism Observed}, 33.
but also in the liberal arts and professional skills. The Bible Institute of Los Angeles responded and in 1949 was renamed Biola College. As Biola College developed in offering more academic programs it subsequently identified a need to restructure and become a university. In 1981, Biola College was renamed Biola University. While the breadth of Biola’s academic programs and liberal arts education grew its commitment to biblically-centered education continued. To this day all undergraduate students enrolled at Biola will graduate with a minor in Bible.

**Conclusion**

Spanning nearly 111 years of history, the genesis of Biola University as an educational community took root in the context of significant social, political, and theological upheaval. The convergence of three key crisis events in conjunction with several complex theological dynamics led to the rise of fundamentalism and ultimately the inception of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. As a result, Biola University in its current state, inherited a set of shared practices that are historically and theologically situated in fundamentalist thought and dispensational theology.

These collective practices have developed and morphed over the years, nevertheless they inscribe a unique core culture, which forms and shapes the community

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82 Biola University, *Biola University*, 65.


84 Ibid.

today.\textsuperscript{86} The patterned activities, when carried on over time, became embodied by individual members involved and the community as a whole. Thus, to reimagine Christian formation at Biola it is vital to begin with the fundamental practices that are core to shaping the community, while also being cognizant of the historical events and theological dynamics that contributed to the current state. Investigating Biola’s present day core practices will not only provide an understanding of the current state of the community, but it will also elucidate Biola’s core identity and core theological convictions.

Chapter 2 will explore and describe the four core practices, which constitute Biola’s current formational identity. Following the descriptive account of core practices, a series of initial observations will be highlighted. The remainder of the chapter will focus on the role of Student Development in devising a counteractive immersion program as a ministry response to the current model of formation. Special attention will be given to the possible resistance to the proposed ministry initiative, and the potential of new pathways for formation. Once the descriptive work of interpreting the current state of Biola is completed, the integrative work of utilizing the social sciences in conversation with theological reflection, a strategy then can be devised to meet the ministry need of reformation.

CHAPTER 2
CURRENT STATE: CORE PRACTICES AT BIOLA UNIVERSITY

As a participant observer from 2003 to 2015, I actively engaged in the shared communal reality of Biola University. From 2003 to 2005, I participated as a graduate student studying theology, pastoral ministry, and instructing undergraduate courses as a teaching assistant in the Bible department. From 2005 to 2015, I worked within the department of Student Development as a Resident Director and subsequently served as Director of Residence Life. During my five years as a Resident Director I lived on campus and was fully immersed in the Biola community. My primary sphere of influence was directly related to the residential experience and co-curricular education. Throughout the five years of serving in campus leadership as Director, I particularly noticed that Christian formation at Biola was largely inadequate. If Biola was to seriously consider its responsibility for Christian formation and developing a fully integrated spirituality in the lives of its students, it must attend to matters of practice and formation.¹

The following thick descriptions will examine four practices core to Biola. By way of thorough description, each practice will provide an inside look at what animates

the community from a perspective of formation. The goal is to discern the situational patterns and understand the theological character with a pragmatic focus on further facilitating Christian formation. By first attending to what is going on, this Ministry Focus Paper can reflect on why it is going on and what ought to eventually take place.2

Core Practice 1: Chapel

The most prominent core practice at Biola is the practice of chapel. Chapel has been a defining mark of the Biola community since 1908. In its current form, Biola’s chapel is a co-curricular component of the education. Each semester students are required to participate in twenty chapels.3 Students attend chapel approximately two times per week in order to meet the requirement. In terms of attendance, students are scanned in and registered within a database that tracks participation. Failure to complete the chapel requirement results in a $375 fine.4 The purpose of the fine is to establish a form of accountability.

In order to explore the spirituality of Biola’s chapel experience it is important to note the unique time, space, and environment in which students inhabit. The overall chapel program brings the community participants together either on Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays from 9:30am to 10:15am. Chapel is held in the Richard Chase Gymnasium, named after Biola’s sixth President and home to Biola’s basketball and

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volleyball teams. The gymnasium was built in 1962 and remodeled in 2004 adding an upstairs seating section. It has a seating capacity for 2200 audience members and a square footage of 15,962 feet.\footnote{Biola University, “Chase Gymnasium,” accessed August, 25, 2019, \url{https://www.biola.edu/event-services/venues/chase-gymnasium}.}

Upon entrance, students pass beneath four banners located above a series of eight doors. The imagery of the banners depicts a large group of students in the Biola gymnasium cheering enthusiastically during a sporting event. Throughout the series of banners, the following statement reads in large white font, “Have the Courage to Have Convictions.” As students enter, they pass through the front foyer and engage several fellow students who fulfill the role of a chapel accountability scanner. After a student’s identification card is scanned, the student enters into the main gymnasium through a drawn curtain.

Once inside, participants experience a very low-lit, almost dark capacious room with casually dressed students sitting either on the bleachers or the gymnasium floor. A large white projection screen, a centralized podium with a microphone, and a student led worship band on a temporarily constructed stage, are located at the front of the gymnasium. Flanked on both sides of the stage is a pair of Yamaha Club V series speakers and sound monitors for the musicians.

Chapel begins promptly at 9:30am with a word of welcome from the worship leader. Several contemporary worship songs are sung accompanied by lyrics on the white screen. The worship songs reflect an Evangelical overtone and the songs are occasionally integrated with extemporaneous prayers offered by the worship leader. Students
traditionally stand, raise their hands, and may close their eyes during worship. From time-
to-time, one might observe a few students located on the highly elevated side bleachers
typing away on dimly lit, yet noticeable mac computers. At the conclusion of the music, a
closing prayer is said, “in the name of Jesus,” and the community is then directed to sit.

Next, the lighting is slightly increased, as relevant announcements are delivered
from center stage by either the Dean of Spiritual Development or the Director of Chapel
Programs. Typically, announcements are related to upcoming university events or
university highlights. Following announcements, a speaker is introduced and welcomed
in order to instruct students in a biblically grounded sermon, otherwise known as the
“message.”

Speakers include various faculty members from throughout the university,
however the majority faculty members are male professors of the Bible department.
These chapels are identified as, “word chapels,” and occur on Mondays and Fridays.
Wednesday chapels are known as, “wisdom chapels,” which address relevant issues from
a biblical perspective. Either the Dean of Spiritual Development or the Director of Chapel
Programs speaks at wisdom chapels, however guests within prominent Evangelical
circles are occasionally invited from outside the university to also speak at the wisdom
chapels.

At any given chapel, the message is delivered monologically and unanimously
takes the form of expository preaching from the Bible. The format is lecture-like: the
speaker stands and the audience remains seated listening. This approach is didactic and
unilateral. The message ranges from twenty-five to thirty minutes in length. It is
considered central to the chapel experience. At the conclusion of the “message” the speaker often closes in perfunctory prayer. Depending on time constraints a final worship song may be sung, otherwise students are punctually dismissed at 10:15am.

The WORD Mural

After exiting the gymnasium an adjacent building to the right known as Bardwell Hall comes into line of sight. Bardwell Hall is the science building on campus, which hosts a thirty-foot mural by Los Angeles muralist Kent Twichell. The mural is titled, “The WORD,” however it is commonly referred to as the, “Jesus Mural,” and has been subject to controversy since the Spring of 1993. The mural was completed in 1990 and refurbished by Twichell in 2011. It depicts a prominent Caucasian Jesus dressed in a long maroon robe with out-stretched arms extending a large black Bible in a downward posture. The pages of the Bible are reflective of Jesus’ maroon robe. A reserved Jesus’ eyes are fixed upward toward heaven. The majority of the background has a duplicity of Jesus’ shadow and the remainder of the mural depicts a muted teal blue color that progressively darkens as it reaches the wall’s edge.

Mesh Mural and Jesus Saves Sign

In addition to the mural on Bardwell Hall, students will also notice an adjacent five story parking structure to the left after exiting the gymnasium. A thirty-eight-by-fifty-nine-foot mesh photographic mural of the original 1930s Bible Institute of Los


Angeles building is displayed with a one-third scale of the iconic seven-foot bright red, “Jesus Saves,” neon sign. The replica sign is constructed of LED lights and is lit up nightly. The original sign was installed on the north dormitory tower at the 6th and Hope headquarters in downtown Los Angeles on February 17, 1935, and two years later an identical second sign was added to the south dormitory side. The 6th and Hope building was originally one of the tallest buildings in Los Angeles throughout the 1930s. The signs remained on the building until 1988 when the building was demolished. The impetus for the conspicuous signs was a hopeful response to Biola’s survival of near bankruptcy during the Great Depression. Also, particularly portrayed on the mesh photographic mural are the words of Psalm 119:89, etched above the archway entrance to the original building, which read, “Forever O’ Lord Thy Word is settled in Heaven.” The entirety of Biola’s chapel experience oscillates between prayer with words, verbal songs of worship, biblical instruction, and imagery that propels participants toward an expression of spirituality grounded in doctrine and biblical truth. Each element seems to function as a doctrine delivery mechanism.

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11 Biola University, “From this Place: The History of Biola University,” May 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxYwPDAA-2M.

Core Practice 2: Torrey Memorial Bible Conference and Missions Conference

Biola’s second core practice is similar yet distinct from chapel. The university conducts two annual conferences, the Torrey Memorial Bible conference during the Fall semester and Missions conference during the Spring semester. Both conferences are three-day events in which classes are suspended and student attendance is required. The conferences are devoted to students’ spiritual development and provide a biblical perspective on the specific theme for the year.

Torrey Memorial Conference

The Torrey Memorial Bible conference was first instituted in 1936 by Biola’s third president, Paul Rood. In the midst of tremendous national and economic upheaval triggered by the Great Depression, Rood decided to commemorate Biola’s heritage. The special commemoration of Biola’s heritage included the establishment of an annual week-long Bible conference and the ceremonial unveiling of a bronze plaque honoring the service of Biola’s first dean R.A. Torrey.

After decades of tradition, the conference today is in its eighty-third iteration. From a formational point of view the Torrey conference is quite similar to chapel, however there are several distinct features worth highlighting. An overview of the conference includes an all university opening chapel with a keynote address from the

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president in Chase gymnasium. Each year during this address special attention is given to the life and times of Torrey, Biola’s Evangelical heritage, and Biola’s influence and contribution to the Fundamental movement. Nevertheless, core to the conference are the evening plenary addresses given by renowned Evangelical authors and theologians. The plenary addresses are grounded in Scripture through expository preaching. At the end of each address there is a time of student led worship and a closing prayer.

A second feature of the conference is a variety of breakout sessions. Based on the biblical theme for the conference, the hour-long breakout sessions are conducted in campus auditoriums and classrooms by notable Evangelical church leaders, Biola faculty and spiritual development staff. Out of twenty-five breakout sessions students can choose five preferences to attend. These sessions consist of a speaker, a break out theme, and biblical instruction. The breakout sessions tend to be didactic, however occasional small group discussions are facilitated and if time permits questions and answers are addressed. The conference concludes with a final address held in Chase gymnasium and closing worship. Students often attend the plenary addresses and workshops on the front end in order to meet the requirement and use the final Friday for a long weekend. Thus, Friday attendance is consistently quite low.

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Missions Conference

Similar to Torrey Memorial Bible conference is Biola’s annual Missions conference. First established in 1929, the conference has been in effect for ninety years. Since its foundation the conference is entirely student led through the Student Missionary Union. In fact, Biola’s Missions conference currently is the largest student led Evangelical Missions conference in the US.\(^\text{18}\) The conference exhibits the same features as the Torrey conference in terms of locations, structure, requirements, schedule, biblical instruction, worship, and breakout sessions, however thematically it is concentrated on the Great Commission and global awareness from a biblical perspective.

Two distinct features of the conference include, a twenty-four hour prayer room located in the Student Union building, and a missionary fair with representatives from eighty-five various Evangelical missions organizations including: Wycliff Bible Translation, World Vision, Christar, and Operation Mobilization.\(^\text{19}\) The purpose of the prayer room is to provide a unique space for students to pray for, “the global spread of the Bible and the gospel.”\(^\text{20}\) The missionary fair arranges for students to network with representatives from various Evangelical missions organizations and learn about the work they do.\(^\text{21}\) The Torrey Memorial Bible conference and Missions conference combine a


\(^{21}\) Biola University, “Missions Conference – Visitors.”
cluster of practices similar to that of chapel. They are overwhelmingly punctuated by propounding biblical perspectives and kataphatic forms of spiritual expression.

**Core Practice 3: Theological Curriculum and Educational Pedagogy**

The third practice core to Biola pertains to the undergraduate theological curriculum and educational pedagogy. Generally speaking, higher education functions as a social practice. As a community of learning, Biola incorporates a myriad pedagogical practices that are interwoven with a plethora of Christian practices. This section will investigate the theological curriculum as a Christian practice of theological study and will devote some attention to Biola’s predominant pedagogical approach to higher education.

The study of the Bible has been a central concern of Biola since its founding in 1908. Today, Biola consist of eight schools in which undergraduate students can choose from nearly 150 major degree programs. However, students are required to complete a thirty-unit minor in biblical and theological studies. Upon graduation, students will declare the Bible minor on their transcript. The Bible minor is designed around a series of foundation, intermediate, and elective course options. These courses options will be further described in the pages to follow.

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Bible Minor

There are four key components of the biblical and theological studies minor important to describe. The first key component is the mission of the Bible minor, which states:

The biblical and theological studies minor teaches undergraduate students to view all of God’s world through the perspective of God’s Word, the Bible. This biblical worldview involves understanding and applying the Bible as the foundation of the Christian faith, values, and virtues—both historically and presently. The goal is that students will lead lives of integrity and will engage the world of ideas, their vocations, their local church communities, and their society as responsible citizens, being faithful stewards of God’s gifts to them and, empowered by His Spirit, carrying out Christ's commission to make disciples of all nations.26

Biola’s distinctive emphasis on the development of a Christian worldview is paramount to its educational focus. Students learn to integrate a biblical perspective within their specific field of study. This is ensured through the theological curriculum and the integration of faith and learning. In fact, the current promotional slogan for Biola is, “Think biblically about everything.”27

Promotional Slogan: “Thinking Biblically about Everything”

The second key component of the theological curriculum is the particular biblical thinking Biola promotes. The curriculum is bound to Biola’s conservative evangelical system of Christian beliefs, ideas, and doctrines. Since 1927 the Board of Trustees have reaffirmed their commitment to Biola’s doctrinal statement by signing the Bible Institute

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of Los Angeles Workers’ Register and Articles of Faith. The Articles of Faith, originally conceived by the founders of the organization, has been and continues to be the stated theological position of Biola. As a result the theological curriculum reflects these positions and provides an overarching evangelical framework in which students practice theological study. Moreover, Biola faculty and staff are required to maintain doctrinal alignment with Biola’s Articles of Faith and theological distinctives on an annual basis.

Design and Structure of Theological Curriculum

The third key component of the biblical studies minor is the design and structure of the curriculum. The minor is comprised of a combination of coursework totaling thirty units. The majority of the coursework entails twelve units of 100 level Foundation Courses. The three-unit foundation courses include Biblical Interpretation, Foundations of Christian Thought, Old Testament History and Literature, and New Testament History and Literature. This segment of coursework emphasizes an introduction to theology with emphasis on the doctrine of Scripture, Christian worldview, and an overview of both Old and New Testaments underscoring the historical and cultural contexts as well as the various literary genres.

Next, the biblical studies minor requires nine units of 200 level Intermediate Courses which include Theology I, Theology II, and Early Christian History. The

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29 Ibid.

30 Biola University, “Theological Positions and Application,” accessed September 7, 2019, http://offices.biola.edu/hr/ehandbook/static/media/pdf/1.2.pdf.

31 Biola University, “Biblical Studies.”
theology courses focus on the biblical doctrines of God, Christ, man, sin, salvation, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and end times, with reference to the history and development of Christian theology. The course on early Christian history explores the book of Acts from a missiological perspective.\textsuperscript{32}

The biblical studies minor also incorporates a nine-unit focus on elective courses. These courses are divided into 300 and 400 level units including a 400-level integration seminar. Some 300 and 400 level elective courses include, Inductive Bible Study, Principles of Interpretation, Biblical Backgrounds, Old and New Testament Theology, Major and Minor Prophets, Pauline and Johannine Literature, and Theology of Mission.\textsuperscript{33} The Integration Seminar is a senior level capstone course in which a student selects a topic of study and integrates that topic with, “biblical truth.”\textsuperscript{34} The result of the researched topic is then critiqued by fellow seminar participants and by the professor.

Pedagogical Classroom Experience

The final key component of the biblical studies minor is the nature of the classroom experience. The classroom experience is characteristic of a traditional professor-student relationship. The roles within this relationship promote a unilateral process.\textsuperscript{35} This process basically incorporates a method of learning where for example, in the case of the biblical studies minor at Biola, the professor dispenses biblical knowledge through a lecture format of instruction. This didactic approach creates an environment for

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34} Biola University, “Courses,” accessed September 9, 2019, http://catalog.biola.edu/courses/bbst/.

the student to listen and learn from the professor a particular biblical knowledge that is doctrinally based in a dispensational fundamental Evangelical theology.

From a pedagogical perspective, this model of learning is representative of a banking concept of education. Implicit in the banking model is the assumption that the professor is the authority on the subject matter and the student is the passive recipient. At its core, Biola’s theological minor seeks to form a Christian worldview through the transmission and absorption of Christian ideas, doctrines, and beliefs. Biola’s approach propounds a cognitive focus on Christian thought in the classroom and throughout the coursework thus impelling the student to, “think biblically about everything.”

**Core Practice 4: Residential Community Life**

The final core practice at Biola is the practice of residential community life. Living in a traditional university residence hall facilitates a unique formative experience. In fact, communal living creates an environment that fosters social engagement, community membership, and community norms. Communal living on a university campus may also foster a particular community spirituality and or spiritualties. In terms of describing Biola’s core practice of residential community life there are five key elements important to underscore.

Evangelical Community

First, as a Christian university, Biola fosters a particular Christian community. In order to participate in university life, “students must be an evangelical believer in the

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Christian faith.” As a result of this requirement, the student body generally reflects a religious and spiritual character that is evangelical in nature. Although Biola emphasizes diversity and cultural inclusion, applicants are limited to enrolling by virtue of a statement of faith that articulates an Evangelical tradition. Consequently, the community is overwhelming theologically homogeneous. Biola’s theological uniformity is certainly palpable throughout the life of the university.

Residential Demographics

Second, students are required to live in the residence halls on campus during their freshman and sophomore years of study or commute to campus from their parents’ or guardians’ home. Undergraduate students who live on campus first encounter the residential experience through the housing selection process. Students can select to live in a variety of dormitories located on upper and lower campus. Seven residence halls are reserved for freshman and sophomore living while three residence halls are reserved for junior and senior living. In terms of student population on campus, Biola hosts approximately 2,362 freshman and sophomores and 235 juniors and seniors. Regardless

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38 Ibid.


42 Ibid.
of class status, undergraduates who live on campus are exposed to the Biola community through a more immersive experience. This is central to the formative nature of on-campus residential living.

Dining Experience

Thirdly, students living on campus are required to purchase a meal plan. Several meal plan options are available to choose from, nevertheless students eat together as a communal practice. Eating takes place primarily in the cafeteria, also known as, “The Caf.” The cafeteria is the main dining facility and is supplemented by four additional eatery options that facilitate a dining experience on a much smaller scale. These facilities include Eagles Nest, Talon, Blackstone Café, and the Heritage Café. The menu at each location varies, however from a formational perspective, students do not engage in the physical experience of obtaining, preparing, and serving food as a practice. In terms of eating together in community this typically takes place haphazardly. Students’ class schedules vary as a whole and consequently eating together with the same community rarely occurs on a consistent basis.

Community Standards

The fourth element related to residential community life is the establishment of community standards. Students are responsible to review and adhere to Biola’s

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45 Ibid.
community standards. As an overarching framework for community life students “are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the value of integrity in word and deed and to take responsibility for their own violations of behavioral guidelines.” Furthermore, Biola’s employee handbook states:

Biola University is a community of Christians committed to the principles of Christian living found in the Bible and holds that these biblical standards are vital to our individual and corporate relationships. Maintaining these standards contributes to the kind of atmosphere in which quality Christian education and spiritual nurturing can best occur and strengthens the testimony of Biola within both Christian and secular communities. In this light, and given the clear biblical imperative for spiritual self-discipline, the university has established these “standards of conduct” to be observed and upheld by all members of the Biola community.

When there is a breach in conduct or an individual or community concern arises, Biola utilizes a student care team, “a team of student development professionals who, in collaboration with the Health Center, and the Biola Counseling Center provides a holistic approach in response to significant student issues.” The student care team also works in concert with Biola’s campus safety department for the purpose of emergency and disaster preparedness, as well as twenty-four hour on-call response. Overall Biola’s community standards establish community norms that guide and direct the community behaviorally.

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47 Ibid.


These norms are fundamentally linked to Biola’s understanding of Evangelical doctrine, and biblical standards.\textsuperscript{51}

Residence Life Program

The final element of Biola’s core practice of residential community life is the Residence Life program. Residence Life exists to aid in the formation of students outside the classroom context. Residence Life’s mission is to “develop students relationally by directing conversations, creating programs, and providing resources, so that students are able to authentically and lovingly engage their neighbor.”\textsuperscript{52} This mission is supported by six values: kingdom centered, excellence, holistic development, intentionality, growing together, and genuine care.\textsuperscript{53} From a programmatic perspective every aspect of the Residence Life program flows from its mission and values.

Residence Life Leadership

Residence Life is led by the Residence Life leadership team consisting of the Associate Dean of Residence Life, the Director of Residence Life, and Assistant Director of Residence Life. The Residence Life program is fundamentally supported by a team of Resident Directors who live alongside students in the residence halls. Resident Directors lead teams of Resident Advisors to develop the Residence Life program and to focus on co-curricular education, spiritual enrichment, and student engagement for the residential

\textsuperscript{51} Biola University, “Student Handbook.”


\textsuperscript{53} Biola University, “Student Handbook.”
communities.\textsuperscript{54} Their leadership and guidance certainly lays a foundation for multiple dimensions of community life.

**Residence Hall Culture**

The individual residence halls on campus embody a unique community and culture that is shaped by dormitory programs, activities, and traditions.\textsuperscript{55} Although the individual resident halls embody a distinct culture of their own, one consistent commonality throughout the various halls are the Residence Life co-curricular program objectives.\textsuperscript{56} Students living in the residence halls are not required to participate in Residence Life programming, however they are strongly encouraged to do so. In terms of Residence Life’s program objectives and Christian formation, the department hopes to provide a means for spiritual enrichment through “a growing evidence of a lived-out spirituality.”\textsuperscript{57} The Residence Life program addresses this objective primarily through the practice of student-led Bible studies facilitated by the Resident Advisors living in each respective residence hall.\textsuperscript{58}


\textsuperscript{55} Biola University, “Undergrad Housing.”

\textsuperscript{56} Biola’s Residence Life programs has the following Program Objectives: 1) A growing evidence of a lived-out spirituality. 2) A profound value in and understanding of a thriving community. 3) An ability to be engaged in and contribute to a diverse community. 4) A commitment to developing as an integrated, whole person. 5) Wise stewardship of body, mind, soul, and resources. 6) A commitment to obtaining a healthy self-knowledge. 7) An ability to grow deep in intimate relationships.

\textsuperscript{57} Biola University, “Residence Life.”

\textsuperscript{58} Biola University, “Undergrad Housing.”
Residence Hall Bible Study

Bible studies occur weekly on individual dormitory floors. Students either gather together for about an hour in an elbow lounge or in one of the student’s dorm rooms. Typically, the focus of the Bible study is related to a book of the Bible or a theme like biblical womanhood or manhood. On occasion Bible professors are invited to the dormitory Bible study as guest speakers to engage students in deepening their biblical knowledge and to engage students in a group discussion. Most Bible studies characteristically end in group prayer and a trip to Eagles Nest for a late-night snack. As a result of participating is the practice of Bible studies, Residence Life hopes for students to practically live out and apply biblical knowledge in their daily lives.59

Summary of Biola’s Core Practices

Thus far Chapter 2 described four practices core to Biola. These core practices carve out a certain patterning of the community. They are laden with meaning, exhibit formative power, and uniquely habituate participants. The core practices also animate the community and subtly deposit hidden inheritances, which often go undetected by community participants. The task of the practical theologian is to provide a clear and thorough description of core practices as possible in order to elucidate the core identity and core theological convictions within a particular social context. Therefore, a critical examination of Biola’s central practices will uncover the underlying assumptions and implicit theology embedded within the practices, ultimately providing insight into a path forward in devising a strategy for counter-formation to further facilitate Christian

59 Biola University, “Residence Life.”
formation at Biola University. This path will certainly require a reimagining of formation.

The remainder of this chapter will highlight my initial observations of Biola’s core practices and will seek to elucidate Biola’s core theological convictions. This section will clarify the role of Student Development and Residence Life in responding to the ministry problematic. It will also highlight the potential for a proposed ministry initiative and indicate possible institutional resistance.

**Initial Observations**

The various practices that constitute Biola’s identity are many, however the central practices offer insight into Biola’s core theological convictions and theological identity. After investigating Biola’s core practices, one binding characteristic emerges: Biola espouses a resolutely kataphatic spirituality. Embedded within the fabric of Biola’s core practices is a twentieth-century Evangelical kataphatic spirituality rooted in fundamentalism and solely facilitated by means of acquiring correct knowledge of God through the study of the Bible.⁶⁰

**Biola’s Kataphatic Spirituality**

Biola’s Evangelical heritage and fundamentalist underpinnings are directly linked to this present approach of espousing a kataphatic Christian spirituality. By requiring students to participate in chapel, formation primarily takes place through the apprehension of word and thought as it relates to a fundamentalist understanding of the Bible and Christian experience. Through participation in both the three-day Torrey

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Memorial Bible conference and the three-day Missions conference, students are repeatedly exposed to the didactic dissemination of biblical knowledge. The educational pedagogy and theological curriculum propound Evangelical Christian ideas and perspectives that ultimately orient around correct Evangelical doctrines. And finally, in the midst of a residential community life students are encouraged to attend Bible studies, which feeds into the narrative and practice of “thinking biblically about everything.”

While Biola seeks to form students through cognitive activities, informing the intellect, and depositing Christian ideas it neglects to form students through an integrated spirituality that considers the whole person and the sociological dynamics of practice. Unfortunately, Biola’s approach to formation remains resolutely kataphatic.

Theology Implicit in Biola’s Core Practices

In terms of the theology implicit in Biola’s kataphatic practices a particular identifier narrowly comes into focus. Namely, that God is fundamentally apprehended through word and thought. Biola assumes thinking the right Evangelical fundamentalist doctrines about God will further facilitate Christian formation and personal spiritual development. At its core Biola’s theological identity is hierarchical in nature. This approach to spirituality understands God’s relationship to the world as hierarchical and domineering. Thus, knowledge of God is essentially “reduced to a mere object for consideration.” As a result, Christian practices at Biola unfortunately are relegated to cultivating a biblical worldview, thinking biblically, and propounding Christian doctrines and ideas.

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61 Peter Rollins, How (Not) to Speak of God (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006), 23.
This approach to the spiritual life is regrettably grounded in information and lacks the necessary relational and social dynamics of formation. A kataphatic spirituality is so robustly embraced at Biola that it is disproportionately homogeneous and undifferentiated in terms of a Christian spirituality. There is little to no room for a broader framework for Christian practice or an avenue to counterbalance its current approach. Not only is Biola in dire need of an alternative non-hierarchical theology of Christian spirituality, but from a practical theological perspective, Biola needs to integrate a theory of practice grounded in the social sciences in order to respond pragmatically to reform Christian praxis.

**The Role of Student Development and Residence Life**

The time is now for Biola to devote its most serious attention and lucid imagination toward a path forward in terms a robust institutional strategy for Christian formation and practice. In order to forge a new strategy, the role of Student Development and Residence Life is indispensable. In fact, Residence Life is not only responsible for student’s co-curricular education, social experience, and communal spiritual formation, it is also well positioned to influence the theological and educational aspects of students’ experiences with the curricular stake holders. Residence Life has the profound opportunity to redirect the normative shape of students’ formation and practice.

Biola undoubtedly has a complex theological history rooted in fundamentalism and a hierarchical theological approach to spirituality, nevertheless in retrospect, not much has changed in light of formation. Formation is not implicitly aimed at a constellation of Christian practices such that it addresses the whole person and the routine habituation of community members. Nor does it provide a counter formation to the overly
reductionistic and kataphatic verbosity. Residence Life can certainly play a vital role in reimagining Christian formation at Biola University.

Potential for Immersion Program

The inadequacy of the current model of Christian formation at Biola is so pervasive throughout the continuum of a student’s experience that a total reimagining of formation is needed. The remainder of this Ministry Focus Project will lay the groundwork for designing a mechanism by which to infuse a counter formational experience in the lives of Biola students through an off-campus immersion program envisioned and operated by the Residence Life department and in partnership with the Bible department.

This program will address the social, theological, and pedagogical need for change through an innovative program that integrates a threefold strategy for Christian formation. The implementation of the strategy will ultimately counterbalance the resolutely kataphatic expression of Christian spirituality currently and robustly embraced at Biola today. It will infuse an apophatic spirituality rooted in an ecological doctrine of creation, utilize a transgressive pedagogy as a pedagogical intervention, and integrate a complexified theory of practice to inform and shape student formation. The combination of the above strategies will contribute to a formational experience for a select number of students who will be immersed in practice while they live and study together in community.
Reprioritization

The potential for the immersion program is quite realistic for three specific reasons. First, there is an impetus within student development to reevaluate the various programs offered to students including Residence Life’s programmatic opportunities due to budgetary concerns created by a reduction in enrollment since 2016. Consequently, a reprioritization is currently underway with an outcome for change, innovation, and solvency. The net effect of the reprioritization will certainly create an appetite for new ideas and establish a unique pathway for proposing the program.

Biola’s Strategic Plan

The second potentiality for the immersion program is related to Biola’s strategic plan. Biola is two and a half years out from the finalization and implementation of its 2022 strategic plan. This plan includes facilitating community discipleship, integrative curricular development, and creating new educational sites and strategic partnerships. Pertaining to the strategic partnerships, there is an impetus to extend Biola’s educational reach throughout the world establishing pathways for global learning communities. Overall, the strategic plan creates an opportunity to promote innovative change. It also provides grounds for soliciting stakeholder support.

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64 Ibid.
Theological Continuity and Reinforcement

The final reason for the potential of the immersion program is deeply connected to Biola’s cultural, social, and theological continuity. Biola’s life as a community continues to maintain a historical continuity that dates back to its founding in 1908 and upholds certain strategies of action that fundamentally have not changed. This continuity reinforces Biola’s approach to Christian formation through similar iterations of the four core practices. The tacit assumption of espousing a kataphatic spirituality through various practices has basically remained the same for well over one hundred years. An upheaval in formation has not yet come to fruition. This is precisely why introducing a program that fundamentally counteracts the current state is vitally important.

Possible Resistance to Proposed Ministry

The proposed initiative developed in this Ministry Focus Project will be designed to counterbalance the formational inadequacies at Biola. It will offer an alternative approach to Christian spirituality that is robustly apophatic, pedagogically transgressive, and practically Bordieuan. As a result of proposing this type of change and transformation, institutional resistance will indeed occur. By virtue of resistance, the ministry initiative will undergo close examination and critique. The anticipated focus of resistance pertains to four distinct areas.

Theological Resistance

The first and most concerning area of resistance is the likely institutional theological perspective that a program which introduces an apophatic spirituality will
lead to a marginalization of Scripture and biblical knowledge. When fusing and counterbalancing a kataphatic spirituality with an apophatic spirituality the outcome will result in partially redirecting practices toward an apophatic path also known as the *via negativa*. The apophatic way “is a tradition in spirituality that rejects all analogies of God as ultimately inadequate. God is greater than any language we might ever use to speak of God.” Thus an apophatic spirituality and apophatic practices can serve as theological and formational correctives to an otherwise exclusive kataphatic or *via affirmativa* approach to Christian spirituality. Nevertheless, there is strong likelihood resistance will occur.

Moreover, this project will argue that the apophatic way can coexist with the kataphatic way and not only strengthens, but also compliments the kataphatic approach. Therefore, the combination of both approaches is not in diametrical opposition, rather they are interrelating moments in the spiritual life that are mutually correcting realities. Biola’s spiritual tradition of knowing and of naming certainly would benefit from the integration of a spiritual tradition of unknowing and unsaying. In other words, a pivot from words to silence is the focus.

An Evangelical anxiety and resistance will likely emerge due to Biola’s staunch commitment to its conservative fundamentalist underpinnings and resolute expression of kataphatic practice. If propositional statements about God and “thinking biblically about everything” is bifurcated by a strategy of apophaticism then the Evangelical framework

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for formation will undeniably be challenged, therefore leading to resistance. Perhaps the marginalization of doctrine delivery mechanisms and the propounding of a Christian worldview is what Biola desperately needs.

Pedagogical Resistance

The second distinct area of resistance relates to Biola’s pedagogical character. As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the theological curriculum and educational pedagogy is emblematic of a banking model of education. The environment in which Biola students study and learn, especially as it relates to theological inquiry but not limited to, essentially is “based on the assumption that memorizing information and regurgitating it represented gaining knowledge that could be deposited, stored and used at a later date,” or in Biola’s case to think biblically about everything. This model tends to be hierarchical and authoritarian in nature.

By introducing an immersion program that adopts a transgressive approach to education, and more specifically to theological inquiry, it would certainly alarm Biola’s key stakeholders and give reason for doubt, concern, and opposition. Not only would a transgressive pedagogy be a paradigm shift in terms of Biola’s pedagogical practice, it would also likely be considered too liberal and too progressive. It could potentially undermine Biola’s focus on propounding a Christian worldview. Moreover, it is possible employing a pedagogical intervention that creates participatory spaces for the sharing of knowledge in an otherwise theologically homogeneous setting, and or fostering an

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environment of free expression, establishing a context for critical thinking and dialectical exchange could all be grounds for institutional resistance.

Cross-disciplinary Resistance

The third area of resistance relates to sources of justification in terms of a practical theological argument for an immersion program that critically employs the social sciences and cross-disciplinary thinking to reimagine Christian formation. Due to Biola’s deeply rooted Evangelical heritage, the Bible is the primary qualifier pertaining to Christian practice. The norm of Scripture is not necessarily held in close tension with other sources of justification when it comes to Christian practice. The current approach at Biola is much more dogmatic and biblical. In fact, claims from the social sciences might be taken into account but not seriously considered as normative, especially in light of a fundamentalist framework. When arguing for an alternative approach to Christian practice that utilizes sources of justification that are not biblical, institutional acceptance is not readily expected. Thus, a practical theological approach to a formation program that relies heavily on the social sciences would certainly encounter resistance.

Financial Resistance

The final area likely to generate resistance is related to budgetary concerns. As mentioned, Biola’s overall enrollment has declined which triggered a reprioritization within the department of Student Development. Student affordability is top-of-mind for Biola’s administrators and stakeholders. Implementing lean operating costs is currently

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held at a premium. Thus, when proposing an off-site immersion program located in a
different part of the world, unavoidable financial questions must be posed. It is probable
that starting a program in another country during budgetary restrictions would be too
costly and the return on investment might result in a lack of profitability.

When proposing the categorical change this ministry initiative suggests,
institutional resistance is a naturally expected. While the four areas of resistance
highlighted above do indeed generate realistic concerns, it remains clear that Biola has
been in need of change for quite some time. As a result, the current state of formation
will require a tenable solution.

Conclusion

This chapter provided thick descriptions of four practices core to Biola’s identity.
It was determined that Biola espouses a resolutely kataphatic spirituality. Regrettably,
Christian formation is relegated to “thinking biblically about everything.” Although there
is potential for reimaging Christian formation, there certainly will be resistance.
Residence Life is poised with a unique platform to innovate change in an environment
that has remained the same for over a century.

Part Two of this Ministry Focus Project/Paper will consist of three chapters.
Chapter Three will include a diversified literature review, while Chapters 4 and 5 will
establish the sociological and theological foundations to reimagine Christian formation at
Biola. Finally, Part Three will present the pragmatic response and ministry blueprint for
an immersion program with specifics for strategic implementation. A final summary and
conclusion will bring the Ministry Focus Project to completion.
PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

In the process of developing this Ministry Focus Project, a diverse selection of resources was examined in order to provide critical insight into three focal topics. The first relates to theories of practice and the sociological implications for communities of practice. The second focal topic highlights a theology of creation with particular attention given to an ecological doctrine of creation. The doctrine of the Sabbath is central to this focal area. Apophatic spirituality is additionally explored with a keen emphasis on spirituality and the environment, and prayer without language. The final focal area concentrates on educational practice as it relates to a transgressive pedagogy. Pedagogical strategies of action are explored with an application of intervention. Overall the combination of diverse resources is intended to provide a broad perspective to meaningfully address the ministry problematic. This will be accomplished through a practical theological method that is robustly integrative.

In this chapter, five books are individually evaluated and reviewed in light of the project thesis. The thesis and summary of each book’s main argument will be developed. The contribution, relevance, and limitations of each resource in relation to reimagining
Christian formation at Biola University will also be identified and discussed. This literature review is intended to capture relevant insight into the above focal areas and demonstrate how Christian formation fits into broader fields of study.

**After Virtue - Alasdair MacIntyre**

Alasdair MacIntyre’s book *After Virtue* is a salient text regarding moral theory and virtue ethics. His discussion on Modern morality posits that the substance of morality has been fragmented and in part destroyed.¹ If morality is to regain integrity it must return to Aristotelian categories, namely a view that there is a proper telos for human life. MacIntyre’s argument begins with an analysis of several Modern moral predicaments. He suggests the Modern reaction to such predicaments is emotivism, a view of all evaluative judgments including moral judgments as expressions of feeling or attitude.² Emotivism is thus not an adequate account for the meaning of moral judgments. It fails to provide a rational justification for an objective morality.³ The dominance of emotivism in Western culture has led to the democratized self, which views the human person as distinctively able to pass moral judgment from her individual standpoint.

MacIntyre advances his argument by tracing the origins of Modern morality to the Enlightenment project. He specifically highlights key episodes in French cultural history which displaced morality and gave rise to the possibility of the emotivist self.⁴ According


² Ibid., 12.

³ Ibid., 19.

⁴ Ibid., 36.
to MacIntyre, “The secularization of morality by the Enlightenment had put in question the status of moral judgments as ostensible reports of divine law.”\(^5\) There are several consequences related to the failure of the Enlightenment. The most notable consequence is the individual moral agent being freed from hierarchy and teleology, thus being sovereign in moral authority.\(^6\) Ultimately, the Enlightenment abandoned a teleological structure.

In response, MacIntyre articulates an Aristotelian alternative. In doing so, he examines the nature of virtues in heroic societies and concludes that, “Every activity, every inquiry, every practice aims at some good.”\(^7\) Therefore MacIntyre argues that human beings have a specific nature that moves them towards a specific telos.\(^8\) The problem throughout moral history however is a unified coherent core conception of a virtue does not exist.\(^9\) In order to make an intelligible concept of a virtue, MacIntyre defines virtues in terms of their relation to practices.\(^10\) MacIntyre’s conception of a practice is the center of his account of the virtues. He defines a practice to mean:

Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers

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\(^5\) Ibid., 60.

\(^6\) Ibid., 62.

\(^7\) Ibid., 148.

\(^8\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Ibid., 186.

\(^10\) Ibid., 199.
to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.\textsuperscript{11}

MacIntyre’s conception of a practice is one of his primary contributions to contemporary moral philosophy and it is key to his system of morality all together. Within the MacIntyrian definition of a practice is the concept of internal goods. Internal goods are goals or aims that can only be achieved by the experience of participating in the practice itself.\textsuperscript{12} In order to achieve the internal goods inherent in a practice, human beings must acquire the necessary characteristics, known as virtues. MacIntyre defines a virtue as “an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.”\textsuperscript{13} Thus a person becomes better at a practice by virtue of exercising the necessary habits that aid in achieving the good of that practice.

Overall MacIntyre’s deeply Aristotelian sense of practice underscores his moral theory. Over time certain dispositions or habits may be absorbed through participating in the routines and rituals of a tradition consequently establishing a kind of second nature.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, within the context of moral education the construction of character is a matter of formation and not a matter of acquiring the right information.\textsuperscript{15} In the end, moral formation occurs by means of practice.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 187.
\textsuperscript{12} Smith and Smith, \textit{Teaching and Christian Practices}, 8.
\textsuperscript{13} MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, 191.
\textsuperscript{14} Smith, \textit{Desiring the Kingdom}, 56.
\textsuperscript{15} Smith and Smith, \textit{Teaching and Christian Practices}, 8.
MacIntyre’s contribution to the topic of social practice is necessary in terms of developing a robust theological understanding of Christian practices. His definition of practice not only provides a foundation in which to comprehend what constitutes a practice, it furthermore aids in the establishment of an understanding concerning what makes a practice Christian. Understanding Christian practices sociologically is vital then in terms of developing a practical theological response toward a ministry problematic. MacIntyre’s contribution will invariably provide an essential foundation for reimagining Christian formation at Biola University.

Utilizing MacIntyre’s definition of practice also highlights the formative aspect of practices, which implicitly includes Christian practices. MacIntyre’s concept of practice can help with reexamining patterns of educational practice and pedagogical methodologies of theological study. His concept of practice can also help with strategizing for the implementation of new core practices at Biola. Within the scope of this Ministry Focus Project MacIntyre’s work will ultimately influence an alternative counter formational experience for students who, in the current state of affairs, essentially are formed to, “think biblically about everything.”

While MacIntyre’s book offers sociological insight in light of the ministry challenge, it does not offer specific and practical guidance on how to provide a theological corrective to Christian formation. Although MacIntyre addresses moral formation and moral theory, his argument is not directly and exclusively focused on Christian practices. Nevertheless, his concept of practice is transferable and may be applied to better understanding and further reimage Christian formation.
A second limitation related to MacIntyre’s contribution to the topic of social practice is the significance of bodily comportment and how the body is habituated, which is important to this project. The primacy of the body and why the body matters in terms of spirituality must be considered when addressing Christian formation. While establishing a concept of practice is crucial for reimagining Christian formation, having the necessary sociological tools to address bodily immersion in an environment is paramount. Pierre Bourdieu’s *The Logic of Practice* presents this broader spectrum of social theory and body hexis. His work provides the additional sociological tools needed for this project.

*The Logic of Practice - Pierre Bourdieu*

In his influential book, *The Logic of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu offers a critique of theoretical reason and introduces a comprehensive theory of practice. Bourdieu’s critique of theoretical reason begins with the notion that the social sciences are fundamentally divided by two modes of knowledge: objectivism and subjectivism. Either epistemological approach to the scientific study of practice has limitations and is equally opposed to the practical mode of knowledge. Bourdieu emphasizes that in order to have an adequate theory of practice, one needs an adequate understanding of the nature of practice from a perspective of irreducibility. Moreover, an adequate theory of practice

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17 Ibid., 25

18 Ibid., 27.

requires a theoretical understanding of what the logician is doing when the logician is scientifically reflecting on practice. In other words, the intellectual activity of theorization needs to be a matter of study.\textsuperscript{20}

In terms of Bourdieu’s critique of objectivism, he is critical of what occurs when the logician theorizes as an intellectual theorist. During the study of a community of practitioners, the logician “imposes on the object his own norms of construction.”\textsuperscript{21} The logician operating from a framework of objectivism “adopts a viewpoint of an ‘impartial spectator’ who seeks to understand for the sake of understanding and who tends to assign this hermeneutic intention to the agents’ practice and to proceed as if they were asking themselves the questions he asks himself about them.”\textsuperscript{22} The problem is the logician inadvertently substitutes “the observer’s relation to practice for the practical relation to practice.”\textsuperscript{23} What cannot be reduced is the relation of the one practicing the practice to the practice. Thus, Bourdieu’s aptly notes, “Practice has a logic which is not that of the logician.”\textsuperscript{24} The logician inherently steps back from a practice or a community of practice in order to theorize and reflect on the practice. Unfortunately, an epistemological gap


\textsuperscript{21} Bourdieu, \textit{The Logic of Practice}, 31.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 34.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 86.
occurs and an objectifying distance is created. As a result, the logician fails to “objectify the objectifying relationship.” This inevitably leads to a social discontinuity.

Bourdieu continues his critique of theoretical reason by examining subjectivism and its failure to properly understand practice. Subjectivism operates with particular assumptions in regard to autonomy and freedom. According to Bourdieu, subjectivism:

Universalizes the experience that the subject of theoretical discourse has of himself as the subject. A professional exponent of consciousness committed to the illusion of “consciousness without inertia” without a past and without an exterior, he endows all the subjects with whom he decides to identify – that is, almost exclusively the projective “populace” (le peuple) born of this “generous” identification – with his own experience as a pure, free-floating subject.

This subjectivist model assumes a radically autonomous human actor without an environment impacting his autonomy. Bourdieu seeks to understand what drives action in a community of practice. The rational autonomous actor ultimately acts in the world without dispositions or what Bourdieu calls a habitus. The subjectivist approach is deficient because it fails to consider the inertia or momentum of a complex social context in which meaningful action emerges.

In sum, Bourdieu’s critique of theoretical reason clarifies the limitations inherent in both objectivism and subjectivism as they relate to a theory of practice. Consequently, Bourdieu introduces “a theory of practice which theoretical knowledge

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 46.
28 Ibid., 49.
29 Ibid., 45.
30 Ibid., 27.
implicitly applies and so to make possible a truly scientific knowledge of practice and of the practical mode of knowledge.”

Bourdieu’s theoretical model insists that human persons do indeed navigate the world at a preconscious level in which practice is primary.

Central to Bourdieu’s theory of practice is the notion of habitus. He introduces the idea of habitus by stating the following:

The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of the construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the habitus, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented toward practical functions.

The habitus, according to Bourdieu, is a kind of intertwined embodied way of being that comes to a person from outside a person. It is a conditioning that is communicable and transposable. In other words, the habitus is a kind of handed-down tradition or social body that becomes inscribed and absorbed into individual persons. The amalgamation of habitus however, is primarily absorbed without rational deliberation or conscious awareness. Thus, human persons exposed to and shaped by a habitus are principally formed not as theorizers but as embodied creatures.

Bourdieu’s contribution to the topic of social practice is significant to this Ministry Focus Project because it provides the necessary sociological tools to have a comprehensive understanding of materiality, embodiment, and structured structures. His theoretical model presents a broader spectrum of social practice especially as it relates to the impact of habitus on a person relative to a social context. The practical sense of a habitus leads to an adept immersion in an environment resulting in, “a feel for the

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31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 52.
game.”\textsuperscript{33} When a human actor has, “a feel for the game,” she is able to react at a pre-reflexive level because the “game” has been inscribed and internalized.\textsuperscript{34}

Bourdieu’s contribution is especially relevant in terms of Christian practice because it underscores why embodiment matters in light of cultivating a spirituality. If, for example, a community is aiming at specifically cultivating a Christian habitus, there are inherent sociological dynamics at play that must be considered, particularly from a practical theological perspective. These dynamics are requisite in order to properly understand and strategize for any sort of formation whether Christian or not.

Nevertheless, a Christian spirituality that is primarily focused on informing the intellect through “thinking biblically about everything” unfortunately misses the point entirely in terms of formation. From a Bourdieuan perspective then, practices are indeed formative and as a consequence, Biola ought to closely examine its current approach to formation with a keen intention not to recapitulate the status quo. Bourdieu’s contribution ultimately provides the sociological insight on how the body is habituated and trained which contributes to a gateway for reimagining Christian practice.

Bourdieu’s \textit{Logic of Practice} is limited in relation to the proposed ministry challenge in two distinct ways. First, although Bourdieu’s insights shed light on the acquisition of a habitus and the cumulative effect of habituation, his work does not explicitly address an educational and formational strategy for developing a Christian habitus, especially in the context of a Christian university. The \textit{Logic of Practice} is not aimed at investigating the historic Christian practices neither does this resource elaborate

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 66.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 82.
on a theological reflection related to practice. Bourdieu principally establishes a sociological framework for practice and not a theological one.

The second distinct limitation of Bourdieu’s work in light of the ministry challenge pertains to his emphasis on patterns of behavior functioning mimetically and the process of acquisition or practical mimesis. Bourdieu clearly makes a distinction between mimicry and imitation in that he identifies imitation requiring conscious effort. Practical mimesis on the other hand incorporates the body being constantly mingled in practical knowledge, which takes place below the level of consciousness and is characterized by a reflexive distance.

Although Bourdieu underscores the rigorous marshaling of practices and the orderly disposition of bodies at a preconscious level, he does not explore more deeply the rigorous marshaling of just one practice, as one is mingled in practical knowledge. From a practical theological approach, it is limiting to use a social theory without a concrete example of a practice in which the author, in this case Bourdieu, utilizes one uniform practice throughout his theory in order to practically explicate his theory. It would be helpful for this Ministry Focus Project to translate one singular social practice through Bourdieu’s paradigm and then compare and contrast that singular practice with a Christian practice.

35 Ibid., 73.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
God in Creation - Jürgen Moltmann

German theologian Jürgen Moltmann articulates a robust doctrine of creation in his book entitled, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. Moltmann originally delivered the contents of this text during his 1984-1985 addresses for the prestigious Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, Scotland.\(^\text{38}\) According to Moltmann, humanity’s exploitation of the natural world resulted in the modern ecological crisis, which requires a new ecological and Trinitarian doctrine of creation in order to theologically address such a crisis.\(^\text{39}\) This crisis is one in which humanity has brought on themselves and on the natural environment. It has progressively placed eco-systemic strain leading to destructive retroactive effects on human society.\(^\text{40}\) Unless there is an unflinching commitment to reverse the effects, eco-systemic balance will likely never be recovered resulting in an indiscriminate catastrophe.\(^\text{41}\)

The liberation of nature from human subjugation and exploitation requires a fundamental shift in theological orientation.\(^\text{42}\) For Moltmann, this shift is a new theological doctrine of creation that is intrinsically ecological.\(^\text{43}\) In exploring a new theology of creation Moltmann underscores a new theological architecture to help

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39 Ibid., xi.

40 Ibid., 24.

41 Ibid., 20.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid., 4.
facilitate an ecological doctrine.\textsuperscript{44} To begin, Moltmann understands creation as a network of interconnected symbiotic relationships.\textsuperscript{45} This community of creation is an open system in which God created for Trinitarian indwelling.\textsuperscript{46} This system is not characteristic of a hierarchical dynamic. On the contrary, God is then wholly in creation as God makes creation God’s home.\textsuperscript{47} Therefore, God is immanently present in the world.\textsuperscript{48}

In order to understand God’s immanence in the world, Moltmann argues for a new kind of understanding about God that dismantles a distinction between God and creation.\textsuperscript{49} In fact, he proposes a panentheistic idea of God, which recognizes the presence of God in the world, and the presence of the world in God.\textsuperscript{50} Moltmann contends that a distinction does not exist between God and world, but rather God is present in the world by virtue of God’s Spirit and God’s immanence.\textsuperscript{51} God is not over and against creation dominating it, rather God is cultivating a community of creation in order to indwell and celebrate it.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., xii.  
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 14.  
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., xii.  
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 14.  
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 13.  
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 14.
Moltmann’s new theology of creation also explores the kabbalistic doctrine of self-limitation.\textsuperscript{52} God’s self-limitation, or \textit{zimzum}, allows for God to withdraw from God’s self in order to make room for creation.\textsuperscript{53} This divine act is the beginning of God’s self-emptying. As a result, God suffers for creation in order to make creation possible. Moltmann expands his idea of God’s creative love in that, “God does not create by merely calling something into existence, or by setting something afoot. In a more profound sense, he ‘creates’ by letting-be, by making room, and by withdrawing himself.”\textsuperscript{54} This doctrine of self-limitation is ultimately a doctrine grounded in divine self-restriction and self-humiliating love.\textsuperscript{55}

The goal and completion of Moltmann’s ecological doctrine of creation is the doctrine of the Sabbath.\textsuperscript{56} Moltmann frames the Sabbath as the crown of creation.\textsuperscript{57} This view distinguishes the Sabbath as the apex of creation. Rather than perceiving the culmination of God’s creative activity in humanity being created in the image of God, it is the Sabbath in which the creation narrative climaxes. Therefore, the six days of creation preceding the seventh were not performed apart from the Sabbath, rather they were performed for the sake of the Sabbath.\textsuperscript{58} This is precisely why the Sabbath is the feast of creation. Moltmann expands this idea by writing:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid., xiii.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 88.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 277.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 6.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 277.
\end{itemize}
On the Sabbath and through the Sabbath God “completed” his creation, and on the Sabbath and through it, men and women perceive as God’s creation the reality in which they live and which they themselves are. The Sabbath opens creation for its true future. On the Sabbath the redemption of the world is celebrated and anticipated. The Sabbath is itself the presence of eternity in time, and a foretaste of the world to come.\(^\text{59}\)

According to Moltmann, a Sabbath doctrine of creation is not only redemptive and celebratory, it is also eschatological. The Sabbath stillness points to a future in which, “God’s creation and his revelation will be one.”\(^\text{60}\) In this sense the Sabbath is eternal and entails a cosmic dimension.\(^\text{61}\) Consequently, sanctifying the Sabbath leads to an intensified capacity for being “wholly present in the presence of God.”\(^\text{62}\) This becomes a foretoken of the eternal rest is God.\(^\text{63}\)

Moltmann’s contribution to the topic of Christian formation is foundational in terms of establishing a theology of Christian spirituality. His theology of creation provides the necessary theological architecture needed to counterbalance a hierarchical kataphatic spirituality. In effect, Moltmann’s ecological approach, especially as it relates to the doctrine of the Sabbath, arranges the groundwork for articulating an apophatic spirituality rooted in the practice of the Sabbath. Although Moltmann does not explicitly address the apophatic tradition or apophaticism, his theology is certainly associated with God’s stillness in the Mystery of the Sabbath.

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 288.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 283.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 286.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 280.
The combination of Sabbath, stillness, silence, and solitude will carefully be integrated into the core practices for the ministry initiative’s pragmatic response. The proposed core practices will have a theological plumb line in Moltmann’s creation theology. His theology will become the heart of counterbalancing an otherwise kataphatic hierarchical approach to Christian formation. The pillar of the above theological integration is Moltmann’s doctrine of the Sabbath.

Moltmann’s *God in Creation* also aids in connecting spirituality with the environment. This will be a central component in the pragmatic response for reimagining Christian formation at Biola. By articulating a theology of creation in which spirituality is aligned with the environment, a deep contemplative consciousness that is literally grounded in the life of the earth can be developed. Thus, by enacting the kind of purposive consciousness that is inherently apophatic and ecologically sensitive, it will provide the spiritual change needed to counterbalance Biola’s current kataphatic approach. Moreover, encounters in the natural environment through a work sustainment initiative, wilderness trekking, and pilgrimage will establish the necessary eco-centric practices recommended for living out a Christian spirituality ground in the theology of creation developed by Moltmann.

While Moltmann’s *God in Creation* develops a new ecological doctrine of creation with a doctrine of the Sabbath as its true hallmark this resource is limited in relation to the proposed ministry challenge because it does not explicitly and robustly address practical guidelines for the application of Sabbath keeping as a spiritual practice. Although Moltmann highlights a few practical steps for Sabbath keeping, including the
practice of an ecological day of rest without pollution and the cessation of interference with nature for one day, he only does so peripherally. It would serve the pragmatic response of the Ministry Focus Project well if God in Creation specifically addressed Sabbath keeping as a spiritual discipline and developed multiple avenues for practicing it. Framing the Sabbath in the context of Christian practice and bodily engagement with creation would be useful for this project in highlighting the interface and connectivity between spirituality and environment.

*The Solace of Fierce Landscapes - Belden C. Lane*

In his book, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, Belden Lane explores Christian spirituality through three distinct yet interconnected stages of the spiritual life. The stages illustrate the following pattern: purgation, illumination, and union. Each stage is symbolized in the experience of what Lane describes as “mythic landscapes.” Lane represents this threefold pattern of the spiritual life in nature by the corresponding landscape imagery of desert, mountain, and cloud. As a whole, the combined intertextuality of the three stages are symbolically represented through fierce landscapes, which demonstrate the apophatic tradition, also known as *via negativa*. Through particular landscape imagery Lane connects spirituality with the environment. From his perspective, place has a profound effect on formation and spiritual imagination. The

64 Ibid., 296.


66 Ibid., 7.

67 Ibid., 6.

68 Ibid., 4.
desert and mountain terrain for example, facilitate a particular discomfort and disorientation resulting in a sort of liminality for the soul that purges one’s proclivity toward false desires. The desert is not only a place to encounter the mysterious presence of God but also the profound silence of God. In “wild terrain” sojourners find themselves running out of language, driven to silence and onto a precipice of simplicity and humility. Lane eloquently expounds on this point:

In desert and mountain wilderness, people discover liminal places suggesting thresholds between where they have been and where they are going. Whether they experience these places as dream symbols or rites of passage, whether they physically travel through wild, disorienting terrain or enter it metaphorically through an experience of profound crisis, such sites mark important points of transition in their lives. Out on the edge - in the desert waste or suspended between earth and sky - they transgress the limits of culture, language, all the personal boundaries by which their lives are framed. In whatever form one may find it, “the desert loves to strip bare,” as Saint Jerome insisted. The desert reduces one to a rawboned simplicity.

Along with the early Christian apophatic writers Lane argues that although the *via negativa* frequently employs the imagery of desert and mountain terrain, it does not presume that physical entry in these environments is an absolute requirement to learn their truth. The apophatic tradition however does draw intentionally upon the “imaginal poverty of a dry and barren land,” as a model for growth in the spiritual life. The symbolic terrain often utilized by the apophatic way is the uncluttered landscape of the

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69 Ibid., 39.

70 Ibid., 77.

71 Ibid., 38.

72 Ibid., 41.

73 Ibid., 10.
Desert topography is emblematic of a stark frugality and emptiness that is necessary for beginning a life of prayer.\textsuperscript{75}

In addition to desert and mountain landscape, Lane also recruits the ecological environment of cloud as apophatic metaphor. God’s divine Mystery, deliberate hiddenness, ineffable glory, and incomprehensible nature, represented by thick darkness or cloud emphasizes the importance of reaching beyond language toward a spiritual poverty, which is the heart of the apophatic tradition.\textsuperscript{76} Cloud emphasizes an approach in spirituality that points to an experience of unknowing or a habit of being in which the seeker attends to God as Mystery. Thus, God known apophatically, means God “is to be entered and loved, never an object to be grasped and understood.”\textsuperscript{77}

Central to Lane’s main argument throughout his book relates to the desert tradition affirming prayer without language. According to Lane, prayer in the apophatic tradition begins with the embrace of silence. It is through the discipline of apophatic prayer that the exercise of language is relinquished.\textsuperscript{78} Surrendering language leads to contemplation. It allows for “moving beyond an excess of words, beyond thinking and judging, to an emptiness where God is met in silence.”\textsuperscript{79} Lane categorizes this method of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 15.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 10.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 62.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 12.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 67.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
prayer as the practice of still prayer. As one practices this form of prayer, one can “be sufficiently emptied to be filled with God.” Thus, without the “protective interference of language,” one reaches beyond language to encounter the divine Mystery. Lane continues to explore the particular movements in the life of apophatic prayer, including: the abandonment of control, letting go of thoughts, emptying the self, loving what cannot be understood, and the power of acting while expecting nothing. Each movement results in the wilderness of apophatic prayer and serves to nurture humility.

The remainder of *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes* argues for apophaticism serving as a theological corrective to kataphatic spirituality. Lane explores the dialectical relationship between the apophatic and kataphatic motifs claiming they are interconnected and mutually correcting realities. He builds on this claim by exploring the biblical narratives related to two mountains: Mount Sinai and Mount Tabor. Sinai symbolizes the apophatic impulse of emptying oneself of inadequate images and conceptions of God, while Tabor symbolizes the sharpness and lucidity of God, ultimately represented in Jesus’ transfiguration. According to Lane, the interplay of these mythic symbols delineates images of God and continually challenge and renew each other.

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80 Ibid., 64.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 65.
83 Ibid., 137.
84 Ibid., 138.
85 Ibid., 140.
Lane’s contribution to the topic of Christian spirituality is relevant to this Ministry Focus Project because it establishes a meaningful foundation for understanding apophatic spirituality. In particular, Lane develops a theological framework for prayer without language in the apophatic tradition. Lane’s grounding of apophatic prayer in silence, stillness, and self-emptying dovetails especially well with Moltmann’s doctrine of the Sabbath and the theology of creation developed in Chapter 5 of this project. It connects and affirms Sabbath stillness as the premier apophatic practice.

While the discipline of apophatic prayer underscores the practice of silence and solitude, it also provides a theological corrective to the otherwise verbosity of kataphatic spirituality and kataphatic certainty. As a result, Lane’s apophatic fusion offers a supplemental spirituality to Biola’s existing exclusive kataphatic commitment. In the end Lane’s emphasis on the interdependence of the apophatic and kataphatic traditions establishes a continuity of a spiritual dialectic that is mutually corrective and will provide the appropriate counterbalance to Biola’s current state of formation.

Lane’s *Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, similar to Moltmann’s *God in Creation*, also connects spirituality with the environment. Lane recognizes a connection between geography and the spiritual life especially through immersion in certain places for an extended period of time. According to Lane, “We experience no inescapable linkage between our ‘place’ and our way of conceiving the holy, between habitat and *habitus*, where one lives and how one practices a habit of being.” When appropriating the natural habitat like that of the desert, mountain, or an austere terrain, one can more

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86 Ibid., 9.
87 Ibid., 10.
attentively order one’s life and body around silence and experience the earth as living partner in the pursuit of the via negativa. Hence, intimately embracing a spirituality rooted in wild terrain or fierce landscapes can invoke an intuitive way of knowing with the body. By juxtaposing this kind of knowing with, “thinking biblically about everything,” it further elucidates the thesis of this Ministry Focus Project: that Biola’s current state of formation is inadequate for spiritually forming students.

Lane’s insights not only emphasize the crucial role of the body in formation, but also provide a pathway for grounding bodily spiritual practice in creation. Moreover, his contributions aid in an understanding of embodiment and spirituality by theologically building on insights gained from Bourdieu’s social theory. An outcome of Lane’s contributions to this Ministry Focus Project will bolster the pragmatic response especially as it relates to the core practices developed in Chapter 6.

While Lane’s *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes* offers a theological framework for an apophatic spirituality grounded in prayer without language, he does not thoroughly establish practical guidance related to spiritual practice in the wilderness. Lane certainly does explore how place impacts the spiritual imagination and suggests some elemental aspects of engaging spiritual practices in the environment. In fact, he addresses the liminality of wild terrain and the spiritual life, but falls short in developing specific practical guidelines for the application of engagement with creation spiritually. However, Lane does address the above limitation in his book, *Backpacking with the Saints: Wilderness Hiking as Spiritual Practice*.88

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bell hooks\(^{89}\) is an American author, feminist theorist, acclaimed intellectual, social activist, and cultural critic. Her written work largely focuses on the intersection of education, race, gender, and culture. In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks argues for an engaged pedagogy that counteracts the overwhelmingly authoritarian, hierarchical, and coercive banking system of higher education today.\(^{90}\) According to hooks, education as a practice of freedom is an education for liberation.\(^{91}\)

hooks acknowledges a serious crisis in the, “banking model” of education.\(^{92}\) In critiquing this model, she calls for the counter-hegemonic act of creating an educational climate that transgresses the boundaries of bourgeois pedagogy.\(^{93}\) In order to move beyond such educational boundaries, hooks contends for creating alternative strategies for learning and teaching to educate the whole person.\(^{94}\) In fact, she writes:

> To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach and who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls

\(^{89}\) bell hooks has chosen this pseudonym and not to capitalize her name so as to focus on her work instead of her name. In honor of her decision, her name will not be capitalized throughout this work either, even when this contradicts normal grammatical rules such as the start of a sentence. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/hooks-bell-gloria-jean-watkins-1952/ (accessed September 15, 2019).

\(^{90}\) hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 188.

\(^{91}\) Ibid., 6.

\(^{92}\) Ibid., 12.

\(^{93}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{94}\) Ibid., 16.
of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.  

At the heart of hooks’s educational pedagogy is attending to students “as whole human beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simply as seekers after compartmentalized bits of knowledge.” Instead of merely consuming information for memorization and storage, hooks is interested in educating for transformation and promoting the cultivation of a critical consciousness.

Hook’s educational strategies and convictions are largely influenced by Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* She highlights the importance of interrogating pedagogical practices to raise critical questions about how such practices reinforce systems of domination and colonialist attitudes. She proposes several key strategies including, but not limited to, establishing a learning environment for participatory dialogical exchange, acknowledging the presence of each person, especially the marginalized, promoting the responsibility of the teacher’s own self-actualization, incorporating inclusion and diversity, and celebrating communal awareness and confessional narratives.

hooks further posits, to create a learning environment for critical awareness and dialogical exchange an engaged pedagogy must recognize the importance of radical

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95 Ibid., 13.
96 Ibid., 15.
97 Ibid., 14.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., 53.
100 Ibid., 186.
openness and vulnerability. In order to cultivate such traits, hooks contends for “pedagogical practices that emphasize mutual participation between teacher and student.” This type of engaged pedagogy requires a whole-hearted commitment to interactive relationship. Moreover, when students understand themselves as mutually responsible for contributing to the development of the learning community they will more readily offer constructive input and constant feedback, resulting in an organic environment for generative growth and connectivity.

Throughout her teaching career, hooks intentionally scheduled lunches with students. She recalls: “I found it helpful to meet with each student in my classes, if only briefly. Rather than sitting in my office for hours waiting for individual students to choose to meet or for problems to arise. I have preferred to schedule lunches with students. Sometimes the whole class might bring lunch and have a discussion in a space other than our usual classroom.” Knowing students’ names and spending quality time with each student contributes to the conditions in which a learning community can truly emerge. Despite the traditional understanding of the classroom setting, the ultimate purpose according to hooks is, “a community of learners together.” The net effect of this kind of classroom positions the teacher as a learner with the students. The preferred

101 Ibid., 202.
102 Ibid., 204.
103 Ibid., 203.
104 Ibid., 206.
105 Ibid., 204.
106 Ibid., 153.
outcome is for equal commitment from everyone to create a learning context.\textsuperscript{107} hooks concludes her book with these fitting words:

The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.\textsuperscript{108}

bell hooks’ contribution to the topic of educational pedagogy is critical in terms of reimagining Christian formation at Biola University. As a learning community, Biola employs teaching practices that are emblematic of the banking model of education, especially as it relates to theological inquiry and study. In fact, as highlighted in Chapter 2, this is one of Biola’s core practices that is desperately in need of revision. The theological curriculum predominantly accentuates, “thinking biblical about everything,” and cultivating a Christian worldview, resulting in a hierarchical approach to studying theology. Consequently, from a formational point of view, Biola’s educational pedagogy and theological curriculum significantly subsidizes its resolute kataphatic spirituality.

hooks’ transgressive pedagogy offers an alternative educational strategy to Biola’s current approach. Adopting her method not only circumvents a banking model, it also establishes the necessary foundation for engaging an apophatic spirituality. This especially relates to theological categories that attend to Mystery. hooks’ model also aids in the process of raising critical questions regarding divine action and catalyzes theological space for not knowing. Her method opens a considerable pathway for change.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 207.
Moreover, ensuring an educational experience that fosters critical consciousness, community engagement, and dialogical exchange will necessitate the radical change required to unsettle the status quo. hooks’s *Teaching to Transgress* is the suitable alternative to Biola’s current state of affairs. Through integrating her educational strategies, theological education can be facilitated in a profoundly personal way. This will result in a learning community that appreciates whole human beings. By virtue of being attended to as whole human beings, each person in the learning community will have an opportunity to more readily grow, develop, and flourish.

In light of the ministry challenge and in particular a pragmatic response, *Teaching to Transgress* has one principal limitation. Although hooks addresses the serious crisis in education today by challenging the banking system of education through proposing a progressive model of engaged pedagogy, she does not tackle the process in which to tactically and strategically introduce such a model of education. This especially relates to an educational environment that historically and overwhelming embodies the traditional banking model. Unfortunately, hooks merely addresses the problem tangentially. It would serve the Ministry Focus Project well were this resource to specifically outline a strategy for systemic change. Insight regarding practical suggestions to influence key stakeholders, how to navigate internal and external politics, and how to transition from a hierarchical model to a transgressive one would additionally aid this project.
CHAPTER 4
THEORIES OF PRATICE AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

To better understand Biola’s current state and propose a new strategy for formation it is important to define the sociological concept of practice. By utilizing the social sciences, a robust understanding of practice can be developed and subsequently an articulation on what makes a practice Christian may be explored. Implementing a new strategy for Christian formation at Biola will require a level of complexity especially as it relates to the integration of the necessary sociological tools.

This chapter will examine MacIntyre’s Neo-Aristotelian concept of practice to establish a foundation for understanding practice. His definition will be explored in detail. Next, the chapter will seek to contextualize Christian practices. The distinct characteristics that Christian practices exhibit will be identified. Following the section on Christian practices, the core concepts of Bourdieu’s complexified social theory will be established. The various concepts will be explored at a granular level in order to comprehensively understand their dynamics. The chapter will conclude by synthesizing Bourdieu’s insights in order to practically apply to Biola’s context of formation.
MacIntyre’s Sociological Concept of a Practice

The concept of a social practice has taken several complex forms within contemporary intellectual orientations.¹ These concepts are situated between moral philosophy and social theory. In his seminal work, *After Virtue*, MacIntyre proposes a foundational concept of social practice. His argument begins with a Neo-Aristotelian alternative to modern moral theory by diagnosing the demise of the Enlightenment project. MacIntyre concludes, “The language and the appearances of morality persist even though the integral substance of morality has to a large degree been fragmented and then in part destroyed.”² Due to the fragmentation of a unified coherent core conception of a virtue, MacIntyre examines the nature of virtues in heroic societies and determines, “every activity, every inquiry, every practice aims at some good.”³

MacIntyre’s Concept of Practice

MacIntyre’s concept of practice and his ideas related to the role of practices has largely been prominent throughout academic discussion.⁴ Central to his argument is the rediscovery of classical virtue in which he develops a notion of practice.⁵ From a Neo-Aristotelian point of view moral formation happens by means of practice. MacIntyre defines practice as:

² MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 5.
³ Ibid., 148.
Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence that are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. Tic-tac-toe is not an example of a practice in this sense, nor is throwing a football with skill; but the game of football is, and so is chess. Bricklaying is not a practice; architecture is. Planting turnips is not a practice; farming is. So are the enquiries of physics, chemistry and biology, and so is the work of the historian, and so are the painting and music.6

MacIntyre’s definition of practice incorporates four key elements that require further development. The following sections will explore each key element.

Social Complexity

First, practices are activities accomplished by humans and take place within a social context.7 These activities require a certain complexity in order to be classified as a practice. For example, the game of football is a practice while throwing a football is not. Piloting a helicopter is a practice, while cleaning the windows of a helicopter is not. To classify a practice is to understand it as a complex set of acts that must not be confused with institutions.8 MacIntyre uses the examples of chess, physics, and medicine as practices, while chess clubs, laboratories, and hospitals he refers to as institutions.9 The specified institutions are concerned with external goods. Practices on the other hand are concerned with goods internal to a practice. This requires technical skill but is not limited


8 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 194.

9 Ibid.
to technical skill.\textsuperscript{10} Practices additionally require social complexity. MacIntyre aptly notes, “To enter into a practice is to enter into a relationship not only with its contemporary practitioners, but also with those who have preceded us in the practice.”\textsuperscript{11}

**Internal Goods**

The second element of MacIntyre’s concept of practice involves internal goods.

Mary McClintock Fulkerson, professor of Theology at Duke Divinity School, summarizes this concept well; she writes, “Practices involve the participatory development of a good. To do a practice well is to enhance one’s capacities and to realize goods internal to the practice.”\textsuperscript{12} Thus practices not only have outcomes but also produce goods internal to their processes.\textsuperscript{13} The goals or aims of a practice can be achieved only by engaging in the practice. In other words, the goods internal to a practice can be had in no other way but by the experience of participating in the practice.\textsuperscript{14} Conversely, those who lack the relevant experience of participating in a particular practice, lack competence in the practice and cannot judge the internal goods of the practice because judgment requires a kind of competence and subordination that is acquired by practicing the practice systematically.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{10} Ibid., 193.
\bibitem{11} Ibid., 194.
\bibitem{13} Treier, *Virtue and the Voice of God*, 23.
\bibitem{14} MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187.
\bibitem{15} Ibid., 190.
\end{thebibliography}
Traditions

Thirdly, according to MacIntyre’s view, practices are socially established, systematically extended, and embedded within traditions.\textsuperscript{16} As one generation passes on to the next the pursuit of goods within that tradition are historically extended.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, one’s story is embedded in a community’s history or tradition.\textsuperscript{18} At a very granular level, MacIntyre claims, “Narrative history of a certain kind turns out to be the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions.”\textsuperscript{19} Thus, communities of practice, whatever they might be, foster particular practices that in turn, create an institutional hegemony and entrench the community members in a particular tradition or story.\textsuperscript{20} This is certainly true of Biola University and important to recognize when accessing Biola’s core practices.

MacIntyre astutely elucidates the following as it relates to practice, story, and tradition:

Man is in his action and practice, as well in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth. But the key question for men is not about their own authorship; I can only answer the question “What am I to do?” if I can answer the prior question “Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?” We enter human society, that is, with one or more imputed characters – roles into which we have been drafted – and we have to learn what they are in order to be able to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are apt to be construed. It is through the hearing of stories about wicked stepmothers, lost

\textsuperscript{16} Tony Jones, \textit{The Church is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emergent Church Movement} (Minneapolis: The JoPa Group, 2011), 84.

\textsuperscript{17} MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, 222.

\textsuperscript{18} Fulkerson, \textit{Places of Redemption}, 39.

\textsuperscript{19} MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, 208.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 186.
children, good but misguided kings, wolves that suckled twin boys, youngest sons who received no inheritance but must make their own way in the world and eldest sons who waste their inheritance on riotous living and go into exile to live with swine, that children learn or mis-learn both what a child and what a parent is, what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born and what they ways of the world are. Deprive children of stories and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutters in their actions as in their worlds. Hence there is no way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own except through the stock of stories which constitute is initial dramatic resources. Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things. Vico was right and so was Joyce. And so too of course is that moral tradition from heroic society to its medieval heirs according to which the telling of stories has a key part in the educating us into virtues.  

MacIntyre’s insights underscore the significance of the story in which Biola tells. As noted in Chapter 1, Biola’s story is deeply rooted in the Fundamentalist movement. The shared stock of stories which constitute this history are communicated throughout the life of the university. Whether it’s the Torrey Memorial Bible Conference, the WORD mural, or Heritage Café, each in their own right along with a myriad of other stories, further the story of Biola’s tradition and ultimately its spirituality.

The concept of narrative and tradition that MacIntyre proposes suggests that practices contribute to the identity of a tradition and just as practices have a characteristically social dimension, so also do narratives. As a consequence, participation in a social community results in community members’ enmeshment in the stories of that community. Thus, an entanglement of stories creates a tapestry of communal experiences. One’s life is always embedded in the story of those communities

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21 Ibid., 216.

from which one derives her identity.\textsuperscript{23} Ultimately, “our stories are concretely embedded in those practices in which we are co-participants.”\textsuperscript{24}

Habits and Virtues

The final element of MacIntyre’s concept of practice is habits. At an individual and institutional level, traditions are sustained through practices, and in turn habits are imbued. Broadly speaking, practices require the exercise of habits, also known as dispositions, traits, rituals, characteristics, or virtues. MacIntyre defines virtues as, “An acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevent us from achieving any such good.”\textsuperscript{25} As habits are repeatedly exercised over time, human capacities develop which lead to a particular internal human orientation. When cultivated, virtues develop in a person a kind of second nature.\textsuperscript{26}

For example, the person who is habitually disciplined in the regimen of playing the scales, will in time have the capacity to play the piano, thus achieving the internal good of piano playing. Moreover, an increase in scale habituation will likely result in a person becoming better at piano playing. Habits intrinsically weave into the person the internal good of the practice being practiced. The more one practices the virtues or habits that enhance a particular practice, the more of a virtuoso one will become in that practice. Thus, persons do not necessarily think their way into achieving the internal goods of a

\textsuperscript{23} MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, 221.

\textsuperscript{24} Murphy, Kallenberg, and Nation, \textit{Virtues and Practices in the Christian Tradition}, 40.

\textsuperscript{25} MacIntyre, \textit{After Virtue}, 191.

\textsuperscript{26} Smith, \textit{Desiring the Kingdom}, 56.
practice. Persons must participate in practice acquisition for it to become realized and inscribed.

In sum, practices are inherently formative and fundamentally shape human persons. Practices are not just something participants do, practices do something to participants.\textsuperscript{27} The communities and spaces one is immersed in will indeed have a shaping effect on the individual and community members as a whole.\textsuperscript{28} Ultimately, the ubiquitous nature of practices and their formative affect is inevitable in the formation of human persons. In fact, this is precisely why it is important to establish a critical awareness of the spaces, communities, traditions, and practices a community is immersed in when creating an intentional strategy for reimagining formation.\textsuperscript{29} Biola’s social body is no exception. It is a unique community in which distinct practices occur and a particular Christian formation is realized. However, formation at Biola is overwhelmingly limited to cognition and doctrinal absorption. Now that MacIntyre’s concept of practice has been established, a discussion of what constitutes a distinctly Christian practice will be developed.

\textbf{Christian Practices}

MacIntyre’s concept of practice has significantly impacted theological discussion related to Christian spirituality, Christian formation, and Christian education,


\textsuperscript{28} Jones, \textit{The Church is Flat}, 82.

\textsuperscript{29} Smith, \textit{You Are What You Love}, 38.
predominantly in the area of practical theology. In order to make a well-informed argument on issues related to Christian practice, Kathryn Tanner astutely notes: “Christian practices would have to be set in relation to non-Christian ones, in all the wide arenas of human life – economic, political, and social. . . . One needs to look, additionally, away from the Christian practice itself to its relations with similar practices in the wider society. . . . That, to a great extent, is the clue to its Christian point.”

Therefore, MacIntyre’s concept of practice provides a suitable starting point in terms of articulating what constitutes Christian practice. Viewed through a MacIntyrian lens, Christian practices are not fundamentally an intellectual system or set of propositions, but rather a practice of many practices that inherently embody the tradition known as Christianity. Christian practices are similar to neutral or non-Christian practices in that they are social, complex, and have a specific teleological aim. In fact:

Christianity cannot be explained or understood without reference to a distinctive cluster of practices. In order to participate in the tradition called Christianity one must necessarily participate in these practices. To put it another way, to participate in the community is to participate in practices because communal life is the point at which the practices intersect. Furthermore, knowing the constitutive practices of Christianity tells us a great deal about how Christians ought to live. If virtues are cultivated by striving for excellence in the practice of practices, then we are unable to grow in Christlikeness unless we participate in Christianity’s practices.

In terms of referencing a distinct cluster of practices Christians have engaged in over the centuries it is important to note the various traditions within orthodox Christian faith, the historical influences that shaped those traditions, and the rich diversity of these traditions.


32 Murphy, Kallenberg, and Nation, Virtues and Practices in the Christian Tradition, 38.
The history of Christian spirituality encompasses many traditions including the Ascetic, Monastic, Mystic, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical.\textsuperscript{33} Each tradition is inextricably linked to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{34} Moreover, each unique practice within any of the Christian traditions has a particular theology implicit to the practice, which differentiates that practice between traditions. In broad reference then, the historic practices of Christianity include: prayer, community, worship, baptism, communion or Eucharist, Scripture study, preaching, service, confession, solitude, and Sabbath keeping. This list is by no means exhaustive; rather it broadly entails the fundamental practices of the Christian tradition across two millennia.

The practices mentioned above vary extensively depending on tradition, nevertheless they are formative and constitute a way of being in the world that is inherently Christian in nature. Embedded within each practice are core theological convictions. The task of the practical theologian then, is to critically examine and elucidate a theological reading of the central practices within a particular faith community in order to discover the core identity of that community and then respond normatively and pragmatically. Chapters 1 and 2 of this Ministry Focus Project accomplished the theological reading.

Summary of MacIntyre

As indicated in Chapter 2, Biola’s four core practices are overwhelmingly kataphatic and ultimately revolve around the study of the Bible. “Thinking bibli
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\item \textsuperscript{34} Gordon Mursell, ed., \textit{The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years, From East to West} (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 2001), 12.
\end{itemize}
about everything,” not only permeates Biola’s approach to formation, it is the story in which Biola consistently tells and retells. Biola’s method is particularly deficient because it perpetuates a kataphatic consumption of knowing God and reduces formation to merely acquiring correct Bible knowledge. It is also deficient due to its modernistic way of thinking. Biola’s approach is overly analytical, reductionistic, and ultimately locates God as an object to be described and dominated.35 This hierarchical approach creates a distance in relationality by bifurcating a Divine human relationship to cognition. In the end, espousing a resolutely kataphatic spirituality might produce a Christian perspective, but it ultimately neglects the significance of a MacIntyrian concept of practice.

Now that MacIntyre’s sociological concept of a practice and an understanding of what makes a practice Christian have been developed a more complex theory of practice will be explored. The following section will examine the central concepts of social theorist Bourdieu’s habitus theory. By integrating Bourdieu’s more complex theory, new insights will be gained and practical suggestions will be developed to reframe Christian formation at Biola. Bourdieu’s theory will deliver the necessary sociological tools in which a strategy for Christian formation will primarily rely.

Central Concepts of Pierre Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice

Bourdieu’s theory of practice provides the necessary sociological tools this Ministry Focus Project will implement to reimagine Christian formation at Biola University. Bourdieu’s distinct theory specifically accounts for humanity’s pre-theoretical orientation to the world. His theory also emphasizes the primacy of the body

35 Moltmann, God in Creation, 2.
in terms of physical embodiment in a social context and how the body knows. The concepts of Bourdieu’s theory are many, however the following sections will develop and elucidate those that are of central concern.

Habitus

Bourdieu’s complexified theory of practice encompasses several important concepts. The most prominent concept is the concept of habitus.36 His theory of practice as practice asserts that habitus is something that gets inscribed in human persons. He describes habitus as:

Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or attain them. Objectively “regulated” and “regular” without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of the conductor.37

Bourdieu’s definition of habitus is quite complex and requires further explanation. Firstly, a habitus is a system of dispositions that produces the habitual way in which human persons construct the world. These dispositions or habits are not necessarily something that entails conscious deliberation. In fact, they are both durable and transposable. In other words, a system of dispositions endures over time as a product of history and produces what Bourdieu describes as a, “present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices.”38 This system is

36 Bourdieu, Logic of Practice, 53.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 54.
shared and passed on as a structured structure or embodied tradition. The habitus comes from the outside and conditions human persons in a certain way. Bourdieu indicates, “The habitus tends to generate all the ‘reasonable’, ‘common-sense’, behaviors,” thus creating a common-sense world.\(^\text{39}\)

Although this system is durable and transposable, it is changeable. One learns how to be in a community of practice by one’s body being immersed or absorbed into the habitus of a community of practice. Consequently, as one’s body is immersed in the community of practice, the community of practice is immersed in one’s body. The constant reinforcement or synchronization constitutes a community in a certain way.\(^\text{40}\) This is precisely what Bourdieu refers to as the, “homogeneity of habitus,” and, “what causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted.”\(^\text{41}\) Nevertheless, a habitus united in a relationship of homology can be disrupted and changed. This occurs by virtue of a community accepting an alteration in models of behavior and subsequently that change or alternation, over time, becomes unconsciously imbibed from one generation to the next.\(^\text{42}\)

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 55.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 59.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 58.

\(^{42}\) Lane, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, 235.
Preconscious Aims

A second concept to Bourdieu’s theory of practice is the notion of a system of structuring structures functioning without conscious aiming or without rational deliberation. In other words, the operation of the habitus occurs at a human level of pre-consciousness. Bourdieu underscores this point in stating the following:

The habitus – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present. This autonomy is that of the past, enacted and acting, which, functioning as accumulated capital, produces history on the basis of history and so ensures the permanence in change that makes the individual agent in the world within the world. The habitus is a spontaneity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects “without inertia” in rationalistic theories.\(^{43}\)

The habitus therefore has an embodied history that produces individual and collective practices by way of internalization.\(^{44}\) Consequently, a habitus is acquired without conscious awareness. Bourdieu further notes, “As an acquired system of generative schemes, the habitus makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production—and only those.”\(^{45}\)

Human persons are fundamentally engaged in a community of practice at a pre-reflexive level through the inertia of a habitus. Therefore, the absorption of a habitus is acquired without conscious aiming. The operation of a habitus is what ultimately causes a person or community to have, “a feel for the game.”\(^{46}\)

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\(^{43}\) Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 56.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 54.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 55.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 66.
Feel for the Game

The third dimension of Bourdieu’s theory is the interplay between the following conceptual categories, a feel for the game, a field of cultural production, and doxa. To acquire a, “feel for the game” is to have a practical sense or practical know-how that resides in the body. Practical sense is not an intellectual knowledge rather it is in Bourdieu’s words, “A quasi-bodily involvement in the world which presupposes no representation either of the body or of the world, still less of their relationship. It is an imminence in the world through which the world imposes its imminence, things to be done or said, which directly governs speech and action.” As mentioned, the spontaneity of habitus occurs at a level of bodily involvement that is largely unconscious for human persons. This is the work of inculcation and appropriation of the social body by way of a habitus and a field of cultural production.

In terms of the interplay, the habitus is inscribed in the body by the co-ordination of practices. According to Bourdieu, practices generated by the habitus, “orients ‘choices’ which, though not deliberate, are no less systematic, and which, without being ordered and organized in relation to an end, are none the less charged with a kind of retrospective finality.” A feel for the game then is a direct result of the encounter between the habitus and a field.

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47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 66.
Field

Bourdieu defines the field as, “an arbitrary social construct, an artefact whose arbitrariness and artificiality are underlined by everything that defines its autonomy – explicit and specific rules, strictly delimited and extra-ordinary time and space.”50 The field is a place that has boundaries and opposition or struggle over social, economic, and cultural capital.51 To belong to a field therefore is to enter into an arena of struggle. The struggle over the dynamics of capital production requires a kind of learning. Bourdieu develops this idea in that:

The earlier a player enters the game and the less he is aware of the associated learning (the limiting case being, of course, that someone born into, born with the game), the greater is his ignorance of all that is tacitly granted through his investment in the field and his interest in it very existence and perpetuation and in everything that is played for in it, and his unawareness of the unthought presuppositions that the game produces and endlessly reproduces, thereby reproducing the conditions of its own perpetuation.52

To enter the game is to enter the arena of struggle in which the slow process of co-option and initiation must occur.53 Bourdieu qualifies this as a “second birth.”54 This process constitutes investing in capital that determines human action.55 As a result Bourdieu

50 Ibid., 67.


52 Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice, 67.

53 Ibid., 68.

54 Ibid., 78.

notes, “Agents never know completely what they are doing that what they do has more sense than they know.” Bourdieu’s insight certainly applies to a context like Biola.

**Doxa**

The struggle on the field is an automatic process that occurs when an individual first enters a field. In order to accumulate capital, one enters the field and begins to sort out the rules of the game or the *doxa*. Bourdieu defines *doxa* as, “the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a habitus and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense.” In every social order there is capital to be accumulated. This is why the deeply structured field is vital to understand or come to know, with the body. Consequently, the habitus is effectively embedded in the body. It begins to govern and prime action by way of internalized strategies derivative of the *doxa*.

**The Primacy of the Body**

The fourth concept of Bourdieu’s theory underscores the primacy of the body. The durable inscription of bodily comportment in the world is unavoidable for human persons. This is exactly why bodily immersion in a social environment is profoundly formational. Human bodies matter then in terms of embodied practice in a body politic because the body is recruited by conscription. Bourdieu underscores that, “What is ‘learned by body’ is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished,


57 Ibid., 68.

58 Ibid.
but something that one is.”\textsuperscript{59} Thus, persons not only have a “state of mind,” but also a “state of body.”\textsuperscript{60}

As the body is constantly mingled in a social context it is constantly being formed and reformed. The body carries an acquired habituated knowledge that is irreducible. This is why human persons exhibit a “durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking.”\textsuperscript{61} It is the direct result of the mechanics of incorporation and embodiment. In sum, although the habitus largely operates in the cloak of concealment, it nevertheless is constantly at work on the body.

The Work of Time

The final concept of Bourdieu’s social theory is the work of time. True of all practices is they are constructed in time and time gives practices their form.\textsuperscript{62} Practice, according to Bourdieu:

Unfolds in time and it has all the correlative properties, such as irreversibility, that synchronization destroys. Its temporal structure, that is, its rhythm, its tempo, and above all its directionality, is constitutive of its meaning. As with music, any manipulation of this structure, even a simple change in tempo, either acceleration or slowing down, subjects it to a destruction that is irreducible to a simple change in an axis of reference. In short, because it is entirely immersed in the current of time, practice is inseparable from temporality, not only because it is played out in time, but also because it plays strategically with time and especially with tempo.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 73.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 68.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 70.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 98.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 81.
Bourdieu indicates that time maintains an element of irreversibility. When considering the relationship that links practice with time, the practitioner or the player is caught up in the game or the practice and is simultaneously immersed in the current of time. Practice is so intertwined with time that it cannot be separated from it.

Consider the experienced hockey player who has cultivated a feel for the game of hockey. The hockey player does not play where the puck is, rather the hockey player plays where the puck is going to be. There is a constant instantaneous assessment occurring all the time. Each moment of the game is urgent and immanent. This is why Bourdieu surmises, “One has no chance of giving a scientific account of practice – and in particular of the properties it derives from the fact that it unfolds in time.”64 Time then cannot be reversed in terms of human action or practice. Therefore, in Bourdieuan thought, “science has a time which is not that of practice.”65

In order for practices to become inscribed time is needed. In fact, it is the cumulative effect of the habituation, repetition, and an appropriate rhythm of activities in which practical mastery is acquired.66 The unconscious direction of habitus is working all the time. In summary of the work of time, Bourdieu notes:

The idea of practical logic, a “logic in itself,” without conscious reflexion or logical control, is a contradiction in terms, which defies logical logic. This paradoxical logic is that of all practice, or rather of all practical sense. Caught up in “the matter in hand,” totally present in the present and in the practical functions that it finds there in the form of objective potentialities, practice excludes attention to itself (that is, to the past). It is unaware of the principles that govern it

64 Ibid., 82.
65 Ibid., 81.
66 Ibid., 75.
and the possibilities they contain; it can only discover them by enacting them, unfolding them in time.\textsuperscript{67}

The immersive nature of ongoing forms of large-scale coordinated social activity does indeed have a formative effect on a community being socialized. This undoubtedly includes communities of Christian formation, like that of Biola. It requires time for inscription to occur. Thus, the longer persons are habituated in a community like Biola, more time will have unfolded, resulting in additional reinforcement of the same deficiencies related to formation.

**Summary and Implications of Bourdieu**

If Bourdieu’s thesis concerning pre-theoretical knowledge, the primacy of the body, the work of time, and the various dynamics of habitus are accepted, then practices matter profusely especially as it relates to Christian formation and a collective spirituality. As a social community, Biola’s core practices fundamentally inscribe a Christian habitus that is overwhelmingly kataphatic and informational. Biola’s patterned activities when carried on over time facilitate a Christian spirituality that is reduced primarily to thinking. This approach neglects the pre-reflexive significance of embodied practice. It also fails to consider the work of time and repetition as it relates to the body. Biola’s habitus operates under the assumption that disseminating Christian ideas, beliefs, and doctrines will fundamentally facilitate formation. Unfortunately, it does not. Biola is solely concerned with the transmission of biblical knowledge without regard for aligning the body spirituality. Consequently, embodied religious practice becomes eclipsed essentially by gathering bodies together to “think biblically about everything.”

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 92.
Biola’s approach to Christian formation does not fully appreciate the significance of the material body and the sociological implications related to Bourdieu’s understanding of the bodily character of practice. In order for Biola to reimagine Christian formation it cannot underestimate the role of the body. Nor can the dynamics of habitus be ignored. Unfortunately, the current state of formation at Biola effectively marginalizes the materiality and sociality of bodied persons relegating formation to cognition. Nevertheless, students most certainly are immersed in a habitus. The relevant problem however is that Biola’s habitus is deficiently unaware and unintentional regarding the indispensable nature of ongoing forms of embodied practice. This must become a central component and strategic prioritization for Biola in regard to reimagining Christian formation. Bourdieu’s social theory indeed provides the sociological foundation for formation. Sadly, a sociological foundation is altogether absent.

Although MacIntyre’s conceptualization of practice and Bourdieu’s social theory provide necessary sociological tools to aid in reimagining Christian formation at Biola they are not theological enough for the scope of this project. Chapter 5 will develop a theology of Christian spirituality to counterbalance Biola’s kataphatic approach to formation. This chapter will also lay the biblical and theological groundwork for enacting an alternative approach to formation through the exploration of an ecological doctrine of creation. It will include critical engagement with Moltmann’s contribution to the subject.
CHAPTER 5
THEOLOGY OF CREATION AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Through critical examination and initial observation this Ministry Focus Project has argued that Biola’s current model of formation is inadequate for theologically training and spiritually enriching the lives of its students. Unfortunately, Biola’s core practices exclusively espouse a kataphatic spirituality. Biola’s approach to formation fails to integrate a combination of practices that counterbalance its kataphatic verbosity. Moreover, Biola not only is excessively focused on informing the intellect through the acquisition of biblical knowledge, it also lacks a coherent spirituality that involves the material body integrally. Biola fails to consider the formational significance of habitual immersion in a Christian habitus and the pre-reflexive nature of practice.

This chapter will develop the biblical and theological foundations required to counterbalance Biola’s overwhelmingly hierarchical, kataphatic approach to formation. A theology of Christian spirituality rooted in the doctrine of creation will be explored. As a result, human spiritual practice will be contextualized in terms of divine relationality. This will be accomplished through critical engagement with Moltmann’s contribution to the subject. Moltmann’s ecological doctrine of creation, as it relates to the practice of the
Sabbath, will provide the theological groundwork for enacting an alternative Christian spirituality. This alternative will be robustly apophatic and inherently personal. The chapter will conclude by expanding on practical implications regarding the practice of the Sabbath.

**Biblical Foundations: The Scheme of Genesis 1:1 – 2:3**

A theology of Christian spirituality rooted in the doctrine of creation begins with the Bible’s opening account of creation, found in Genesis 1:1-2:3. The literary framework of this text is carefully structured and intricately woven together. It provides the context in which to understand the doctrine of creation.¹ God’s creative activity is described through the biblical notion of a seven-day week. This week is divided up into six days of creating and a seventh day of resting. Set apart and located at the pinnacle of the creation narrative is the seventh day, the Sabbath. The theological content throughout this text points to God’s activity in the world. It also points toward God’s relational interconnectivity in and with creation.

**Days 1 to 3**

To understand the schema and sequential strategy of God unveiling God’s own creative activity in relation to creation, it is important to notice the meaning embedded in the biblical notion of a week.² This meaning is grounded in the distinctive realities each day represents throughout the week of creation. On the first three days God creates

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¹ Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 12.

² Ibid., 14.
specific environments for the cosmos. The first environment created consisted of light separated from darkness, which God deems as good. God names the environment day and night. This was day one (Gn 1:3-5). On day two God creates the firmament, which separates the waters from waters. God deems it good and names the environment sky (Gn 1:6-8). God’s creative activity on day three consists of dry ground. God separates the waters from the dry ground and calls this environment land and the waters God calls seas. Once again, God deems creation good (Gn 1:9-10). Day three also incorporates the creation of vegetation produced by the land. It too is similarly declared good (Gn 1:11-13). The first three days comprise stage one of the biblical creation narrative emphasizing a spatial and environmental focus. The environments will provide the necessary home for their respective inhabitants.\(^3\) Space and dwelling are central to God’s creative endeavor. Together they collectively provide an environment in which God will indwell and relationship may be cultivated.

Days 4 to 6

The framework for creation continues on the fourth, fifth, and sixth days. God creates inhabitants for the cosmic environments fashioned in stage one. On day four God creates the first inhabitants, namely heavenly lights. Stars are also included. These lights are given the task of separating and governing day from night. God deems the lights as good (Gn 1:14-19). The fifth day of God’s work includes the creation of living creatures. God specifically creates sea creatures, all moving living creatures, and birds of the sky. Each creature is declared good, blessed, and given the task of fecundity and filling the

\(^3\) Ibid.
earth (Gn 1:20-23). On day six, God continues to create living creatures. God produces land creatures or wild animals and declares them good. Moreover, on day six, God creates the final inhabitant in the cosmic environments - human beings. Humanity is distinctively different than the preceding creation, in that humanity is created in God’s image. Human creatures are given the task of fruitfulness, filling, and subduing the earth (Gn 1:28). Finally, on the sixth day, God declares everything that was made as very good (Gn 1:31). Overall the first three days of the seven-day week in the biblical creation narrative comprised of the cosmic habitats, while days four, five, and six comprised of the cosmic inhabitants. The ordered environmental space of creation is filled with inhabitants. Thus, a context for divine dwelling is established. Nevertheless, creation is not quite brought to completion.

Day 7

As the biblical creation narrative progresses the text gives special attention to the seventh day. Genesis 2:2-3 states, “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.” The seventh day is radically different from days one to six. In fact, this day stands alone as wholly different from the preceding six days. An exclusivity of the seventh day exists in comparison to the other six days. The Sabbath day diverges into a completely new reality.

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4 New International Version of the Bible.
On days one to six God creates day and night, heaven and earth, light and dark, male and female. But on the Sabbath day there is no partner. It is solitary as an uneven day. The Sabbath is sanctified by God, which highlights its utmost significance. It becomes the primary vantage point through which to view the whole creation narrative. By reviewing the narrative through the lens of the Sabbath, a kaleidoscope of divine action that is purposeful, creative, and ultimately relational emerges. Therefore, the seventh day becomes the pivot on which the entire narrative fluctuates. The central nexus of the narrative is totally directed toward a place of rest for the Creator. John H. Walton infers the following, “The Sabbath element is not a tag on to the creation narrative. It is its motivation, the reason God creates is to establish a place of rest for himself.”

Creation is intended to be a home, a context in which relationship between Creator and creation can flourish and thrive.

Now that the Sabbath is understood in its biblical context the deeper theological foundations can be developed. The following section will explore the theological foundations for an ecological doctrine of creation through critical interaction with Moltmann’s creation theology. Special attention is devoted to the doctrine of the Sabbath. Moltmann’s insights will lay the foundation for an understanding of the Christian Sabbath as the premiere apophatic practice and gateway to integrating a strategy of

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5 Moltmann, God in Creation, 284.


7 Ibid., 155.
apophaticism. This section will also underscore practical implications related to engaging the Sabbath.

**Theological Foundations: Jürgen Moltmann’s Ecological Doctrine of Creation**

Twentieth century German theologian and scholar Jürgen Moltmann developed an ecological doctrine of creation in his seminal book titled, *God in Creation*. According to Moltmann, the biblical tradition displays a God who observes a Sabbath rest in order to crown and complete God’s creation. God creates and then feasts on that creation because God is fully satisfied with God’s creation as God dwells within it. Moltmann’s theology of creation hinges entirely on this point. He writes:

> The goal and completion of every Jewish and every Christian doctrine of creation must be the doctrine of the Sabbath; for on the Sabbath and through the Sabbath God “completed” his creation, and on the Sabbath and through it, men and women perceive as God’s creation the reality in which they live and which they themselves are. The Sabbath opens creation for its true future. On the Sabbath the redemption of the world is celebrated and anticipated. The Sabbath is itself the presence of eternity in time, and a foretaste of the world to come.  

The doctrine of the Sabbath is the hallmark of Moltmann’s creation theology. God is not only the organizing Subject of the cosmos, but God lives and dwells relationally with the cosmic community through God’s own resting presence in that community. In order to fully understand God’s resting presence Moltmann underscores God’s Sabbath stillness. He writes:

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10 Ibid., 6.
According to the biblical traditions creation and the Sabbath belong together. It is impossible to understand the world properly as creation without a proper discernment of the Sabbath. In the Sabbath stillness men and women no longer intervene in the environment through their labour. They let it be entirely God’s creation. They recognize that as God’s property creation is inviolable; and they sanctify the day through their joy in existence as God’s creatures within the fellowship of creation.  

God’s Sabbath is most fully understood as God’s stillness or silence. In God’s Sabbath stillness, God rests from God’s work in order to return to God’s self through a cessation from creating.  

The outcome of God’s stillness is “a quiescence in himself.”  

As God is wholly present in the Mystery of Sabbath stillness, “all creatures find their sustaining foundation.” It is within this context of creation that the community of creation embraces the Creator. The embrace occurs through participation in an interconnecting and interdependent whole. This particular understanding of the doctrine of the Sabbath accounts for an ecological doctrine of creation. In fact, Moltmann acknowledges, “An ecological doctrine of creation implies a new kind of thinking about God. The centre of this thinking is no longer the distinction between God and the world. The centre is the recognition of the presence of God in the world and the presence of the world in God.”  

This kind of understanding concerning divine action has profound theological implications for Christian spirituality and practice. If God is present to God’s creation by virtue of God’s Sabbath rest, then God’s relationship to creation must be understood in

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11 Ibid., 277.
12 Ibid., 278.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 282.
15 Ibid., 13.
Moltmann’s words as, “an intricate web of unilateral, reciprocal and many-sided relationships.”16

Consequently, Moltmann contends, “In God there is no one-sided relationship of superiority and subordination, command and obedience . . . in the triune God is the mutuality and the reciprocity of love.”17 This theological construct dismantles a hierarchical understanding of God. Concern is certainly generated for communities that practice a top-down approach to human and divine relationship, like that of Biola. By virtue of neglecting an understanding of a cosmic community in which relationships of mutuality exist, the enduring reality for divine human connection is lost. Thus, Christian formation emblematic of a resolutely kataphatic spirituality is seriously negligent when it comes to understanding divine relationality. This must be addressed. Before practically addressing the theological implications for Christian spirituality, the section that follows will develop three areas of Moltmann’s ecological theology with special attention devoted to the Sabbath. The three areas include: God’s immanence in creation, the sanctification of the Sabbath, and the cosmic dimension of the Sabbath.

God’s Immanence in Creation

Moltmann articulates the interplay between God’s transcendence and immanence throughout creation. God is completely other than creation. God is the transcendent Reality upon which all creation is absolutely dependent.18 However, God intimately

16 Ibid., 14.

17 Ibid., 16-17.

dwell with creation and is therefore immanently present to it. According to Moltmann, the Sabbath is where God’s immanence most fully blooms. Moltmann writes:

The works of creation display in God’s acts the Creator’s continual transcendence over his creation. But the Sabbath of creation points to the Creator’s immanence in his creation. In the Sabbath God joins his eternal presence to his temporal creation and, by virtue of his rest, is there, with that creation and in it. He rests wholly in himself and is, as himself, in his creation wholly there. The Sabbath is the day when God is present.19

Divine action in this respect reveals a Creator who creates space for a temporal world. The Creator permits a coexistence with subjects other than God’s self. God allows a temporal finite world not to exclusively exist with God’s infinite self, but on the Sabbath God uniquely rests and dwells with that finite world. Consequently, the Creator comes home to God’s self and invites creation to partake in a relational encounter. Moltmann concludes, “All created beings then find in nearness to him the inexhaustible wellspring of their life, and for tier part find home and rest in God.”20

Ultimately, God’s presence in God’s resting is best understood as direct and unmediated.21 This is precisely why Moltmann refers to his doctrine of creation as an ecological doctrine.22 In fact, Moltmann references the symbolism of home and dwelling. He emphasizes the Greek derivation of the word, “ecology” (οἶκος), meaning, “doctrine

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19 Moltmann, God in Creation, 280.

20 Ibid., 5.

21 Ibid., 282.

22 Ibid., xii.
of the house.”23 Moltmann’s doctrine of the house is a doctrine of God’s immanent indwelling in creation to make a home for God’s self, “on earth as it is in heaven.”24

Divine immanence in the world also allows for creation’s participation. The totality of creation in all its various forms is able to act on God as God rests. Moltmann infers, “By ‘resting’ from God’s creative and formative activity, God allows creation in its own way to act on him.”25 The outlet for creation to act on God is by way of God ceasing from further creative influence. On the Sabbath God is wholly present to creation. Thus, God completes creation by immanently resting with creation. God is therefore at home with creation.

As the created order is fully present with God on the Sabbath, the created order is able to experience God as God experiences it. In other words, on the Sabbath God “feels” the world.26 This results in an ongoing interactive relationship with the cosmos. God’s immanence and rest manifest such a relationship. This reality is only made possible through the Sabbath day as God ceases God’s creative impulse. God acts personally and relationally with the cosmos by being wholly present to it.

Fundamental to this understanding of a doctrine of creation is a relational interdependence as opposed to a hierarchical domineering form of relationship.27 Moltmann writes, “We can no longer either, conceive, his relationship to the world he has

23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 5.
25 Ibid., 279.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 2.
created as a one-sided relationship of domination. We are bound to understand it as an intricate relationship of community - many layered, many-faceted and at many levels. This is the fundamental idea behind a non-hierarchical, decentralized, confederate theology." God is not over against the world in domination. Rather, God is immanently at rest in it. Interlaced throughout the Sabbath is this very reality. Unfortunately, Biola’s approach to divine human relationship is starkly different.

Sanctification of the Sabbath and the *Imago Dei*

A second dimension of Moltmann’s creation theology as it relates to the doctrine of the Sabbath is the sanctification of the Sabbath. Genesis 2:2-3 states: “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.” In the creation narrative God uniquely decides to bless and set apart the seventh day. The seventh day of creation is the crowning achievement and capstone of creation. By ceasing from creative activity on this day, God sanctifies and completes creation. God’s hallowing and celebration of the seventh day intimates the telos of creation, namely God’s rest.

God’s rest on the Sabbath becomes creation’s rest. God invites creation into a life of celebration, beauty, love, and relationship. Ultimately, God fashions a universe that is a community of creation dependent on God’s resting presence and is for God’s resting presence. In light of God’s sanctifying God’s resting presence on the Sabbath, Moltmann proposes the following:

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28 Ibid.
People sanctify the Sabbath by abstaining from every kind of productive work, and by recognizing the whole of reality as God’s creation – the creation from which, in face of which, and within which he himself rested. The human beings who rest on the Sabbath day, and who in their rest are wholly present, are God’s image. Just as the Sabbath is sanctified by God’s resting presence, so men and women also sanctify the Sabbath through their recollection of their existence, and their grateful expression of that existence. Existence precedes activity. So activity ends in simply being present.  

God’s rest on the seventh day is what sanctifies the seventh day. But it is not only God’s rest that takes part in this sanctification. The whole of creation rests with God. Resting with God on the Sabbath is the vocation and calling of the entire cosmos. This includes human beings created in the Imago Dei (Gn 1:27).

Human likeness to God as constituted in the Imago Dei, has a unique role on the Sabbath. Moltmann suggests the role of human beings on the Sabbath is to abstain from productivity, recall their existence as derived from the transcendent God, and in turn bless God for their existence.  

The primary avenue for humanity to bless God for God’s existence is by simply being present and attentive to the present God without productive activity. Therefore, God and humanity can both be at rest with one another. As humanity participates in blessing God particularly on the Sabbath, humanity also uniquely reflects humanity’s own Imago Dei back to God. There is a wonderful interplay of human and Divine partaking in an experience of likeness together. Humanity responds to God’s blessing with humanity’s own ability to bless.

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30 Ibid., 277.

The Cosmic and Eschatological Dimension of the Sabbath

The third dimension related to Moltmann’s creation theology and doctrine of the Sabbath is the cosmic and eschatological dimensions of the Sabbath. According to Moltmann’s perspective, one must comprehend the Sabbath as the consummation of creation. He writes:

The feast of creation is the feast of completion or consummation—the consummation of creation which is realized through this feast. Because this consummation of creation in the Sabbath also represents creation’s redemption—the redemption enabling it to participate in God’s manifested, eternal presence—it will also be permissible for us to understand the Sabbath as the feast of redemption. But if, as the feast of creation, it is also already the feast of creation’s redemption, it is understandable that the whole of creation should have been brought into being for the sake of that redemption.

The Sabbath comprehended in this way has a redemptive dimension to it. The destination of creation is the final place for God’s resting presence. The entire cosmos is headed in this direction. Therefore, the Sabbath points beyond itself to the eschatological future of a cosmic community. It crosses a threshold into eternity.

When humanity along with all of creation practices Sabbath not only is humanity’s Imago Dei more fully reflected, humanity is also preparing for and practicing with God for the future of the cosmos. Moltmann notes, “This makes the human sabbath the rhythm of eternity in time, and the presence in history of the future world of glory.”

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32 Moltmann, God in Creation, 287.

33 Ibid., 277.

34 Dan B. Allender, Sabbath (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 173.

35 Moltmann, God in Creation, 287.
In the end, the Sabbath is a journey toward an eternal rest in God.\textsuperscript{36} The Sabbath points to a future that will be overwhelmingly full of the manifest presence of God.\textsuperscript{37} Now that the biblical and theological foundations for an ecological doctrine of creation have been developed, three practical implications regarding the Sabbath will be explored.

**Practical Implication: God’s Immanence in Creation**

In terms of a theology of Christian spirituality grounded in God’s immanence in creation, humanity’s first role is to receive from God. The manner in which humanity receives is by recognizing the reality of interdependence and by practicing a ceasing from striving. Creation is to simply receive God’s presence. Daniel L. Migliore writes, “God’s revelation comes to us rather than from us. It is experienced as a gift we receive rather than as a discovery we make on our own about God, the world, and ourselves.”\textsuperscript{38} The primal role of a Christian spirituality grounded in creation is to receive from God’s immanence. This is the embryonic starting point for all of creation including humanity. Thus, an exclusive and resolutely kataphatic spirituality misses this point entirely. Biola is quite consumed with attending to God hierarchically. This approach is primarily manifested through the active production and use of words, especially words about God. Biola would certainly benefit if the community were to intentionally pivot from words to silence. Perhaps what Biola most acutely and desperately needs is a Sabbath from the domination of, “thinking biblically about everything.”


\textsuperscript{37} Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 288.

In the context of Biola’s approach to Christian formation, naming and speaking about God eclipses listening to and resting with God in creation. An excessive, “thinking biblically about everything,” negates a contemplative rest in the Mystery of God. However, according to an ecological doctrine of creation, God is not fundamentally apprehended through word and thought, but rather through an interdependent relationship of receiving God’s resting presence. A constant barrage of doctrine delivered by means of statements about God does not provide a context for stillness, silence, and rest in which to intentionally receive the gift of Divine immanence. Biola would do well to embark on a Sabbath from its very own approach to formation.

The God of creation is the God who practices a resting silence for an eternal future. After first receiving the gift of God’s immanence on the Sabbath humanity can actively respond to God by virtue of silently resting with God. Silently resting with God allows for humanity to engage God in order to come in closer contact and deeper relationship. This is only possible through God’s creative love. Moltmann drives this point further to light, he writes, “In his creative love God is united with creation, which is his Other, giving it space, time and liberty in his own infinite life.”

Practicing the Sabbath expresses a spirituality of silent abstention, which counterbalances a spirituality that exclusively names or produces words and ideas about God. Sabbath understood in the context of silence underscores its apophatic posture. Leading twentieth century Jewish theologian and philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel sums up this point well. He writes:

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The seventh day is a palace in time which we build. It is made of soul, of joy and reticence. In its atmosphere, a discipline is a reminder of adjacency to eternity. Indeed, the splendor of the day is expressed in terms of abstentions, just as the mystery of God is more adequately conveyed via negationis, in the categories of negative theology which claims that we can never say what He is, we can only say what He is not. We often feel how poor the edifice would be were it built exclusively of our rituals and deeds which as so awkward and often so obtrusive. How else to express glory in the presence of eternity, if not by the silence of abstaining from noisy acts?  

As previously mentioned, the Sabbath becomes the premiere apophatic practice and gateway to integrating an apophatic spirituality. Were Biola to embrace a silence from its “noisy acts,” it might just discover a pathway for reformation. Perhaps intentionally traversing beyond the boundaries of language and into the brilliant darkness of the Divine is indeed the kind of Sabbath Biola would tremendously benefit from. The how of this very issue will be addressed in pragmatic response.

Practical Implication: Sanctifying the Sabbath

Sanctifying the Sabbath is vital in terms of Christian practice. When humanity ceases creative activity human labor no longer intervenes in the environment. The lack of intervention impacts the created order for the common good. From a practical agricultural perspective imagine humankind continually sowing and reaping. Eventually the land would find no rest and become infertile. Exodus 23:10-11 and Leviticus 25:1-7 highlight a case study concerning such a problematic. Exodus 23:10-11 reads:

For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your

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people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what is left. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed.  

Leviticus 25:1-7 reads:

The Lord said to Moses at Mount Sinai, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: “When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.”

Together these texts point to the divine ecology in which humankind is invited to agriculturally, environmentally, and ecologically adhere. Otherwise the earth itself is unable to rest.

As a result of sanctifying the Sabbath God invites humanity to practically embrace a spirituality that is, in fact ecological. Unfortunately, humanity’s radical exploitation of the earth has led to the present global environmental crisis. Nearly thirty-three years ago, Moltmann offered this sobering ecological appraisal in God in Creation:

Our situation today is determined by the ecological crisis of our whole scientific and technological civilization, and by the exhaustion of nature through human exploitation.

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42 New International Version of the Bible.

43 New International Version of the Bible.

beings. This crisis is deadly, and not for human beings alone. For a very long time
now it has meant death for other living things and for the natural environment as
well. Unless there is a radical reversal in the fundamental orientation of our
human societies, and unless we succeed in finding an alternative way of living
and dealing with other living things and with nature, this crisis is going to end in a
wholesale catastrophe.  

The ecological crisis Moltmann describes above ultimately is a spiritual crisis with
spiritual roots in a spiritual ecosystem. This is why the sanctification of the Sabbath is
inseparable from a Christian spirituality grounded in a theology of creation. It is also why
Moltmann posits the following conclusion:

What we call the environmental crisis is not merely a crisis in the natural
environment of human beings. It is nothing less than a crisis in human beings
themselves. It is a crisis of life on this planet, a crisis so comprehensive and so
irreversible that it can not unjustly be described as apocalyptic. It is not a
temporary crisis. As far as we can judge, it is the beginning of a life and death
struggle for creation on this earth.

The struggle for creation on this earth is inherently a spiritual struggle. Thus
by way of
sanctifying the Sabbath, humanity participates in God’s own ecological spirituality and
ecological strategy. Mary Frolich writes, “Ecosystemic balance is unlikely to be
recovered unless humans come to know themselves as fundamentally members of the
family of creation, integrally making choices that participate in the good of the whole.”

The struggle for creation on this earth is a struggle for an ecology of daily life that is
ecologically sensitive and promotes environmental responsibility. The Sabbath is at the
heart of such practice. It accentuates a rhythmical interruption of time, resulting in a

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47 Ibid., 18.

48 Ibid., xi.

49 Mary Frohlich, “Under the Sign of Jonah: Studying Spirituality in a Time of Ecosystemic
divine ecology and ecological strategy designed to preserve life.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, engaging in ecologically sensitive practices is an engagement in an ecological spirituality.

A Christian spirituality limited to propounding Christian ideas and perspectives neglects the overwhelmingly integrative aspect of being human in the world. A spirituality grounded in creation is a spirituality that effects every aspect of daily human life. This is why cultivating a Christian worldview is not sufficient enough for an integrative Christian spirituality and conversely why engagement with and care for creation is so essential. Biola must ponder how to consider embracing sanctification of the Sabbath in terms of promoting ecological sensitive practices and what an ecological spirituality for students entails. These reflections certainly require a practical response.

**Practical Implication: The Cosmic and Eschatological Dimension of the Sabbath**

The climax of creation points to God’s eternal resting. It is in this resting that God is making a future home for God’s self. As the whole of creation was brought into being, its goal and destination is ultimately to rest in the house of God.\textsuperscript{51} Therefore, in preparation for a future home in God, God’s Sabbath celebration is an eschatological practice. It is also a liberating power that creates a pathway to Mystery and a threshold to an eschatological future. Scott Russell Sanders articulates the following reminder:

Through honoring both Sabbath and wilderness, we renew our contact with the mystery that precedes and surrounds and upholds our lives. The Sabbath and the wilderness remind us of what is true everywhere and at all times, but which in our arrogance we keep forgetting—that we did not make the earth, that we are guests


\textsuperscript{51} Moltmann, *God in Creation*, xiii.
here, that we are answerable to a reality deeper and older and more sacred than our own will.\textsuperscript{52}

Sanders’s insight regarding the Sabbath propels the idea that humanity is a guest partaking in a much deeper Reality. The invitation to participate, along with the created order, in a Reality “deeper and older and more sacred,” is an invitation to embrace the eschatological dimension of hospitality.

In terms of practicing the Sabbath eschatologically, there is one essential implication for Christian spirituality. This fundamental implication pertains to the physical manifestation of welcome, also known as hospitality.\textsuperscript{53} In creating a physical space for creation God gives the space both to be and to become.\textsuperscript{54} This provision of space is God’s invitation of welcome for the stranger, namely creation. God’s welcoming act is an act of love, generosity, gratuity, and celebration. It is in welcoming creation that God expresses God’s eschatological intention for creation’s participation in God’s manifest eternal presence.\textsuperscript{55}

Practicing the Sabbath eschatologically then means interweaving the Sabbath with hospitality and hospitality with the Sabbath. This approach to the Sabbath does not involve a singular act of welcome, but rather an overall orientation that attends to otherness. Genuine hospitality welcomes the presence of the other with openness and receptivity. It cultivates an atmosphere of listening, valuing, and sharing.

\textsuperscript{52} Scott Russell Sanders, \textit{A Conservationist Manifesto} (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 167.

\textsuperscript{53} Smith and Smith, \textit{Teaching and Christian Practices}, 64.

\textsuperscript{54} Parker Palmer, \textit{To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education} (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 70.

\textsuperscript{55} Moltmann, \textit{God in Creation}, 277.
Hospitality is inherently relational and nevertheless can occur at every level of human social life. As a result, human relationships become a conduit for practicing God’s manifest eternal presence. This is also true for human engagement in creation. Lauren Winner notes, “Creation is the ultimate expression of God’s hospitality to his creatures.” Not only are human relationships a channel for practicing God’s manifest eternal presence, so is engagement with creation. Therefore, hospitality is fundamental to practicing the Sabbath eschatologically because it is preparative for creation’s future home in God’s eternal rest. In order to address the cosmic and eschatological dimension of the Sabbath outlined above, it requires an intentional movement toward hospitality and welcome. The potential for practical infusion regarding a spirit of hospitality is certainly promising for the new ministry initiative.

Conclusion

The biblical and theological foundations developed in this chapter establish a Christian spirituality rooted in an ecological doctrine of creation providing the theological framework needed to counterbalance Biola’s overwhelmingly hierarchical and kataphatic approach to Christian formation. Moltmann’s understanding of God’s non-hierarchical relationship with creation establishes the theological basis for embodiment and immersion in creation as it relates to a spirituality grounded in creation. The Sabbath lays the groundwork and gateway for implementing an apophatic spirituality. It is the premiere apophatic practice that will become a key strategy in counterbalancing Biola’s otherwise resolute kataphatic expressions.

PART THREE

MINISTRY STRATEGY
CHAPTER 6

PRAGMATIC RESPONSE: e3 PROGRAM PROPOSAL

In Chapters 4 and 5 of this Ministry Focus Project the sociological, biblical, and theological rationale was developed to reimagine Christian formation at Biola. The constructive mode of Part Two holds in tension both Scripture and social theory in order to better understand Christian praxis. Part Three of the project will address the pragmatic response of the new ministry initiative. Chapter 6 will develop an integrative ministry strategy to the ministry problematic by proposing an immersion program implicitly aimed at Christian practice and theory-guided action.¹ bell hooks’ transgressive pedagogy and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice will provide the educational and sociological strategy for the program. The proposed immersion program will also integrate an apophatic spirituality grounded in an ecological doctrine of creation. The overarching approach will, in a comprehensive manner, counterbalance Biola’s kataphatic verbosity and reach beyond Biola’s hierarchical tendencies.

A constellation of practices will be woven into the program establishing intentional sites of formation. In order to respond innovatively and pragmatically in

¹ Jones, *The Church is Flat*, 25.
reforming Christian praxis it is important to remember such a response will considerably unsettle and disentangle Biola’s formational norms resulting in a process of deep change.

The ministry response proposal will include the following sections: title page, table of contents, program summary, program design and content, and appendices. Each section will develop, in granular detail, the necessary components for implementation. The department of Student Development is uniquely positioned to pioneer this new ministry initiative. Through the operational impetus of Residence Life new strategies of action will be determined that will encourage and promote institutional collaboration. It will also require embracing a spirit of liminality. Part Three will bring this ministry focus project to completion with an overall summary and conclusion. This section will address insights gained and plans for the future of the ministry.
IN THE SHADE OF VALLOMBROSA
REIMAGINING CHRISTIAN FORMATION AT BIOLA UNIVERSITY

A PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE

SUBMITTED

BY

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September 2019
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: PROGRAM SUMMARY AND RATIONALE
CHAPTER 2: PROGRAM DESIGN AND CONTENT
CHAPTER 3: PROGRAM LEARNING WEEKS
CHAPTER 4: PROGRAM CORE PRACTICES
APPENDICIES
CHAPTER 1
PROGRAM SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

Biola’s e3 program exists to provide an immersive formation experience for a select group of undergraduate students.¹ This program will address the theological, pedagogical, and sociological needs for change through an innovative off-campus co-curricular initiative that integrates a threefold strategy for Christian formation. The semester-long initiative will adopt a collaborative venture of Christian higher education with a global partner in Reggello, Italy.² The sixteen-week semester-long program will occur primarily at Casa Cares, a Christian retreat center situated at the base of the Pratomagno ridge, fifty kilometers southeast of Florence in Italy’s central region.³

Students will be invited to study in the context of a living-learning community that reimagines Christian formation through three core strategies. Each strategy will embed a variety of core practices woven throughout the program in order to further facilitate Christian formation. The core practices provide the ministry blueprint and infrastructure for the new ministry initiative. Students will follow a common rule of life as well as a common curriculum. The adoption and incorporation of the core practices for the e3 program are described and developed in the pages that follow. Moreover, the

¹ e3 refers to three strategic priorities embedded in the immersion program. The strategic priorities integrate the following three elements: apophatic spirituality, transgressive pedagogy, and the logic of practice. While the three strategies are synthesized, they also incorporate an overall ecological engagement and embodiment with creation, thus the e3 descriptor.

² In July of 2010 I traveled to Casa Cares to initiate a conversation regarding a collaborative partnership. The conversation focused on a preliminary plan to establish the e3 program for Biola. Casa Cares’ leadership expressed interest in the potential partnership.

courses of study coalesce with existing academic requirements for every Biola student. The theological coursework is paired with a unique learning environment because, “where one studies should be consonant with what one studies.”

**Strategic Priority 1: Apophatic Spirituality**

The first strategy for reimagining Christian formation is the embrace and integration of an apophatic spirituality or *via negativa*. The apophatic way will serve as a theological and formational corrective to an otherwise exclusive kataphatic or *via affirmitiva* approach to Christian spirituality, which is pervasive throughout Biola’s traditional on-campus experience. Biola’s spiritual tradition of knowing and saying can certainly benefit from an integration of a spiritual tradition of unknowing and unsaying. In fact, an apophatic fusion provides a much-needed pivot from words to silence. Furthermore, the apophatic approach not only strengthens but also compliments the kataphatic approach. A combination of both approaches is not in diametrical opposition, rather they are interrelating moments in the spiritual life that are mutually correcting realities. This counterbalance will provide the foundation for an integrated coherent spirituality.

In order to strategically engage an apophatic spirituality Biola’s e3 program will include the study of an ecological doctrine of creation and incorporate practices to aid in

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the facilitation of an apophatic spirituality. In terms of studying an ecological doctrine of creation, a segment of the coursework will be designed around Jürgen Moltmann’s *God in Creation*. Themes for study will include, God’s immanence in creation, the sanctification of the Sabbath, the eschatological dimensions of the Sabbath, and an apophatic spirituality rooted in the Sabbath. A practical outgrowth of this theology will focus on apophatic prayer. Apophatic prayer will be practiced in conjunction with silence and solitude and interspersed throughout the program’s common rule of life.

By virtue of being situated in Reggello, Italy, which is juxtaposed with the Vallombrosa forest, students will embrace the wild and connect with the land in order to develop a personal spiritual ecology grounded in creation and Sabbath. The contours of creation will foster a spirituality conducive for living apophatically. Pilgrimage will additionally have a vital role within the e3 program. It will strategically contribute to the program’s apophatic tactics and further forge a deep and abiding relationship with nature.

**Strategic Priority 2: Transgressive Pedagogy**

The second strategic priority in regards to reimagining formation relates to Biola’s pedagogical character. Biola fundamentally practices a traditional banking model of education. This approach focuses on depositing distinctly Evangelical Christian ideas and cultivating a biblical worldview while neglecting free expression, critical consciousness, and the embrace of Mystery. Biola’s banking model approach to education is also emblematic of consuming information, which underestimates education for transformation. This is most notably evident in Biola’s educational slogan, “think

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hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 14.
biblically about everything.”\textsuperscript{8} The e3 program will employ bell hooks’ transgressive pedagogy to unsettle and disrupt an overwhelmingly hierarchical and authoritarian pedagogical mode.

The transgressive approach is also more suitable for theological inquiry that explores negative theology and promotes a spirit of contemplation leading to deeper questioning. In this respect, engaging Mystery requires complexity, vulnerability, and a radical openness. In the end, the type of theological inquiry this program champions is inherently personal. As such, student accompaniment will focus on participants as whole human beings with a greater sensitivity toward human discovery and interactive relationship.\textsuperscript{9} “Thinking biblically about everything” and cultivating a Christian worldview does not quite appreciate or necessitate personalized learning nor does it foster whole person relationship. This is precisely why hooks’ pedagogical strategies are vital for program implementation. In sum, the proposed pedagogical mode will certainly ensure learning in community and not learning in isolation.\textsuperscript{10}

**Strategic Priority 3: The Logic of Practice**

The third strategy for reimagining formation at Biola will utilize Bourdieu’s theory of practice. Bourdieu’s habitus theory will reframe practice by involving the material body integrally. This strategy will take into account the pre-cognitive significance of embodied practice, especially as it relates to a community of practice. As

\textsuperscript{8} Biola University, “About.”

\textsuperscript{9} hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 15.

\textsuperscript{10} Ronald J. Morgan and Cynthia Toms Smedly, eds., *Transformations at the Edge of the World: Forming Global Christians through the Study Abroad Experience* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2010), 90.
a result, habituation, repetition, and ritual will be the seedbed for enacting a harmonious
daily cumulative formation experience. The overall structure of the program will
incorporate a Christian habitus reflective of Bourdieuan social practice.

The central concepts of Bourdieu’s theory of practice will provide the
sociological tools necessary for program instillation. Bourdieu’s central concepts include:
habitus, preconscious aims, fields of cultural production, the primacy of the body, and the
work of time. Bourdieu’s concepts will be fully integrated into the program and
amalgamated for Christian practice.

Students’ bodily primordial sensory activity in the e3 program’s body politic and
physical environment will result in an intentional Christian habitus where a body-based
knowing is cultivated.11 In other words, a kinesthetic knowing will occur at the bodily
level.12 This habituated knowledge carried in the body overtime will be derived from an
integrated liturgical set of practices enacted for everyday whole community formation.
Such a concentrated, sustained, and cohesive focus on a constellation of practices will
undergird the strategy. Students will certainly be propelled into a cumulative immersive
experience of embodied Christian formation. In addition, physical contact with land will
provide the seedbed for intentional spiritual engagement with creation.

The integration of the above strategies will result in a reimagined formation
experience as an alternative to Biola’s current state of affairs. Rather than exclusively
espousing a resolutely kataphatic spiritually with an underlining theological identity

12 Ibid., 106.
based in, “thinking biblically about everything,” the e3 program will infuse an apophatic spirituality grounded in creation and the Sabbath. Instead of a theological curriculum and educational character emblematic of the banking model the e3 program will integrate a transgressive pedagogy rooted in dialogical exchange, openness, and mutual participation. Lastly, contrary to reducing formation to merely acquiring correct biblical knowledge and depositing a distinct Christian perspective, the e3 program will immerse students in sites of Christian formation with increased intentionality pertaining to embodiment and the dynamics of habituation. In sum, the integration of the program’s strategic priorities will be robustly apophatic, pedagogically transgressive, and practically Bourdieuan.
CHAPTER 2

PROGRAM DESIGN AND CONTENT

As a division of Student Development, the Residence Life departmental leadership is responsible for implementation of the e3 program. In order to operationalize the program, it is vital to robustly develop the design and content for this Ministry Proposal. In the pages that follow the location, work sustainment initiative, Leadership Community, target audience, selection and pre-boarding process, learning structure, core practices, and appendices will be explored. It is my hope that this proposal will become the blueprint for reimagining the future of formation at Biola University.

**Location**

Everything about the e3 program’s location is certainly intended to generate a convergence between the participants’ overall formation, bodily social experience, and spiritual transformation. Location will undoubtedly exhibit a pivotal role in reimagining Christian formation as a whole. The proposed location for the program is a Christian retreat center known as Casa Cares located in central Italy. As a setting for a living-learning community Casa Cares was carefully chosen to provide the essential ingredients conducive for the development and infusion of the three core strategies previously highlighted in the program summary. This location specifically considers the nature of theological study especially in relationship to creation. It also establishes a necessary communal context for a common rule of life and uniform body politic.
Mediterranean Context

From a geological perspective, students will be placed in an environment that is more broadly situated in the Mediterranean region. The landscape and ecology in the Mediterranean, and particularly in central Italy, is a suitable context in which to immerse students especially in terms of exploring an apophatic spirituality grounded in creation and the Sabbath. The Mediterranean environment naturally provides the unique conditions for exploring and embracing the earth. J. Donald Hughes eloquently highlights the following in relationship to the Mediterranean:

The Mediterranean ecosystem is large, productive, and complex. Powered by the energy of a sun that is relatively seldom obscured, the yearly cycle of weather allows plants to grow, and they, depending on solar energy for photosynthesis, produce food for the whole interacting structure of the community of life. Its setting is a unique mixture of mountains, unstable land and a tideless, omnipresent inland sea.¹

With the Mediterranean region in mind and its unique global position, Casa Cares is situated on the far western side of Tuscany. The site borders the landlocked Umbria region also known as Italy’s “cuore verde,” or, “green heart.”² Students will be approximately located in the center of the Mediterranean allowing for an immersive experience in a global context that is distinctly powered by the sun.


Grounded in the Soil

Sunshine is a determining characteristic of the Mediterranean climate resulting in a region of the globe where soil is well suited for agricultural and horticultural purposes. Casa Cares’ particular location, and more importantly its soil, provides a unique opportunity for physical and theological contact with the land. As a result of placement in this context students will not only till and harvest the gardens and acres of Casa Cares through the work sustainment initiative, they will also have the opportunity to explore, with ecological sensitivity, the depth of human membership and responsibility in relationship to creation. Consequently, a special fraternity can be cultivated, therefore promoting an ecological conversion with creation. Students will ultimately experience a kinesthetic encounter in the cathedral of creation’s Mystery. Consequently, bodily attunement with the land will result in a cumulative experience in creation, thus acting as a catalyst for transformation.

In order to facilitate students’ rootedness in creation, they will literally be grounded in the soil through the overall pattern of living. The program will seek to connect the community’s individual and collective spirituality with the land by way of a variety of core practices. Each participant will have an opportunity to foster an abiding

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5 Pope Francis, *On Care for Our Common Home Laudato Si’*, 5.


7 Lane, *Backpacking with the Saints*, 227.
relationship with nature. This will most notably occur through the work sustainment initiative and embarking on wilderness hiking in the Vallombrosa forest in physical preparation for a pilgrimage to Assisi, which will bring the program to its culmination.

Casa Cares: On the Edge of the Vallombrosa Forest

More specific to Casa Cares’ selection as a global partner for reimagining Christian formation at Biola is its proximity to Italy’s *Riserva Naturale Statale di Vallombrosa*. The *Riserva* hosts a botanical preserve, the Benedictine abbey of the Vallombrosan monks, (founded in 1038), the world renown Forestry School of the University of Florence, and the Vallombrosa forest at large.\(^8\) It is important to note the root meaning of the word Vallombrosa. The Italian etymology is aptly translated in English as, “shaded valley.”\(^9\) John Elder, author of *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa* surmises the following in regard to Vallombrosa; he writes, “Vallombrosa has a tradition of active stewardship unmatched in Italy, if not the world. For almost a thousand years the Vallombrosan monks, and the surrounding villages under their jurisdiction, protected and cultivated their huge forest domain.”\(^10\) Elder further adds, “The forests of Vallombrosa have thus become a sort of ark – a capacious vessel bearing a biological and

\(^8\) John Elder, *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa: From Vermont to Italy in the Footsteps of George Perkins Marsh* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 47.


\(^10\) Elder, *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa*, 56.
cultural heritage of importance for the whole world."\textsuperscript{11} Students will quite literally be placed in the shade of Vallombrosa.

Nestled on the northwest slopes of the Pratomagno ridge and covering 3,150 acres, the Vallombrosa forest conserves a magnificent arborescence landscape, which hosts nearly 5,000 types of tree species.\textsuperscript{12} The Vallombrosan woodlands with its varying altitudes are home to an assortment of oaks, maples, beech, pine, firs, redwoods, chestnut, and sequoia trees.\textsuperscript{13} The \textit{Riserva Naturale Statale} also maintains an impressive botanical garden containing various Mediterranean plant and herbal life.\textsuperscript{14} It is to no surprise that the Vallombrosa monks, in their Benedictine tradition, have a world renown pharmacy that utilizes homeopathic methods derived from natural elements.\textsuperscript{15}

By virtue of being situated in Vallombrosa students will be immersed in the physical and spiritual resource of the forest.\textsuperscript{16} Trees and the wilderness they populate, will certainly enact a spirit of hospitality and welcome. The perennial engagement in an arboreal context will further ground students more deeply into an apophatic experience where attentive listening to Mystery and practicing the Sabbath can be distinctly lived.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 57.

\textsuperscript{12} Lasdun and Davis, \textit{Walking and Easting in Tuscany and Umbria}, 23.


\textsuperscript{14} Beth Elon, \textit{A Culinary Traveller in Tuscany: Exploring and Eating Off the Beaten Track} (New York: The Little Bookroom, 2006), 159.

\textsuperscript{15} Andrew Jotischky, \textit{A Hermit’s Cookbook: Monks, Food, and Fasting in the Middle Ages} (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001), 89.

\textsuperscript{16} Elder, \textit{Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa}, 113.
out. While students engage the forest, they will gradually abandon words and enter deeper into a deliberate contemplative practice. The definitive formational aim is to, “rediscover God’s hidden immanence in nature.”

**Villa I Graffi Manor House**

Stretching along the rim of a volcanic crater in central Italy is the ancient Roman road, known as the *Via Cassia*. The systems of Roman roads, including *Via Cassia*, was open to everyone and frequented by many, especially pilgrims on their way to Rome. *Via Cassia*’s historic consular road runs adjacent to a provincial road passing through Reggello. This stretch of road is known as the *Strada dei Sette Ponti*, or, “Street of the Seven Bridges.” The 2,000-year old corridor lies the beneath *Villa I Graffi*, the manor house of Casa Cares, ultimately connecting Florence with Rome. This artery provided a critical pathway for commerce and cultural engagement.

*Villa I Graffi’s* manor house dates back to the fifteenth century *Toscano* sharecropping industry, belonging to various noble mercantile families, but most notably

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17 Ibid., 70.


under the auspice of the Quratesi family.\textsuperscript{23} Share contracts were the predominant agrarian arrangement in fourteenth century central Italy and they maintained their prominence for over seven centuries.\textsuperscript{24} The sharecropping system eventually collapsed in the mid-twentieth century, and as a result \textit{Villa I Graffi}'s estate was divided up and subsequently sold.\textsuperscript{25} In 1983, however the property was donated to the Waldensian Church.\textsuperscript{26} Casa Cares was then established as a retreat house and reception center. For nearly four decades Casa Cares continues to be animated by the Waldensian tradition of hospitality and environmentalism.

\textbf{Casa Cares’ Inclusion in a Network of Waldensian Guesthouses}

As a non-profit institution, Casa Cares it is part of a network of eleven guesthouses within the \textit{Diaconia Valdese}, a general assembly of the Waldensian Evangelical Church in Europe.\textsuperscript{27} The network of guesthouses maintains membership with the \textit{Associazione Italiana Turismo Responsabile}.\textsuperscript{28} As part of the Italian \textit{Agriturismo}, Casa Cares intentionally practices sustainability and seeks to reduce an environmental

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{25} Krieg, “History of Casa Cares.”


\textsuperscript{28} Diaconia Valdese, “\textit{Case Valdesi},” accessed September 15, 2019, https://www.casevaldesi.it/.
impact wherever possible. In fact, Casa Cares utilizes organic farming and compost methods, constructed a wetland wastewater treatment system, and installed photovoltaic panels for the production of electricity. At the heart of the Casa Cares is an ecological sensitivity in partnership with, “promuovere una vita semplice,” or, “the promotion of the simple life.” This is one of many critical reasons Casa Cares is a suitable partner for the e3 program’s strategic initiatives.

Casa Cares’ Architecture and Built Environment

Architecturally, Casa Cares’ main villa consists of eighteen refurbishessed sunlit guest rooms offering brilliant views of the Tuscan hillside and capable of accommodating approximately fifty guests. The structure also contains communal meeting spaces, including but not limited to the: Fireplace Room, Stove Room, Sitting Room, and Wine Room. Additionally, Casa Cares has a library, front portico entrance, clock and bell tower, and a recently restored Chapel Theatre. The dining quarters include several kitchenettes and one main room with double barrel vaulted callings and ample space for

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31 Krieg, “History of Casa Cares.”


34 Ibid.
shared meals.\textsuperscript{35} The historical kitchen hosts an impressive hearth with a spit and several terracotta wood burning stoves.\textsuperscript{36} Casa Cares’ auxiliary spaces include a cellar, central heating room, woodshed, and a workshop.\textsuperscript{37} In sum, Casa Cares’ built environment, located 500 meters above sea level and surrounded by terraced vineyards, olive groves, and dense woodlands; provides a favorable space for a shared living experience. Casa Cares will certainly aid in reimagining Christian formation with the proposal’s three strategic priorities in mind.

**Work Sustainment Initiative**

The design of the e3 program entails a work sustainment initiative in which students will provide labor for Casa Cares. The initiative specifically involves a unique partnership regarding culinary and guest services at *Villa I Graffi*’s manor house. The work will pertain to sustainable agriculture and horticulture and caring for the lodge. As a result of laboring on behalf of Casa Cares, the cost of room and board for students will be significantly subsidized through a contractual agreement between Biola and Casa Cares. This partnership is emblematic of a local economy.

**Sustainable Agriculture and Horticulture**

Students will participate in organic farming and learn the art of Tuscan cuisine through a rotating work schedule that will, in part facilitate Casa Cares’ agricultural production, meal preparation, and meal serving. The gastronomic approach at Casa

\textsuperscript{35} Krieg, “History of Casa Cares.”

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
Cares’ is reflective of a Slow Food bioregional approach.\textsuperscript{38} This approach fosters an intentional environmentalism while at the same time enabling students to experience eating as an agricultural act.\textsuperscript{39} In short, students will act as participants and not consumers.

From a formational perspective, the experience of growing, preparing, and eating shared meals together is intensely physical. It promotes a meditative atmosphere in which materiality and spirituality are integrated into a process of knowing with the body that is inherently contemplative, mindful, and nurtures sensation.\textsuperscript{40} Seemingly mundane practices like that of meal preparation nevertheless are a hallmark for linking the body with spirituality thus catapulting formation beyond the realm of cognition.

Moreover, Casa Cares’ location is an exceptional environment in the cultivation of sustainable organic agriculture and horticulture. In fact, Casa Cares maintains nine acres of olive groves with approximately 750 olive trees.\textsuperscript{41} Extra virgin olive oil is a staple product and will be harvested on-site and sold locally. The property also includes an organic vegetable garden, herb garden, and chicken coop, which contribute to the food supply for retreat guests. Surplus harvest is additionally sold within the local market economy along with the olive oil.

\textsuperscript{38} Elder, \textit{Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa}, 83.


\textsuperscript{41} Casa Cares, “Vegetable Garden.”
As a result of working the land students will ultimately participate in the life-giving nature of the soil and uniquely embrace the earth. Daniel Hillel, author of *Soil in the Environment* provides the following insight regarding the earth’s crust:

> Considering the height of the atmosphere, the thickness of the earth’s rock mantle, and the depth of the ocean, we note that soil is an amazingly thin body—typically not much more than one meter thick, and often less than that. Yet it is the incubator of terrestrial life which biological productivity is generated and sustained. It acts as a composite living entity.\(^{42}\)

Students will clasp this composite living entity to help sustain Casa Cares. Their labor in the soil will significantly reduce Casa Cares’ need for additional support regarding the cultivation and harvesting of agriculture production. The outcome will be an ongoing process of sustainability and reciprocity. Students will intentionally experience an ecological interdependence with creation.

**Caring for the Lodge**

The second dimension of the work sustainment initiative relates to servicing the lodge. Students will contribute to conservation efforts, the repurposing of objects, and the overall care for the retreat house. Specifically, students are tasked to provide the upkeep of the lodgings, practice low utility of electricity and water use, maintain the recycling and compost systems, launder clothing, and provide kitchenette service including dishware cleaning. The duties mentioned will be organized through a rotating work schedule in conjunction with the agricultural services for the purpose and promotion of shared responsibility, stewardship, and meaningful contribution to work sustainment and community life.

In sum, the ritualized rhythm and rubric of the work sustainment initiative will create a patterned social experience in which students mutually serve together and create a shared accountability that will foster a model of servant-membership and harmony reflective of creation’s eco systemic web of activity. Lastly, the intentionality of the sustainment initiative will reflect a Bourdieuan habituated effort for embodied practice. In the midst of caring for creation students will manifest a conservational community. As the e3 community distinctively embraces creation, the community will simultaneously live apophatically in creation.

**Leadership Community**

In order for the e3 program to be theologically intentional, strategically motivated, and relationally dynamic, an interdependent Leadership Community will be established. The design of the Leadership Community for the e3 program comprises of a Program Director, Program Administrator, and two Resident Coordinators. The combination of roles will sustain the purpose and direction of the program. Each role uniquely contributes to the overall mission and design of the program. Through collaborative leadership the e3 program will have an opportunity to thrive and flourish. At the same time, this structure will exemplify a community of symbiosis, aiding students to learn by example the art of cooperation.

**Program Director**

The Director is responsible for overseeing the e3 program as a whole. The cardinal focus of this role is to ensure the strategic priorities are embedded throughout

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every aspect of the program with special attention devoted to the inculcation and solvency of the core practices. Besides the above responsibilities, the Director will instruct and facilitate the majority of the coursework while co-leading a pilgrimage to Assisi with the Resident Coordinators. In terms of supervision for the Resident Coordinators, the Program Director will provide support, guidance, and mentorship. The Director will live on-site in a separate homestead while being fully immersed in the life of the community. This role is certainly not intended to lead in isolation; rather the hallmark of the role is to facilitate fellowship.

Program Administrator

The Program Administrator is responsible for day-to-day administrative duties in partnership with Casa Cares. Duties will consist of student application processing, pre-boarding seminar planning, coordinating legal affairs related to international study abroad, budgeting, managing medical insurances, and maintaining relations with the *Diaconia Valdese* guesthouse network. This role will also provide logistical support for student travel from the US to Europe. The Program Administrator will live off-site with the intention of full participation in daily community life during working hours and will join the community on pilgrimage.

Resident Coordinators

Students will be guided in their work ethic as well as their spiritual growth and development through the leadership and support of two Resident Coordinators. In terms of the work sustainment initiative one Resident Coordinator will oversee the scheduling,
planning, training, and coordination of meal preparation and meal serving. Trained in the art of Tuscan cuisine this Coordinator will provide culinary guidance for students as they learn local traditional recipes, rituals, and methods of, “cucina povera,” or “poor kitchen.” This method of cooking was born of necessity and frugality. It relies heavily on local seasonal ingredients and foods foraged from the land. It is rooted in Tuscan peasant cooking.

The accompanying Resident Coordinator will be responsible for the horticulture and agricultural component of the work sustainment initiative. Similar to the above Resident Coordinator’s responsibilities, this role will oversee the scheduling, planning, and coordination for student work related to cultivating and harvesting the organic gardens, nine acres of oil groves, and upkeep regarding the chicken coops. This role will not only provide guidance and support for students in their labor, it will also co-manage the olive oil production and local market transactions in partnership with Casa Cares.

A shared responsibility between both Resident Coordinators is the organizational details necessary for the group pilgrimage to Assisi. This component of their ministry will require advanced planning, itinerary synchronization, and coordination with the Umbrian Bishops’ Confederation in terms of securing the Via di Francesco Credenziale and Tesitmonium Viae Francisci for each student. The Resident Coordinators will additionally oversee the physical training students will engage in preparation for the

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pilgrimage. This aspect of their role necessitates the cataloging of student trekking hours, student transportation to the Vallombrosa forest, and orientation to the pilgrimage’s history, ecology, and spirituality.

Interwoven within the role of the Resident Coordinator is an attunement to each student’s spiritual growth and development. The Resident Coordinators will be trained in spiritual direction and empathetic listening. Through the practice of spiritual direction the Resident Coordinators will help facilitate a spirit of discovery and foster a contemplative attitude as they meet with students in direction.47 Students will be invited to encounter Mystery through contemplation and direction that waits patiently, and sometimes in darkness.48 On a weekly basis student will have the opportunity to explore their own spirituality and transformation in the context of space created to nurture openness, potential upheaval, and likely transformational change.49 Ultimately, a boundless hospitality grounded in a practical theology of creation and the Sabbath will be the hallmark of each student’s experience in direction.50

While the Resident Coordinators help tend to students spiritually, they will essentially function as abbots for community members. Through their role, the Resident Coordinators will provide spiritual counsel and residential accountability, especially in terms of practicing simplicity, maintaining a community rule, and honoring a spirit of


49 Ibid., 43.

50 Palmer, To Know as We are Known, 73.
silence and Sabbath. The Resident Coordinators will live on-site and fully participate in the life of the community. Lastly, the Leadership Community as a whole will meet weekly during for the purpose of collaboration, interpersonal support, and strategic prioritization.

**Target Audience**

The target audience for the program is open to Biola students in their junior year of study approximately between the ages of twenty and twenty-one. Amongst this group, the program will seek students who are purposefully engaged in their maturation and spiritual formation as emerging adults. Students previously immersed in an on-campus experience at Biola, will have been exposed to a formational experience that is resolutely and exclusively kataphatic in nature. It is the hope of the e3 program to offer students seeking a deeper and more integrated educational and theological experience grounded in relationship and liminality.

The goal is to invite students on a journey of personal and spiritual discovery that goes beyond, “thinking biblically about everything.” Merely acquiring a biblical worldview does not quite engage students personally and transformationally. Alternatively, students will be invited to embark on a theological journey of change and transition passing through a spiritually apophatic, educationally transgressive, and physically demanding threshold. This principle of liminality has the potential to transport students through a major reformulation of their spirituality and a whole new way of being

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51 Dunn and Sundene, *Shaping the Journey of Emerging Adults*, 41-42.

in the world. Participants in the program will certainly be jettisoned into an unsettling reality.

Selection and Pre-boarding Process

The selection process for the program includes an online application, a hand-written essay, and in-person interview. The essay prompts are as follows:

Give a reasonably full account of your life, including family of origin, important events, relationships with people who have been significant to you, and the impact the important events and relationships have had on your development. What is your motivation for participating in the e3 program? Describe your understanding of Christian practices and spiritual formation? Describe an experience you encountered in creation that was formative and spiritually meaningful to you? Explain how liminal experiences and spiritual development are interconnected?

The essay may not exceed 4,000 words.

Prior to beginning the program, students are required to attend a two-day preliminary pre-boarding seminar. The seminar will be held at Serra Retreat, a Franciscan retreat center located in the foothills of Malibu, California. On Day 1 of the seminar the Resident Coordinators guide students through details related to overall expectations and logistics for the participating in the program. This day will include a review of course syllabus material and pre-reading requirements. Day 2 will provide instruction related to preparation for the pilgrimage to Assisi. Students will embark on a local hike in the Malibu Creek State Park for the purpose of learning the physical rigor and practical guidelines required for the pilgrimage. Lastly, students will have the

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opportunity to connect with fellow participants through shared meals in order to cultivate relationship and camaraderie.
CHAPTER 3

PROGRAM LEARNING WEEKS

In terms of the overall learning structure the program is arranged according to weeks. The sixteen-week design will occur both in the Spring and Fall semesters. The first week of the program will entail an orientation phase while the final week will allow time for student travel and a celebratory two-day sending seminar. The remaining weeks, (Weeks 2 –14), will comprise of one semester-long course module and four three-week long intensive course modules. The courses of study will correlate with existing academic requirements for Biola’s traditional curriculum. The e3 program’s theological coursework in particular, factors into to the thirty-unit requirement for the biblical and theological minor required for all Biola students. It is important to note the work sustainment initiative will coincide with the rhythm and cadence of the learning structure. In the pages that follow the learning weeks are developed along with course module descriptions.

Learning Week 1: Orientation

The first day of learning Week 1 students will arrive on site and settle into Casa Cares. This will begin on a Monday. On Day 2, a recap from the pre-boarding seminar will be overviewed and students will have an opportunity to rest from their travels. Day 3 will encompass a full orientation to the work sustainment initiative led by the Resident Coordinators. The Resident Coordinators will also correlate the student work schedule and provide an in-depth overview related to expectations and preparations for the pilgrimage to Assisi, occurring near the end of the program.
On Day 4 students will join the Leadership Community on a visit to the Vallombrosa Abbey. The group will participate in a tour of the Abbey with particular attention given to the library, pharmacy, and Museum of Sacred Art.\(^1\) In addition to exploring the Abbey the group will embark on a late afternoon peripatetic conversation, walking in pairs along the five-kilometer *Circuito delle Cappelle di Vallombrosa*. This circuit connects a path of the monastic community’s ten commemorated chapels.\(^2\) Throughout the walking meditation, each participant will share with their partner regarding the first two application essay prompts to promote deeper personal connection.

Orientation will continue on Day 5 with a visit to Florence. The focus of this excursion is solely devoted to exploring Giotto di Bodone’s frescoes in Santa Croce’s Bardi Chapel. Consecrated in 1443, the Basilica of Santa Croce acclaims a pure Gothic style, designed by Arnolfo di Cambio.\(^3\) The Bardi Chapel in particular will provide a platform for reflection and consideration regarding two collective decision points the students will observe by virtue of participation in the e3 program. The two decision points are related to technological simplicity and honoring a rule of life for the community.

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2. Elder, *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa*, 63-64.

The series of frescoes painted by Giotto depict scenes from the life of St. Francis.\(^4\) Students will be guided in closely examining two of the seven life cycle vignettes. The two scenes for meditative reflection are St. Francis’ *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* and *Confirmation of the Rule*.\(^5\) The pair of fresco cycles will visually aid students in individual and group processing in terms of the collective decision points determinations. Students will have the opportunity for consensus decision making with the hope of a shared experience in reflection and group dynamics.

The fresco scene related to *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* will prompt reflection regarding the curtailment of technology. Students will be asked to either limit or entirely relinquish the use of smart phones, social media, and the internet during their time in the program. The student community, by way of group consensus, will collectively determine how much to curtail technology or to relinquish technology altogether. A group decision point will be finalized by the end of orientation week.

The fresco scene related to the *Confirmation of the Rule* will prompt reflection regarding the community’s adoption of the program’s practices. The program’s distinctive Christian habitus and spirit of discipline, unlike what students previously experienced at Biola’s main campus, will establish a unique rule of life and common daily schedule for the duration of the program. The program’s habitus of being is robustly apophatic, pedagogically transgressive, and practically Bourdieuan. The e3 community habitus is interwoven throughout the program by means of a cumulative practice.


Students are invited to determine the structure and implementation of an evening liturgy for the last day of orientation to commemorate and ritualize how they will transition into the program’s practices and rule of life. The planning and preparation for the liturgy will take place on Day 6 of orientation.

The frescoes in the Bardi Chapel will additionally serve as a precursor for an immersive experience the students will subsequently encounter at the culmination of the pilgrimage to Assisi. The pilgrimage will conclude at the Basilica di San Franceso. Masterfully frescoed in the basilica are Giotto’s twenty-eight scenes, which provide a visual narrative of the life of St. Francis. The life and spirituality of St. Francis brilliantly frescoed by Giotto will indeed incite an effort and renewed engagement in reimagining Christian formation for Biola students. The final two days of orientation will promote rest, provide space for the necessary decision-making process regarding the above decision points, and conclude with the aforementioned evening liturgy.

**Introduction to Course Modules**

In total the e3 program offers sixteen units of coursework. As previously mentioned, the course load will comprise of one semester long module and four three week-long intensive modules. In terms of the three-unit intensive modules, students will learn and study together at Casa Cares from 9am – 12 pm five days a week, resulting in approximately fifteen hours of weekly instruction. The section below describes the

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intensive module course descriptions and course readings for Learning Weeks 2 –15. The course readings listed indicate the necessary texts required for each course, however not every text will be read in its entirety. The four-unit semester-long course related to wilderness trekking and pilgrimage is arranged differently than the intensives. It will be described and developed further in the core practices section following the intensive modules.

Learning Weeks 2 – 15

3 unit – Learning Module 1: Learning Weeks 2 – 4
E301: History and Theology of Christian Spirituality

This course broadly explores Christian spirituality throughout Church history highlighting each tradition’s historical and theological roots. A segment of the course will explore authority, plausibility structures, and cables of meaning related to Christian praxis spanning two millennia. A particular focus is directed toward an understanding of both via positiva and via negativa. Expressions of each pathway are traced throughout Christian history and special attention is devoted to theologically differentiating between via positiva and via negativa while also emphasizing their continual dialectical mutuality and rich interrelationship.

Course Readings
Evan B. Howard, The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality

Gerald Sittser, Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries

Phyllis Tickle, The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why

3 unit – Learning Module 2: Learning Weeks 5 – 7
E302: Ecology, Spirituality, and the Doctrine of Creation

This course focuses on Christian spirituality in the context of creation. It explores the biblical and theological foundations of creation as well as Jürgen Moltmann’s theology of creation. Special emphasis throughout the course is aimed at eco-systemic exploitation, environmentalism, and care of the earth. A practical understanding of the Sabbath is integrated in terms of its sanctification,
eschatological impulse, and overall apophatic dimensions. This course will provide the theological foundation to engage E303. Several course sessions will be instructed outdoors in the Vallombrosa forest.

**Course Readings**

Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering our Role in Community in Creation*

Pope Francis, *On Care for our Common Home: Laudato Si’ Encyclical Letter*

Bill McKibben, *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Touch new Planet*


3 unit – Learning Module 3: Learning Weeks 8 – 11

E303: Introduction to Apophatic Spirituality and Apophatic Prayer

Building on the theological underpinnings from E302, this course provides an opportunity for an in-depth exploration of apophatic spirituality and apophatic prayer. E303 will focus on the critical value of negative theology, explore the divine as Mystery, and seek to understand a dark way of knowing. This course will rely heavily on Belden C. Lane’s second chapter, “Prayer Without Language,” in his book, *Solace of Fierce Landscapes*. Learning to pray apocalyptically is practically embraced through a series of prayer projects.

**Course Readings**

Jane Brox, *Silence: A Social History of One of the Least Understood Elements of our Lives*

Belden C. Lane, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality*

J.P Williams, *Seeking the God Beyond: A Beginners Guide to Christian Apophatic Spirituality*

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8 This course compares with Biola’s Bible department in terms of institutional resistance. It will include the biblical and theological foundations for a doctrine of creation and will seek to aid students in their ability to understand Biola’s particular historic theological perspective while also exposing students to an alternative perspective that is theologically progressive.
3 unit – Learning Module 4: Learning Weeks 11 – 13
E304: Christian Practices and the Embodiment of Practice

This course will explore Christian practices in the context of social theory and embodiment. A unique focus is given to Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice and concept of habitus. Upon this foundation, an understanding of Christian practices will be developed. Tony Jones’ book, *The Sacred Way*, is a guiding text in exploring a plethora of Christian practices. Students will develop a personal rule that will guide their spiritual practice after the program. The spiritual mapping of each student’s personal rule will derive meaning from engagement and experience related to the established practices embedded within the e3 program.

**Course Readings**
Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*


Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*

James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*

4 unit – Learning Module 5: Learning Weeks 2 – 15.5
E3005: Trekking in Vallombrosa and Pilgrimage to Assisi

This course comprises of a hybridity of four units. Two units are dedicated to theological credit while the remaining units are dedicated to a kinesiology health science credit. In preparation for trekking, students will train weekly in the Vallombrosa forest for the 120 miles required for the pilgrimage to Assisi. Beginning on Learning Week 2 students will log approximately thirty miles of walking per week at their discretion. On the Saturday of Learning Weeks 6 and 9, students will undertake a single trekking session twenty miles in length. The peripatetic engagement in the Vallombrosa forest will cultivate a spirit Sabbath, silence, solitude, and contemplative attentiveness in creation. This course will also emphasize an intuitive way of knowing with the body especially as it relates to bodily attunement to the natural world.

**Course Readings**
Sandy Brown, *Trekking the Way of St. Francis: Via Di Francesco From Florence to Assisi to Rome*

Judith Dean, *Every Pilgrim’s Guide to Assisi*
John Elder, *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa: From Vermont to Italy in the Footsteps of George Perkins Marsh*

Belden C. Lane, *Backpacking with the Saints: Wilderness Hiking as Spiritual Practice*

Belden C. Lane, *The Great Conversation: Nature and the Care of the Soul*

Thomas Verdon, *The Story of St. Francis of Assisi: In Twenty-Eight Scenes*

**Learning Week 15 – 16: Leisure, Celebration, and Sending**

Upon completion of the pilgrimage to Assisi students will have four days of discretionary travel in Italy. They may choose to travel alone or in groups to various locations in the country. Following the travel leisure, students will regroup back at Casa Cares for a two-day celebration and concluding sending ceremony. Throughout the pilgrimage students will have an opportunity to plan and design the two-day celebration while the Leadership Community will make the necessary arrangements for the closing ceremony and sending liturgy. The two-day celebration is intended for students to apply their learning and interconnected experience of the Sabbath by distinctively creating a celebratory atmosphere for the entire e3 community. The design of the celebration is entirely their prerogative. Following the celebration students depart Casa Cares for travel back to the United States.
Although an array of practices is embedded throughout the design and structure of the e3 program, students will fundamentally experience four practices that are core. The core practices are intended to synthesize the strategic priorities and compliment the majority of coursework. The rhythm and cadence of the core practices principally facilitate intentional sites of formation resulting in a distinct Christian habitus. Moreover, they will utilize Bourdieuian like pre-reflexive social tactics for implementation. The four core practices are highlighted in the pages to follow. The description of each core practice is not intended to be comprehensive rather they are intended as summaries.

**Core Practice: Sabbath**

Students will practice the Sabbath in a multiplicity of ways throughout the e3 program. Engaging this practice will require an enormous intentionality and communal reinforcement. Exploring the Sabbath in this section is limited to four unique dimensions. Essentially the Sabbath will come to fruition on a weekly day of rest and cessation from work and study. This will occur throughout the program primarily on Sundays during a full twenty-four-hour cycle. The Sabbath day will actually be initiated by engaging purposeful sleep. It will formally begin at midnight Sunday. Proper sleep

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throughout each week will inherently be practiced paleolithically, that is to say without being surrounded by the accouterments of technology pre- and post-sleep.²

Students will also engage the Sabbath through a spirit of welcome and hospitality especially in the context of shared meals, but not limited to meal times. On a daily basis, each meal will represent an overall orientation that attends to relationship, conversation, and simple enjoyment of earth’s bounty. Students are encouraged to welcome Mystery to the “table” as they intentionally “welcome” one another. To aid in creating an atmosphere of encounter, each diner meal will begin with a recitation of St. Francis of Assisi’s *Canticle of the Sun.*³ After the prayer is spoken in unison, the meal will be served and a spirit of relational generosity encouraged. This type of ambiance is also encouraged as a pedagogical intervention during each course module, thus furthering the infusion of the Sabbath.

A third dimension regarding the Sabbath is the engagement of ecologically sensitive practices. Ecological sensitivity will permeate the program in terms of sustainability, recycling, repurposing, and restraint. Conserving resources like water and electricity is essential to the program as well. This conservationist approach to daily life is vital in caring for the earth and promoting the common good. This approach to creation will most notably occur through the work sustainment initiative. The work sustainment initiative will ground students in the earth and become a platform to embrace practices that are agriculturally and horticulturally responsible. Promoting environmental practices


³ See Appendix F.
not only honors creation, it respectively contributes to a healing and a Sabbath for the earth.⁴

The fourth dimension related to the Sabbath is directly connected to the final two days of the sixteen-week program. The e3 program arrives at its culmination by way of renewal, celebration, and sending. The hallmark and purpose for this festive event is devoted to communal feasting and delight. Students are encouraged to integrate their learning and experience of the Sabbath in their planning of the two-day celebration. They are empowered, through creative license, to orchestrate and capture the feast of creation and a foretaste of the world to come.⁵ By virtue of celebratory feasting, the Sabbath most definitely will be sanctified.

**Core Practice: Apophatic Prayer**

Apophatic prayer will have precedence throughout the program. The majority of the sixteen-week semester is punctuated by daily intervals of morning, mid-day, and evening prayer. Woven into the regulation of each day, these segments of pause will be devoted to silence, attentiveness, and stillness.⁶ The intervals of prayer will be initiated by the ringing of Casa Cares’ bell tower.

Students will be accompanied in their experience of praying apophatically through spiritual direction, engaging prayer projects, and listening to the forest. As

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⁵ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 276.

students are immersed in the Vallombrosa forest, trees will certainly become “true partners” in apophatic prayer. Their very existence and stillness will create an environment for contemplative attention to creation’s beauty. David Haskell, aptly notes, “to listen to trees, nature’s great connectors, is therefore to learn how to inhabit the relationships that give life its source, substance, and beauty.”

The overarching theme related to apophatic prayer is learning to practice God’s presence apophatically and to recognize God retrospectively. In order to embrace God’s presence, it will require profound exposure to silence. This is precisely why the program fosters episodes of nondiscursive meditation and pure quietude. While students will intensely engage in theological study and discourse about God, they will nevertheless embark on repeated apophatic practices of unsaying, unlearning, and unknowing. The chief impulse for attending to apophaticism is to reach beyond the protective interference of language and plunge deeper and deeper into Mystery.


Formation will occur on many levels throughout the e3 program. This undoubtedly includes formation at a pedagogical level. The pedagogy incorporated into the courses of study will be transgressive in nature. Through a transgressive approach an educational experience will be established unlike what students are currently exposed to at Biola’s main campus. There are several important reasons for the transgressive pedagogical pivot.

First, Biola’s primary pedagogical methods are overwhelmingly and predominately emblematic of the banking model of education. Students are inundated with, “thinking biblically about everything,” such that free expression and progressive theological inquiry is not quite tolerated. Introducing a transgressive approach would certainly contradict Biola’s educational norm. It will also provide a suitable foundation in cultivating engagement and enhancing a critical consciousness.

The second reason for the pedagogical pivot is to compliment theologically apophatic categories. In order to embark on a journey into the Mystery of the Divine, participants must be willing to engage in open, vulnerable discussion in which not knowing is central. This type of openness intentionally demands a spirit of epistemic humility for the learning community as a whole. This certainly includes humility on behalf of the teacher leading to a decentralization of power. Integrating humility can also promote a spirit of collaboration and exploration, thus reaching beyond the transference of knowledge and deeper into a redemptive atmosphere.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12} Nouwen, Creative Ministry, 10.
The third reason for practicing a transgressive pedagogy is to foster whole person relationship throughout each course of study. The learning environment will become a context for whole human beings to connect as they embark on the inherently personal nature of theological study.\(^{13}\) In fact, the focus is not to digest information, but for each learning member’s personal and spiritual engagement.\(^{14}\) By virtue of attending to relationship each learning member can contribute to the wholeness of the learning community.

The embodiment of transgressive practices include, but are not limited to: embracing a teacher-student/student-teacher relationship, participatory dialogical exchange, the advancement of critical consciousness, student contribution to the design and content of the final examinations for each course of study, promoting the responsibility of the teacher’s own self-actualization, and utilizing learning spaces that are conducive for face-to-face knowing and mutuality.\(^ {15}\) The combination of the above practices not only requires total embodied participation, but total engagement of the whole learning community in order to facilitate transformational growth.

\(^{13}\) hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 15.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 13.

\(^{15}\) A horizontal learning structure enables the act of dialogue to occur in which students learn from the teacher and the teacher learns from the students. This approach is especially relevant for theological dialogue and inquiry. It is vital for the learning environment to create a safe place for personal theological exploration. Humanizing the pedagogy for the entire learning community is a central focus of the pedagogical strategy.
Core Practice: Pilgrimage

The *Via di Francesco*, also known as the, “Way of St. Francis,” is a Christian pilgrimage journeyed since the thirteenth century.\(^{16}\) Following his death in 1226, pilgrims began traveling to Assisi to honor and venerate St. Francis.\(^{17}\) Today several modern routes of the pilgrimage exist which follow in the footsteps of the saint. Each itinerary includes various sites significant in the life and spirituality of St. Francis.\(^{18}\) For example, after his estrangement from his family, Francis departed in self-exile with no possessions other than a rugged tunic given to him by Bishop Guido of Assisi.\(^{19}\) Upon arrival in the Umbrian town of Gubbio, Francis began a ministry to a nearby leper colony.\(^{20}\) St. Francis’ charitable service to lepers became a central focus of his ministry and was adopted by his followers.\(^{21}\)

In terms of the e3 program, The *Via di Francesco* provides a distinctive opportunity for students to engage the practice of pilgrimage. Students will travel the Northern route beginning in La Verna and concluding in Assisi. The 120-mile trek certainly will require intense training and preparation, thus jettisoning students into a

\(^{16}\) Brown, *Trekking the Way of St. Francis*, 18.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 18.


\(^{19}\) Brown, *Trekking the Way of St. Francis*, 16.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 128.

mode of liminality.\textsuperscript{22} The pilgrimage will also uniquely fuse the overarching framework of the program’s strategic priorities into climactic synergy.

In order to build the necessary stamina for the pilgrimage students will train weekly in the Vallombrosa forest as part of the course module; E3005: Trekking in Vallombrosa and Pilgrimage to Assisi. The embodied practice of trekking effectively links the material with the spiritual, especially as it relates to bodily rigor in creation.\textsuperscript{23} As a result, the Vallombrosa Forest and the wild terrain from La Verna to Assisi will become a conduit for bodily attunement to the natural world prompting a way of knowing with the body that is deeply apophatic and intensely challenging.\textsuperscript{24} It will also incite a transgressive learning that presses beyond personal, physical, mental, and spiritual boundaries. The hope is for students to encounter an outward expression of the inward journey embraced throughout the e3 program.\textsuperscript{25}

The specifics of the pilgrimage’s itinerary encompass a ten-day journey through eight distinct stages.\textsuperscript{26} The distance and altimetry of each stage varies dramatically. Several stages surpass twenty miles in length, thus requiring requisite physical preparation. As students traverse through the Umbrian hillside and the Apennine mountain range, they will discover the unusually beautiful \textit{scaglia bianca} and \textit{rossa}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{22} Turner and Turner, \textit{Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture}, 3.
\textsuperscript{24} Lane, \textit{Backpacking with the Saints}, 6-7.
\textsuperscript{25} Jones, \textit{The Sacred Way}, 155.
\textsuperscript{26} See Appendix A for the pilgrimage itinerary.
\end{footnotes}
limestone characteristic of its deep-sea floor deposition.\textsuperscript{27} This part of the world tells a unique tectonic story of the earth’s history.\textsuperscript{28}

While on pilgrimage to Assisi, students will also pass through the Umbrian lowlands where rain typically saturates the valleys nurturing vibrant green foliage.\textsuperscript{29} Students indeed will be immersed in Italy’s “cuore verde.”\textsuperscript{30} Each day’s journey will conclude at local Italian \textit{agriturismo} providing respite, fellowship, and time for reflection. Day 7 of the pilgrimage is entirely devoted to Sabbath and silence, which will occur in the town of Pietralunga. The community will pause for twenty-four hours to embrace a day of unsaying, quietude, and interiority in the Mystery of creation, further forging a deep apophatic yearning.

On the final day of the pilgrimage the community will depart before dawn to trek nine miles from Valfabbrica to Assisi. They will arrive at the \textit{Basilica di San Francesco} in time to participate in the “Pilgrim’s Mass.”\textsuperscript{31} While in the \textit{Basilica} students will be guided in an extended meditation through Giotto’s brilliant frescoes depicting the life of St. Francis. The guided mediation distinctively dovetails with the excursion to the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce during Week 1 of orientation, in which students were previously exposed to Giotto’s frescoes of St. Francis and directed to consider two important decision points concerning their formation. Following the “Pilgrim’s Mass,” each student

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Alvarez, \textit{The Mountains of Saint Francis}, 128.
\item Ibid., 6.
\item Brown, \textit{Trekking the Way of St. Francis}, 23.
\item Jepson, \textit{Umbria}, 1.
\item Dean, \textit{Every Pilgrim’s Guide to Assisi}, 28.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
will have their *Testimonium Viae Francisci*, a pilgrimage credential, stamped to acknowledge their spiritual journey to the tomb of St. Francis therefore bringing the core practice of pilgrimage to a meaningful end.

The integration of the four core practices highlighted in this chapter establishes the necessary sites to further facilitate formation. Their combination creates a unique immersive environment that is robustly apophatic, pedagogically transgressive, and socially Bourdieuan. As a result, formation is thoroughly reimagined.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Outcomes and Insights Gained

This Ministry Focus Project argued that the binding characteristic of Biola’s theological identity represents a hierarchical spirituality rooted in “thinking biblically about everything.” Consequently, Biola espouses a resolutely kataphatic spirituality and reduces Christian formation merely to acquiring correct knowledge of God. This top-down method of Christian spirituality is fundamentally grounded in the transmission of biblical knowledge as the primary means for formation. As a result, Biola is profoundly in need of a formational counterbalance.

Additionally, this project demonstrated that Biola underestimates the materiality and sociality of bodied persons in terms of a Christian habitus. Biola’s strategy for Christian formation does not fully appreciate the significance of the material body. This lack of appreciation also relates to the sociological and formational implications pertaining to the bodily character of practice, especially at a pre-reflexive level. Regrettably the deliberate observance and habitual bodily immersion in a combination of Christian practices does not exist. In the end, Biola’s approach to formation fails to foster an integrated, coherent spirituality that demands the involvement of the whole person and recruits the whole community through repetition and ritual.

Part One of the Ministry Focus Project provided insight into Biola’s historical beginnings. It brought to the forefront intricate realities of the Fundamental movement and the proliferation of Bible institutes across the continental US. The emergence of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles in 1908 was undeniably at the epicenter. Throughout the
decades Biola continued in its promotion of fundamentalism and educating students to cultivate a biblical worldview. In terms of Biola’s current state of formation, it is oriented around four core practices that continue to thrust Biola’s theological identity deeper and deeper into “thinking biblically about everything.” The outcome is an approach to Christian formation that deliberately espouses a resolutely kataphatic spirituality.

Part Two of the Ministry Focus Project established the sociological and theological alternatives for the purpose of reimagining formation. The central concepts of Bourdieu’s complexified habitus theory were utilized to reframe Biola’s core practices. The insights gained included the pre-reflexive significance of practice, the primacy of the body, and the cumulative effect of habit. The integration of Bourdieu’s theory also underscored the immense significance of an embodied tradition through structured structures. This is precisely why being immersed in a community of practice matters profusely in terms of formation.

Next, Part Two posited Christian spirituality rooted in an ecological doctrine of creation as the basis of theological reflection. Moltmann’s theology of the Sabbath provided the necessary theological underpinnings for the implementation of a non-hierarchical apophatic spirituality. This approach to formation demonstrated the appropriate counterbalance to Biola’s overwhelmingly kataphatic impulse. It additionally laid the foundation for the inherent relationality of a human embrace of the Divine.

Part Three developed the ministry strategy by pragmatically responding to the ministry problematic. It proposed an immersion program implicitly aimed at Christian practice and theory-guided action. bell hooks’ transgressive pedagogy and Bourdieu’s
theory of practice delivered the educational and sociological strategy, while Moltmann’s ecological doctrine of creation addressed the theological strategic priority. Situated a few kilometers to the west of the Vallombrosa Forest in Reggello, Italy, the program’s location is intended to uniquely bond students with the earth.

**Strategies of Action and the Ministry Initiative**

There certainly is a failure of nerve when it comes to reimagining Christian formation at Biola.¹ Throughout my tenure in Student Development, it was apparent that formation fundamentally remained the same. Biola’s approach to formation was and continues to be primarily oriented around espousing a kataphatic spirituality and acquiring biblical knowledge. Biola has been in a period of what sociologist Ann Swindler calls, “settled lives,” for most, if not all, of its existence, especially from a formational perspective.² In settled lives, patterns of action are anchored in the community or social context and are difficult to disentangle or transform.³ New strategies of action during periods of settled lives simply do not emerge. It is only through, unsettled lives, that periods of social transformation can occur. Swindler underscores a key insight in terms of unsettling the status quo:

In such periods, ideologies—explicit, articulated, highly organized meaning systems (both political and religious)—establish new styles or strategies of action. When people are learning new ways of organizing individual and collective

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³ Ibid.
action, practicing unfamiliar habits until they become familiar, then doctrine, symbol, and ritual directly shape action.\footnote{Ibid.}

If Biola’s modes of experience and shape of action, especially as it relates to Christian formation, do not undergo an unsettling or transition through a period of cultural transformation, then Biola will continue to propound the same inadequacies highlighted throughout this project. Christian formation will unfortunately remain resolutely kataphatic. Students will continue to “think biblically about everything,” and Biola’s habitus will remain overwhelmingly informational rather than deliberately transformational.

An immersion program that unsettles and disentangles the explicit norms and ways in which formation occurs is a plausible alternative to the current inadequate state of formation. Thus, the adoption of the e3 program described in Chapter 6 has the potential to create the incipient groundwork for systemic change, especially at a level of core practice and core identity. Unfortunately, the imaginative and organizational self-differentiating work has not yet transpired. This work will require theological, pedagogical, and social disruption on a level that is quite complex and unconventional. Nevertheless, Biola must experience a deep unsettling to break free from its norms. If the e3 program is adopted, then a cultural unsettling will unquestionable come to fruition.

**Plans for the Future of the Ministry Initiative**

The proposed immersion program uniquely dovetails with Biola’s 2022 strategic plan by delivering an innovative global partnership. This type of strategic alignment not only has the potential to launch a new program, but would also establish a programmatic
paradigm and infrastructure for future global partnerships in various other locations.

Biola might also consider extending this program to member affiliates of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities. This would allow for collaboration across the continuum of Evangelical Christian universities resulting in systemic change that would permeate throughout an overwhelmingly hierarchical system of education and formation. Through this pioneering endeavor Biola has the potential to be a leader in robustly and meaningfully engaging students in whole human being formation.

The e3 program also has the potential to further influence the Biola community through utilizing the program site to offer graduate course modules and faculty retreat programs. The proposed immersion program will rotate yearly between the Fall and Spring semesters. During the intervals amid semesters and various calendar breaks, the program site could potentially offer graduate education modules in partnership with Biola’s seminary, Talbot School of Theology, that perhaps would focus on pilgrimage, ecological spirituality, and immersing participants in creation. Faculty retreats might also be implemented throughout the year for sabbatical purposes and personal formation.

In summation, although the e3 program has yet to be realized, its future is within reach. Nevertheless, to meaningfully reimagine Christian formation at Biola one essential condition is absolutely necessary: practice. In order for this eventuality to become a reality it must be robustly apophatic, pedagogically transgressive, and practically Bourdieuan. Perhaps Job’s telluric insight is indicative of the last word, “speak to the earth, and it will teach you” (Job 12:8).
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<tr>
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<td><em>Casa Cares</em> to <em>La Verna Franciscan Sanctuary</em></td>
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|             | **Point of Departure**  
Via del Santuario  
della Verna, 45, 52010  
Chiusi della Verna AR, Italia |
|             | **Distance**  
15km ~ 9.3mi |
|             | **Altimetry**  
+ 257  
- 959 |
|             | **Time**  
5-6 hours |
|             | **Degree of Difficulty**  
Medium |
|             | **Point of Arrival**  
Agriturismo  
Il Capannino  
Via Sigliano, 2, 52036  
Formole AR, Italia |

**DAY 2**  
**STAGE 1**  
*La Verna*  
to  
*Pieve Santo Stefano*
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<td><em>Str. Vicinale del Rio Secondo 44, 52037 Sansepolcro, AR Italia</em></td>
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<td><code>Sansepolcro</code>&lt;br&gt;to&lt;br&gt;<code>Citerna</code></td>
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              | *Città di Castello* |
| STAGE 5     | **Distance**  
              | *33km ~ 20.5mi* |
|             | **Altimetry**  
              | *+ 1071*  
              | *- 808* |
|             | **Time**  
              | *11 hours* |
|             | **Degree of Difficulty**  
              | *Very Challenging* |
|             | **Point of Arrival**  
              | *Agriturismo*  
              | *Al Palazzetto*  
              | *Vocabolo Palazzetto, 151, 06012*  
<pre><code>          | *Pietralunga PG, Italia* |
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<td><strong>Sabbath and Silence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sabbath and Silence</strong></td>
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| **DAY 8**   | **Point of Departure**  
              *Pietralunga* |
| **STAGE 6** | **Distance**  
              *26.2km ~ 16.2mi* |
| *Pietralunga* | **Altimetry**  
                  *+651*  
                  *-712* |
|  *To*       | **Time**  
              *7 hours* |
| *Gubbio*    | **Degree of Difficulty**  
              *Challenging* |
|             | **Point of Arrival**  
              *Agriturismo*  
              *Valle Verde Gubbio*  
              *Località Villamagna, 74, 06024 Gubbio PG, Italia* |
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<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point of Arrival</strong></td>
<td><strong>Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Piazza Inferiore di</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>S. Francesco, 2, 06081</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Assisi PG, Italia</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Basilica di San Francesco – Assisi, Italy


192
## e3 Program Proposal: Learning Week Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>E301 and E305 Trekking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>E301 and E305 Trekking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>E301 and E305 Trekking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>E302 and E305 Trekking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>E303 and E305 Trekking</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>E303 and E305 Trekking</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>E304 and E305 Trekking</td>
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<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>E304 and E305 Trekking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>E305 Pilgrimage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>E305 Pilgrimage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Travel, Celebration, and Sending</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX C

c3 Program Proposal: Example of Daily Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:30 – 7:30</td>
<td>Work Sustainment Shift Breakfast and Lunch Prep</td>
<td>Main Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 – 8:30</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Main Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00</td>
<td>Morning Prayer</td>
<td>Chapel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>Course Instruction</td>
<td>Multiple Sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 – 1:00</td>
<td>Work Sustainment Shift Lunch Prep</td>
<td>Main Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 – 2:00</td>
<td>Midday Prayer &amp; Lunch</td>
<td>Main Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 – 6:00</td>
<td>Work Sustainment Shift Trekking Option</td>
<td>Main Kitchen Acres or Gardens Vallombrosa Forest Casa Cares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 – 7:00</td>
<td>Dinner and Evening Prayer</td>
<td>Main Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 – 10:00</td>
<td>Study or Leisure</td>
<td>Casa Cares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 6:00am</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>Casa Cares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

e3 Program Proposal: Week 1 Orientation Bardi Chapel Giotto Frescoes

2 Giotto, St. Francis of Assisi: The Renunciation of Worldly Goods.

3 Giotto, St. Francis of Assisi: Confirmation of the Rule.

195
APPENDIX E

e3 Program Proposal: Casa Cares Photos

\[\text{Image of Casa Cares building and surroundings}\]

\[\text{Image of Casa Cares building and surroundings}\]

\[\text{All photos produced by Patrick R. Saia}\]

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4 All photos produced by Patrick R. Saia

196
APPENDIX F

The Canticle of the Sun, St. Francis of Assisi

Most high, omnipotent, good Lord, praise, glory, and honor and benediction all, are Thine.

To Thee alone do they belong, most High, and there is no man fit to mention Thee

Praise be to Thee, my Lord, with all Thy creatures, especially to my worshipful brother sun, the which lights up the day, and through him dost Thou brightness give;

And beautiful is he and radiant with splendor great; Of Thee, most High, signification gives.

Praised be my Lord, for sister moon and for the stars, in heaven Thou hast formed them clear and precious and fair.

Praised be my Lord for brother wind and for the air and clouds and fair and every kind of weather, by the which Thou givest to Thy creatures nourishment.

Praised be my Lord for sister water, the which is greatly helpful and humble and precious and pure.

Praised be my Lord for brother fire, by the which Thou lightest up the dark and fair is he and gay and mighty and strong.

Praised by my Lord for our sister, mother earth, the which sustains and keeps us and brings forth diverse fruits with grass and flowers bright.

Praised be my Lord for those who Thy love forgive and weakness bear and tribulation. Blessed those who shall in peace endure.

And by Thee, most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the bodily death, from the which no living man can flee.

Woe to them who die in mortal sin; Blessed those who shall find themselves in Thy most holy, will.

For the second death shall do them no ill.

Praise ye and bless ye my Lord, and give Him thanks.

And be subject unto Him with great humility.¹

APPENDIX G

e3 Program Proposal: Provisional Budget

**Income**
- Student Tuition: $305,000 (15,250 per student x 20)
- Student Program Fees: $10,000 (500 per student x 20)
- Room: $0
- Board: $0 (no cost, subsidized by work sustainment initiative)

Total Income: $315,000

**Expense**
- Salaries:
  - Director: $80,000
  - Administrator: $50,000
  - Coordinator: $40,000
  - Coordinator: $40,000 (Director and Coordinators live on-site)
- Pre-Boarding, Orientation & Sending: $10,000
- Other: $60,000

Total Expense: $290,000

Surplus: $25,000
APPENDIX H

e3 Program Proposal: Timeline

**September 2019**
Submit proposal to Biola’s key stakeholders

**October 2019**
Begin preliminary discussions with Biola’s key stakeholders

**November 2019**
Reestablish discussion with Casa Cares

**December 2019**
Begin preliminary program mapping, planning, and leadership recruitment

**January 2020**
Travel to Casa Cares for program tactical work

**February 2020**
Report back to Biola’s key stakeholders

**March 2020**
Begin marketing campaign to Biola students and hire leadership community

**April 2020**
Travel to Casa Cares to finalize tactical work and trek the Via Di Francesco with leadership community

**May 2020**
Begin Biola student selection process

**June 2020**
Finalize Biola student selection process for 2021 Spring cohort

**July – August 2020**
Summer Break and 2 day Pre-boarding for 2021 Spring cohort (Sierra Retreat, Malibu, California)

**September – December 2020**
Final preparation for program implementation (i.e. course syllabus, administration, etc.)

**January 2021**
Launch e3 program (Spring cohort)
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