A Spiritual Direction and Prayer Retreat Experience for Young Adults at Newberg First Presbyterian Church

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This doctoral project entitled

A SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND PRAYER RETREAT EXPERIENCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS AT NEWBERG FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

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2020

Spiritual formation support for young adults is a crucial ministry for the church today. Young adults often are neglected by churches who cater to older members that are less interested in adapting to a new generation. It is important to prioritize the spiritual formation of young adults both for the purpose of helping young people know Jesus and be transformed by his love, but also for the church to thrive in the future.

Models need to be given on how churches may particularly journey with young adults as they grow in faith. This doctoral project provides an experience of both spiritual direction sessions and a prayer retreat that support the spiritual formation of college students from George Fox University. The results of this project showed significant growth in the college students who participated in the experience.

Part One explores the ministry context of Newberg First Presbyterian Church in the city of Newberg, Oregon and nearby to George Fox University. Part Two offers a theological reflection on the spiritual formation of young adults using Scripture, literature review, and the setting of Newberg First Presbyterian Church’s college and young adult ministry. Part Three demonstrates the value of the ministry practices of spiritual direction and prayer retreats for the spiritual formation of young adults.

Now is an exciting time to invest in the next generation of Christian leaders. Churches that wish to follow Jesus’ call to make disciples are invited to prioritize ministry to young adults. College students and other young adults are open to grow deeper in faith, but they need opportunities like spiritual direction and prayer retreats to help them experience intimacy with God and spiritual transformation.

Content Reader: Steve Summerell, DMin

Words: 276
To my wife Karen, who is my loving partner in life and ministry, and to our beautiful daughters Cate and Chiara, who give us so much joy.
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Thank you to my entire family for offering me so much support and encouragement. Thank you, Karen, Cate, and Chiara for loving me and for helping me remember that my most important ministry is to be a devoted husband and dad. Special thanks to my mom and dad, Diane and Bruce Murphy for raising me to love college ministry and for my sister Karen and her two impressive sons, Diego and Julio, who inspire me to follow my dreams.

Special thanks to Newberg First Presbyterian Church for embracing me as your pastor and for supporting our outreach to young adults. Finally, thank you to all the college students, grad students, and other young adults I have journeyed with over the years. I have learned so much from you about the grace, hope, and love of God.
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PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION

Newberg First Presbyterian Church is a Christ centered church of grace, hope, and love in Newberg, Oregon. It began in 1890 as a small community of Christians. The church at its height had close to 200 members, but currently it welcomes about sixty people into worship every Sunday.¹ The church is located less than a ten-minute walk from George Fox University, which has a population of over 4,000 students.² Newberg is a historically Quaker town, but the community currently boasts thirty-seven churches from many denominations in a town of approximately 24,000 people.³ At one point in Newberg’s history, per local folklore, it set the Guinness Book of World Records for the most churches for the size of its population.⁴ Although, Newberg does not hold this record currently, the town remains grateful for its Christian roots, and churches remain influential partners in developing the vision for the city.

Newberg First Presbyterian Church is part of the Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination. The PC(USA) has followed other mainline denominations in experiencing a significant decrease in membership in recent years. At the end of 2018, the PC(USA) denomination had 9,161 congregations, 143 fewer than at the end of 2017.⁵

¹ Brief History of Newberg First Presbyterian Church, unpublished document, 1989.


⁴ Newberg, Oregon’s World Record, accessed March 9, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7a4ZvREV8M.

population of members at the end of 2018 was 1,352,678, a decline of 62,375 members from 2017. Part of the recent decline in membership can be attributed to a number of PC(USA) churches moving to other denominations due to concerns over theological or social issues, such as the decision of the PC(USA) to ordain people who identify as part of the LGBTQ community. Recently, the decline has begun to slow down, since many churches that wanted to leave the denomination have already left.

In the midst of the decline of those actively participating in the church, new areas of growth are underway. The percentage of women ministers, deacons, and ruling elders is increasing, as are the percentages of ministers who are people of color and those who identify as LGBTQ. In addition, professions of faith and reaffirmations of faith are up last year from 12,900 to more than 22,000. Unfortunately, the PC(USA) is seeing fewer young people make professions of faith than in the past. Professions of faith are down among youth from 10,716 in 2017 to 9,578 in 2018. In response to this news, the PC(USA)’s Stated Clerk, the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, encourages congregations to focus on young people:

The real work internally is creating opportunities for youth and young adults to be taken seriously by our congregations. Many of them bring fresh perspectives to a rapidly changing world that can assist both sessions and congregations to live into 21st century ministries and new evangelism possibilities…This type of shift should not be viewed as a power issue, but instead a commitment to maximize and broaden opportunities for growth within the congregation. Partnerships with campus ministries are essential as well.7

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
While Nelson continues to have hope for the PC(USA), he is calling the church to focus on young people if it is to grow again.

The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II is the first African American to lead the PC(USA) as Stated Clerk, which is encouraging, since the majority of the denomination is largely White. The PC(USA) remains 90 percent White (90.62), 2.96 percent Asian, 1.47 percent Hispanic, 2.5 percent African American, 1.12 percent Black, and .64 percent African. Those of Native American, Middle Eastern, or “other” heritage are identified as less than one-third of 1 percent.8

According to national records, while two thirds of PC(USA) churches have under one hundred members, two thirds of PC(USA) members attend churches with more than 300 members. This statistic is especially troubling for churches such as Newberg First Presbyterian Church that are less than one hundred members. Newberg First Presbyterian is part of the Presbytery of the Cascades, which includes congregations in Oregon and a small number of congregations in California and Washington. The Presbytery currently has ninety-six churches, but a number of those churches are small, and some are expected to close in the coming years.9

Though these statistics are troubling, they, nevertheless, are helpful in providing direction for the future church. They reveal that PC(USA) churches which will thrive in the future need to reform. According to the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, “The

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church is not dying, it is reforming…and that reformation must be built on a vision of God’s kin-dom that is compelling to people who find us lacking. We have that vision – it is part and parcel of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We simply must find new ways to proclaim it and, more importantly, to live it out in our congregations.”

This is a critical observation by the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, and one which hopefully will help the PC(USA) adapt for the future through supporting the spiritual formation of young people.

When I became the pastor of Newberg First Presbyterian in February of 2018, I offered the church a vision of helping it grow by fostering a strong partnership with George Fox University. I suggested that the church start a college and young adult ministry that would provide spiritual formation opportunities to young people. This doctoral project represents one experiment in offering spiritual formation support to four college students by means of spiritual direction and a prayer retreat. My hope is that through spiritual formation opportunities like the one designed in this doctoral project students will be able to deepen their intimacy with God and the next generation will be equipped to lead the future church.

Newberg First Presbyterian Church hopes that the college students and other young adults who participate in the church will help bring new life to the community which has the power to shape its mission for years to come. Our hope is that the presence of college students will also attract other members of the college community and,

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10 Van Marter, “PCUSA Membership Decline Slows, But Does Not Stop.”

11 Meeting Minutes, Session of Newberg First Presbyterian Church, February 13, 2018.
ultimately, will help draw in young couples and young families. The purpose of this doctoral project is to establish a spiritual direction and prayer retreat experience that supports the spiritual formation of young adults who are connected to the College and Young Adult Community (CAYAC) at Newberg First Presbyterian Church.

Part One of this project explores more deeply the context of ministry in Newberg. Chapter 1 reflects on the history and demographics of Newberg and the history and culture of George Fox University. Additionally, it highlights some of the cultural changes in the region that are leading to greater diversity. Chapter 2 highlights the history and current opportunities for the ministry of Newberg First Presbyterian Church and emphasizes that the church is in a season of new opportunities as it seeks to grow as a community of grace, hope, and love. Understanding the history of Newberg, Oregon, George Fox University, and Newberg First Presbyterian Church will bring to light both God’s activity in the past and God’s heart for the future.

Part Two of this project elaborates on a theological reflection of the ministry approach to young adults that is being used at Newberg First Presbyterian Church. Chapter 3 provides a literature review of books related to the ministry of young adults, the field of spiritual direction, and the area of future church studies. The studies in these three areas will offer significant perspectives on how best to support young adults in spiritual formation during the period of emerging adulthood. Chapter 4 reflects on a theology of spiritual formation and spiritual direction for young adults. Additionally, it highlights Jesus’ teaching in John 15 in which Jesus encourages his followers to abide in him and to bear fruit. The story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-41 is also discussed.
Chapter 5 explores the theological content of the College and Young Adult Community (CAYAC) while expanding on insights from John 15. Reflection on Scripture, theology, church studies, and spiritual direction lays a strong foundation for the College and Young Adult Community ministry plan which, in turn, fosters spiritual formation in young adults as this project will reveal.

Part Three of this project lays out the specific ministry practice whereby spiritual direction and prayer retreats were offered to four college students from George Fox University. The experience of the students who participated in spiritual direction sessions and the prayer retreat is discussed, as is the fruit of this experience in the spiritual formation of these young adults. Chapter 6 explains the ministry plan goals and implementation process. Chapter 7 describes the ministry plan results and demonstrates that this practical example of offering intentional spiritual direction and a prayer retreat to college students contributes to the broader movement of supporting the spiritual formation of young adults and the future visioning of the church as it seeks to reach the next generation with the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

My own prior ministry experience in youth and young adult ministry provided the desire and knowledge from which to focus on a ministry to college and young adults. I have attended a Presbyterian Church (USA) for most of my life. In addition, I have worked with college students and other young adults for most of my twenty-five years of professional ministry. My background includes serving as a Resident Chaplain at Whitworth University, a Campus Minister at Seattle Pacific University, a Chaplain in the area of spiritual formation at Fuller Theological Seminary, the Director of Presbyterian
Ministries at Fuller Theological Seminary, and as a spiritual director and prayer retreat leader in partnership with various spiritual formation ministry organizations including: The Leadership Institute, Renovaré, and Christian Formation and Direction Ministries.

Prior to receiving a call to Newberg First Presbyterian Church, my church roles included serving as a College Minister for Glendale Presbyterian Church and as an Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Portland, Oregon. My hope was that my experience with young adult ministry would enable me to design a spiritual formation experience that would continue to support students who attend Newberg First Presbyterian. Because the College and Young Adult Community (CAYAC) includes many students from George Fox University, the ministry can serve to strengthen our relationship with the university.

In September of 2018, the College and Young Adult Community (CAYAC) was launched at Newberg First Presbyterian Church. In March and April of 2019, four spiritual direction sessions and one prayer retreat experience were offered to four George Fox University students: two women and two men who are involved in CAYAC. Each of the four students responded favorably both to the spiritual direction sessions and to the prayer retreat, and each clearly articulated the significant growth that transpired during the two months of the spiritual formation experiences. The positive experience of these students provides a foundation for how other churches may also support young adults in their spiritual growth.

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12 Meeting Minutes, Session of Newberg First Presbyterian Church, September 10, 2019.
In the future, more spiritual direction and additional prayer retreats will be incorporated into the College and Young Adult Community at Newberg First Presbyterian. These spiritual formation opportunities will become ongoing offerings as part of our ministry partnership with George Fox students. Students appreciate the opportunity of having someone care enough to companion with them on their spiritual journey. This project highlights the spiritual transformation of college students who have participated in both spiritual direction and times of prayer and solitude and, subsequently, who have experienced God’s love more deeply.

The sad reality is that many emerging adults choose to move away from the church as they form a deeper sense of identity and make decisions about faith, relationships, and vocational call. My desire is that the College and Young Adult Community will offer the mentoring and spiritual formation support needed that will not only help young people remain in church, but will help them thrive as followers of Jesus and as ministers for Christ in a world that feels lost.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) like many mainline denominations is being called to make a seismic shift in emphasis by encouraging its churches to prioritize young people and young families as the central mission outreach of the church. Many PC(USA) churches desire to see more children, youth, college students, young adults, and young families in church, but they also wish to hold onto a culture of church that is rooted in the past. At one level this makes sense. Traditions and history are important, and churches function like families with often long histories. As people age and churches age, it is normal for people to lose the energy to change. Nevertheless, adaptive leadership is
needed that can help PC(USA) churches grow younger, and, at the same time, that can facilitate intergenerational worship and support the values of tradition and history.

Older church communities that successfully transform to vibrant missional communities both support the older generation and prioritize the younger generation. It takes a passion for spiritual formation and mission outreach to aid a church in growing young after it has become old. It also requires an intergenerational style of ministry that works to build relationships between the younger and older generations.

In my context, this project is not theoretical. Instead, it is immensely practical as Newberg First Presbyterian Church sits at a critical time in its 130-year history. If it can grow young, it will thrive for years to come. However, in order to do so, it will take a clear vision of itself as a church of grace, hope, and love that is caring for the next generation. It must be willing to learn from emerging adults what the future of the church needs to be, and it must support emerging adults, so they, in return, can invest in helping to create the future church. The word grace speaks to a community of kindness, gentleness, deep refreshment, and empowerment through God’s forgiveness and love. Hope is a word that is uplifting and conveys trust in God and faith that the future will be bright. Love communicates the longing that everyone has for a community of deep connection with God and with one another and that overflows in compassion for those on the margins of our world.

Serving as the pastor of a church that must revitalize or face an uncertain future is hard work and requires a tremendous amount of experience in the area of spiritual formation and mission. It is also deeply meaningful work. The most creative ministers
need to be engaged in ministry with the church at this time in order to have the best opportunity to transform lives for Christ in this season.

For Christians, the church remains the primary locus by which to bring Christ centered transformation to our world. As followers of Christ, Christians are to pray that the kingdom of God comes to earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). This doctoral project is one experiment in helping the church to adapt for the future by prioritizing young people. Now is not a time to retreat from church ministry. Now is the time for the brave to engage the church and have faith for a bright future.

13 All Scripture when quoted is from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), unless otherwise noted.
CHAPTER 1:
NEWBERG: COLLEGE TOWN, CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, AND WINE COUNTRY

The ministry context for Newberg First Presbyterian Church is the small city of Newberg, Oregon, which according to the U.S. Census Bureau of 2018 has a population of approximately 23,844 people.\(^1\) The city was founded by Quakers in 1891, and, in the same year, the community committed to founding Friends Pacific Academy which included in its student body future President of the United States, Herbert Hoover.\(^2\) Friends Pacific Academy would change its name to Pacific College and then eventually it would become George Fox University, the largest Christian University in Oregon with 4,070 students pursuing either their undergraduate or graduate degree.\(^3\)

The city of Newberg was founded by Quakers, but the original inhabitants of the area were different tribes of Native Americans known collectively as the Kalapuyas.\(^4\) The


\(^4\) Edmonston, Newberg: Stories from the Grubby End, 15.
Kalapuyas gathered for generations in a location called Champoeg near the current city of Newberg. Oregon’s Yamhill County, which includes the city of Newberg, is named after a specific Kalapuya tribe called the Yamhelas.

In 1813, the Willamette Post was established by French Canadians from Montreal Canada. This fur trade establishment was active in the region for twenty years. Many of the French-Canadian trappers married Native American women and settled in Champoeg. The children of these mixed-race couples were called in French, *metis* (pronounced “matee”). The *metis* families were influential in developing the region agriculturally prior to the arrival of pioneers from the east moving west to settle farms.

The pioneers arrived in the region as part of the Great Migration Wagon Train of the 1840s. These early pioneers settled farms and many raised cattle. The land that would become Newberg was referred to as the Grubby End of the region, because farming was harder near the town. Nevertheless, the city successfully developed as a location for growing fruit orchards and grasslands. The city of Newberg was named by Sebastian Brutscher, who wanted to honor his hometown Newburgh in the country of Bavaria.

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5 Ibid., 15.
6 Ibid., 19.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 10-11.
Though Quakers first arrived in Oregon as early as 1843, it was not until the 1870’s that large groups of Quakers came to Yamhill County.\textsuperscript{11} Newberg became a Quaker settlement before becoming a city.\textsuperscript{12} Many of the Quakers that settled here came from Iowa and Indiana.\textsuperscript{13} The future president, Herbert Hoover, came to Newberg in 1885 as a young boy from Iowa and was raised by Henry John and Laura Minthorn, his adopted aunt and uncle.\textsuperscript{14} The Hoover-Minthorn home remains a historic site in the city today. In 1891, Newberg received permission from the Quaker Yearly Meeting in Iowa to hold its own Yearly Meeting, which is the name given for an annual gathering of Quakers from different regions.\textsuperscript{15} Consequently, Newberg remains the location for the annual Northwest Yearly Meeting of Quakers.\textsuperscript{16}

The fact that Newberg originated as a Quaker settlement explains why Christianity flourished in this area. Today, over thirty churches exist within the city limits.\textsuperscript{17} Many of the mainline denominations have been in the area from almost the beginning of the town’s establishment, including Newberg First Presbyterian Church, which was founded in 1890.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 52.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Brief History of Newberg First Presbyterian Church, unpublished document, 1989.
Another interesting facet of the city influenced by its Christian heritage was its desire at different times in its history to remain a dry town that would not serve alcohol.\textsuperscript{19} Even after the prohibition era of the United States ended, Newberg tried to remain an alcohol-free town. From 1936 until 1966, Newberg remained a dry town even though it was legal in almost every other city in Oregon to drink alcohol.\textsuperscript{20} The conservative approach to alcohol consumption was impacted by the churches in Newberg and by George Fox College.

The concern for morality in Newberg followed the Victorian values of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{21} Professor of History, Dr. Dale Soden, reflects on the history of Oregon in his book \textit{Outsiders in a Promised Land} and highlights the goals of the Victorian era:

For most Victorian Christians, the purpose of culture and civilization was to impose order, to restrain the self, and to nurture higher ends for human beings beyond mere survival and the experience of pleasure—a tough sell on the frontier and the nascent communities of the Northwest. Victorians believed that nothing should be done just for its own sake but for the larger purpose of advancing Western Civilization. Recreation and leisure (most notably drinking and gambling) rarely served to edify individuals. Instead, each of life’s activities should contribute to the improvement of humanity.\textsuperscript{22}

Newberg represented a city that was trying to establish Victorian values as it developed over time.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 110.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 111.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 110.
Despite an adherence to Victorian values, the issue of racism challenged the city in the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{23} Newberg’s history has many positive aspects, but, unfortunately, one tragic period highlights the problem of racism in the town. One must remember that Oregon was originally founded as a state that did not allow Black settlers.\textsuperscript{24} In 1925, five million people in the United States belonged to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.\textsuperscript{25} It is estimated that Oregon alone had close to 14,000 clan members. A woman named Maybelle Bents led one female segment of the Ku Klux Klan called LOTIE or the Ladies of the Imperial Empire in Newberg.\textsuperscript{26} One can assume that under the clan’s leadership, racist attitudes were common in the town of Newberg and in many other Oregon towns despite the Christian influence. The clan was especially effective in rural communities like Newberg.\textsuperscript{27}

Today, Newberg is broadening both culturally and economically. The local paper mill, that was the central business for years, has closed. Currently, the largest employers are ADEC (Austin Dental Equipment Company), which is run by the Austin family, and George Fox University.

To understand more fully the city of Newberg, it is helpful to look more closely at the story of Ken and Joan Austin, who are the founders of ADEC. Ken and Joan Austin

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 118.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 117.
both grew up in Oregon.\textsuperscript{28} They met in Newberg as teenagers. After serving in the U.S. Air Force and struggling for some years to hold on to engineering jobs with other companies, Ken was ready to use his creative gifts to become an inventor and to launch out in a new direction. With the critical partnership of Joan, the Austin family started a dental company, specializing in the creation of a new suction system that revolutionized dentistry around the world.\textsuperscript{29} To this invention they added specialized dental equipment trays and other items to support the new field of sit-down dentistry. Today, the Austin Dental Equipment Company (ADEC) has more than 1000 employees, making them the largest employer in Newberg and the largest privately-owned dental company in the world.\textsuperscript{30} ADEC also developed a model of leadership that empowered employees to participate in the visioning of the company.

In addition to ADEC, Ken and Joan Austin helped to start a Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Center in Newberg called Springbrook Northwest which is now owned and operated by the Hazelden company.\textsuperscript{31} Ken experienced great spiritual growth and support for his struggle with alcoholism through the help of Alcoholics Anonymous.

\textsuperscript{28} Ken Austin with Kerry Tymchuk, \textit{American Dreamers: How Two Oregon Farm Kids Transformed an Industry, a Community, and a University} (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2015), Prologue, xi.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 132.


\textsuperscript{31} Austin, \textit{American Dreamers}, 89-90.
Because of his struggle with alcohol, Ken sought to give back to the community by starting a center which could help others with the same addiction.\(^{32}\)

Joan Austin used her heart for children and education to fund the building of Joan Austin elementary school in town.\(^{33}\) Joan also used her creative gifts to develop a beautiful resort hotel and spa on the outskirts of Newberg called the Allison Inn.\(^{34}\) The hotel now provides wonderful food, luxurious accommodations, and spa treatments to guests who visit the region, especially people who wish to go on wine tours.\(^{35}\)

Ken and Joan, with their children and extended family, also began the Austin Foundation to support philanthropy in the area of Newberg and the broader Yamhill County.\(^{36}\) The Austin Foundation supports many organizations that care for families and young people who live in poverty. Recently, the Austin Foundation provided a grant to assist in mental health and other crucial social service support for teenagers and others who have various physical and emotional needs.\(^{37}\)

It is not an overstatement to suggest that Ken and Joan Austin are the most well known and influential residents of Newberg in the past fifty years. One simply cannot

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 83-91.


\(^{34}\) Ibid., 99-102.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.


fully understand the history and culture of Newberg without knowing the Austin family story. Joan passed away in 2013 and Ken passed away in May of 2019. Ken served as a mentor to many in the community over the years and to me as well when I became the pastor of Newberg First Presbyterian Church. The Austin’s gave generously to many organizations in Newberg and across Oregon, including, but not limited to, George Fox University, Oregon State University, and the Yamhill Community Action Network, a social service agency that supports people in poverty.\textsuperscript{38} The legacy of generosity, faith, and creativity will continue to live on through the Austin Foundation.

It is because of the Austin family that the cultural and economic environment of Newberg was strengthened and is thriving today. Today, Newberg has quality restaurants, coffee shops, art galleries, and wineries. The arts community is strong thanks to the Chehalem Cultural Center, the Chehalem Dance Academy, and other art venues. The wine industry only began developing in the 1980s and 1990s, but today Oregon has close to 800 wineries.\textsuperscript{39} Located in the Willamette Valley, Newberg is in the heart of Oregon’s wine country. This proximity to the wine industry has benefitted the local economy and added to the cultural diversity of the region.\textsuperscript{40} The existence of vineyards and other agricultural land has brought many Latin American immigrants to this part of Oregon.

\textsuperscript{38} Austin, \textit{American Dreamers}, 124.


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid. The wineries employ a number of Hispanic immigrants to work on the fields.
Although the city is becoming more diverse, racism remains a challenge in Newberg.\footnote{41} The Latin American community is not well integrated into the White community. Most Latin Americans live in the poorer areas of town, and those who are undocumented remain vulnerable to deportation due to the activity of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency in Oregon.\footnote{42} Although George Fox University actively recruits students of color, those that attend the university struggle at times to feel fully accepted or supported in their education, since the majority of students are White.\footnote{43}

The following information provides the relevant demographic data regarding the population of Newberg. According to the 2018 census, 88.08 percent of people are White, ‘other race’ are 4.89 percent, ‘two or more races’ are 4.05 percent, 0.2 percent are Black or African American, .67 percent are Native American, 1.99 percent are Asian, and 0.13 percent Native Hawaiian.\footnote{44} Out of the 1,752 people who identify as Hispanic, 849 have a high school degree, but only 126 have a bachelor’s degree. The median household income for the entire city is $56,599, but the average individual earnings are $37,052, with $44,103 being the average for men and $30,765 being the average for women.


\footnote{43} Black Student Union event, panel conversation on experience of students of color at George Fox University, George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon, March 2019.

\footnote{44} The material in this paragraph is drawn from the following website: “World Population Review,” accessed March 9, 2020, http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/newberg-or-population/. Based on the 2017 census, the Hispanic population was 14.5 percent. The 2018 census may have included some of the Hispanic population in the figures for the white population.
The overall poverty rate for Newberg is 17.04 percent. The rate for men in poverty is 12.74 percent and the rate for women in poverty is 21.10 percent. According to the ethnic data, the percentage of White people who are in poverty is 15.08 percent [of the White population in Newberg]. Those who identify as Hispanic and are in poverty are 29.32 percent [of the total Hispanic population in Newberg]. Those who identify as Black and are in poverty are 68.75 percent of the Black population. Those who are Asian and in poverty are 17.52 percent of the Asian population. Those who are Native American and in poverty are 5.77 percent of the Native American population.

The above-mentioned statistics highlight the diversity of economic, educational, and cultural backgrounds of people who live in Newberg. A large gap exists between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, and between White people and people of other ethnic backgrounds. The presence of numerous retirement communities in the Newberg area contributes to the gap between White people and people of other ethnic backgrounds. Many older people move to Newberg specifically to live in such communities. Many of these people are White and are less integrated with the diverse ethnic communities in town.\(^\text{45}\) The statistics suggest that as Newberg grows diversity will increase and a need to support greater inclusion in the city will exist.

Newberg, Oregon is also known as a college town. In downtown Newberg, numerous coffee shops cater to students, staff, and the faculty of George Fox University as they meet for coffee and conversation. The sports teams, theater productions, and

\(^\text{45}\) This observation is based on my extensive visitation of the elderly at retirement communities in Newberg, OR.
music performances at George Fox enhance the arts and support the cultural life of the community. George Fox University also employs many Newberg residents.

George Fox University began as Pacific College in 1891 with fifteen students. It has the distinction of being the oldest Christian university in the state of Oregon. For many years it maintained a relatively small student body. In 1949 the college changed its name from Pacific College to George Fox College in honor of George Fox, the founder of the Quaker faith movement. The official accreditation of George Fox College occurred in 1959. The college grew in the 1960s through the 1980s adding new buildings and expanding the student body. In 1996 it changed its name to George Fox University after merging with Western Evangelical Seminary. Today, with an enrollment of 4,070 undergraduate and graduate students, the university is pleased to offer more than forty majors. George Fox University is currently ranked the best university for the money in Oregon according to Money Magazine.

George Fox University is growing largely due to extensive marketing throughout the state of Oregon. It is common to see large billboards highlighting the success of George Fox University lining major freeways as you drive into Portland or throughout the state. A recent addition of a football program and other sports programs are helping to increase the diversity of the student body. The ethnic diversity is at 29.6 percent of the}

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student body, which is higher than the national average for colleges and universities.\textsuperscript{49} In an effort to support an ethnically diverse student body, the university provides an Intercultural Resource Center.

The Christian culture of George Fox University remains strong. Only a small portion of students identify as Quaker in faith background, but a number of students identify as Christian.\textsuperscript{50} Under the leadership of the Reverend Jamie Noling-Auth, the Spiritual Life program flourishes providing many opportunities for spiritual formation support both in large chapel settings and in small group venues.\textsuperscript{51} The Spiritual Life department welcomes local churches to reach out to college students and invite them to church. In addition, every fall George Fox University offers a SERVE Day where students are encouraged to participate in different service projects that help beautify the city and improve the lives of vulnerable people. Newberg First Presbyterian Church is one of the sites that hosts SERVE Day students.

George Fox University students also benefit from a focus on cross-cultural experiences. This emphasis is accented in the university’s Juniors abroad program, which encourages students to travel internationally to many different countries such as Japan, Peru, Amsterdam, Germany, South Korea, Italy, Vietnam, Greece, Australia, and nations

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
in West Africa.\textsuperscript{52} The cross-cultural emphasis of George Fox is a great strength of the university.

Furthermore, every effort is made to help students prepare for life after college. Many students do internships to prepare for future employment. Graduates of colleges like George Fox have an advantage in finding work after school, but many students feel tremendous pressure to find meaningful employment after school and struggle spiritually and emotionally with the uncertainty of the future. The marketing promise of George Fox is that every student will “Be Known,” and students are encouraged to “Stand Tall” as they graduate and prepare to be alumni of this great university.\textsuperscript{53} These goals are important. However, students often graduate with sizeable loans, and it is not uncommon for the first few years out of college to be challenging as decisions are made about work, faith, graduate school, and relationships.

Although George Fox offers wonderful opportunities for spiritual life and cross-cultural community, it is difficult for students who graduate to find similar support after college. Newberg is a great college town, but George Fox University graduates often feel as though they should venture out of Newberg to pursue future goals. In my experience, the young adults who remain in town after graduation have a hard time settling down in Newberg. The ones who do stay often choose Newberg because of family connections or for economic reasons. Unfortunately, a shortage of affordable housing in Newberg


creates additional problems, so the people who can afford to buy homes are normally people who left for a season and came back after getting married in order to settle down and possibly raise a family. Many new people are continually moving to Newberg hoping to settle down or retire comfortably.

Some of the young couples and families who live in Newberg attend church, but many are among those who have decided that church is an optional activity. Sports, dance classes, school functions, and trips to the coast often compete with church for the attention of families. Churches that offer programs for children, youth, and young adults are normally the most effective, but only a few churches are booming with activities that engage the community.

This chapter has offered a broad overview of the history and current issues that face the city of Newberg. Newberg First Presbyterian Church is seeking to engage this culture and this community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The community of Newberg will continue to grow, and faithful churches are called to contribute to the future of this community. The history of Newberg First Presbyterian is a good starting place to help explore the mission of our church today.


55 For an example of a large active church in Newberg, see the Northwest Christian Church website at https://mynw.cc/.
CHAPTER 2:
NEWBERG FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: GROWING IN GRACE, HOPE, AND LOVE

Newberg Presbyterian Church was organized on March 18, 1890, during the early years of Newberg’s development as a city.¹ One year earlier in 1889, the Rev. William Travis, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Lafayette drove a team of horses to the town of Newberg and found enough Presbyterians in the area to form a group of people who wished to worship occasionally in the small Jones Hall. The church next began meeting in the Free Methodist church, because Jones Hall did not feel enough like a church and because the Hall had regular dances that seemed for many to be ungodly. The only three denominations in town before the Presbyterians came were the Free Methodists, the Evangelical church, and the Friends Quaker church. The residents eventually desired a new permanent structure and the Free Methodists also encouraged them to move out.

The first church building was originally located next to the town library, across the street from the Methodist congregation and a few blocks from the large Quaker church. The first building was quite small, consisting of one room of only twenty feet by thirty-four feet. The furniture of the church included crude benches, a pulpit, a small

¹ The material in the following two paragraphs is located in the “Brief History of Newberg First Presbyterian Church,” unpublished document, 1989.
organ, and a sheet iron stove that required an enormous amount of wood to keep the sanctuary warm. During the dedication of the church, one of the benches broke off from the wall in a loud sound of splitting wood causing a group of church members to dramatically fall to the floor. Without missing a beat, the minister stood up and quoted from 2 Samuel 1:19, “How the mighty have fallen.”

The church did their best in these early years, but, nonetheless, it struggled to even hold services between 1891 and 1894. In 1896 the church officially became part of the Portland Presbytery. From 1896 until 1901 the church did not hold services, but in 1901 the church was reorganized under the Rev. Telesphore Brouillette. Under the new pastor the church gained new life, and a refurbished building was designed near the same spot as the small church. Newberg Presbyterian eventually added a manse for the pastor in 1949. In 1956, the church officially changed its name to the First Presbyterian Church of Newberg.²

Newberg First Presbyterian maintained a congregation size between 100 and 200 people for most of its history.³ It grew to its largest size under the leadership of the Rev. George Hewitt Lee. When he came to the church in April of 1915, the church gave him a salary of $1,200 annually with a one-month vacation.⁴ At the height of his ministry, the church recorded over 180 members. He reported in the annual meeting on 1926 that the

² Meeting Minutes, Session of Newberg First Presbyterian Church, 1956.
³ The congregation size information is recorded in the “Brief History of Newberg First Presbyterian Church,” unpublished document, 1989.
⁴ Meeting Minutes, Session of Newberg First Presbyterian Church, 1915.
The church had gained thirty-three new members and only lost eight. He shared with the church, “Let’s make our next total over 200 by prayer and good earnest work.” It is unclear whether the church ever reached 200, but it got close under Rev. Lee. He finished his tenure in 1930.

The size of the church was fairly typical for small towns. However, the large Newberg Friends Church in town had closer to 900 members during its height, so the smaller denominational churches seemed to be outnumbered by Quakers during a large part of Newberg’s history. Nevertheless, no matter what their size, churches in town often worked closely together over the years. In the Newberg Presbyterian Session minutes from July 27, 1924, it was advertised that open-air services were conducted in partnership with the Baptist and Quaker Friends churches in town.

In 1965, First Presbyterian Church of Newberg moved to its current location about one mile from the original site. The move occurred to support further growth. The church’s current location at 501 Mission Drive is in the heart of a residential neighborhood and remains within a ten-minute walk of George Fox University and downtown Newberg. The street, Mission Drive, was created and named in response to the presence of the new church, and in light of the fact that the church had always had a

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5 Ibid., 82.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 76.
8 The story of the church move to the present location is recorded in the “Brief History of Newberg First Presbyterian Church,” unpublished document, 1989.
focus on mission support. Over the years, the church raised money for many different causes of mission, including the American Bible Society, Foreign Missions, Ministerial Education, and the Anti-Saloon League. The church came to the neighborhood with a goal of fulfilling the mission of Christ in the neighborhood.

The land for the church was purchased with the help of a generous benefactor named Dorothy Hemphill. She also gave $50,000 as a matching gift in 1981 to help build the fellowship hall. The whole church rallied to help fund the fellowship hall. Additional money came in from former members who had moved to other areas.

In the 130-year history of Newberg First Presbyterian Church, over twenty pastors have served in short-term or long-term pastorates. On average, the pastors at Newberg Presbyterian Church served from five to ten years, with the exception of the fifteen-year service of George Hewitt Lee. In 1994, the church welcomed the Rev. Peter Blank who, like Lee, would serve a longer term of ministry.

The Rev. Peter Blank was pastor from 1994-2014. For most of these years, the church enjoyed an active ministry with regular participation of children, youth, and families. The Rev. Blank focused on strong Bible preaching, and the congregation was evangelical in theology with a strong emphasis on the Lordship of Jesus Christ and

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9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 41, 43.


12 Survey of Meeting Minutes from 1900 to 2020, Newberg First Presbyterian Church.

13 Blank, Peter, conversation about Newberg First Presbyterian church history, Newberg, OR, March 2018.
mission. The church remained sustainable in numbers during most of these years, but it began to decrease in size toward the end of his ministry. Near the end of his tenure, Rev. Blank experienced a stroke, and, after some months of recovery, the church accepted Rev. Blank’s resignation. Another factor that led to the decrease in the size of the church occurred when some members of the church left over the issue of whether churches should support the marriages of lesbian and gay couples. The congregation has changed some in recent years and today a significant number of people who attend the church support same gender relationships.

Newberg First Presbyterian has historically been a traditional church with a classic, traditional, Presbyterian style of worship, including a formal liturgy, church choir, hymns, and a twenty-minute sermon. After the Rev. Blank resigned, Newberg First Presbyterian had three different interim pastors whose job it was to help prepare the church to call a new pastor. As part of the preparation process during the interim time, the church encouraged the Christian school that was renting its back property to move off-campus. For fourteen years, Newberg First Presbyterian had hosted a Christian school, called Veritas, on its campus. Veritas already owned land near the edge of Newberg, so it was able to move to the new location quickly. Although this move was for the best for both the school and the church, Newberg First Presbyterian has lost some rent income due to the move.

On February 1, 2018, I began as the first full-time pastor of Newberg First Presbyterian Church, since the twenty-year ministry of the Rev. Blank. At the time of my hire, the church had decreased to an attendance of forty-two people on any given Sunday.
During my first year, worship services grew to an average of fifty-eight on a Sunday.\textsuperscript{14} The church is continuing to grow and is seeking to welcome children, youth, young adults, families, and older adults. The worship service has become a blended experience of modern and traditional worship styles.

The church’s new mission is to be a Christ centered church of grace, hope, and love committed to mission in Newberg and throughout the world. The emphasis is on being a church that is inclusive of all people with a heart for those on the margins. Grace refers to the goal that people who attend our church will experience refreshment from God and a release of burdens. Grace suggests that it is okay to not be okay, and God’s compassion and forgiveness is available to everyone. Newberg First Presbyterian is seeking to be a grace-filled, non-judgmental, inclusive community. Hope reminds the church that God holds the future, and Newberg First Presbyterian desires to be a church that inspires hope through God. Lastly, love refers to the goal of life. Growing in God’s love, receiving love, and sharing love with others is the journey of life and the calling of followers of Jesus. The focus on inclusion and caring for those on the margins also shapes the missional ethos of Newberg First Presbyterian. The concern is that churches are often viewed as less inclusive. Newberg First Presbyterian desires to be a church that welcomes everyone and that has a special heart for people who are oppressed within society.

\textsuperscript{14} “Annual Congregation Report for 2018,” Newberg First Presbyterian Church, Newberg, Oregon.
In order to clarify what it means to be a Christ centered church of grace, hope, and love in Newberg, Newberg First Presbyterian recently developed five core values. The core values include a focus on: (1) being a warm and welcoming community, (2) supporting intergenerational relationships, (3) empowering children, youth, young adults, and young families, (4) caring for those on the margins through mission and community outreach, and (5) a deep value of worship, prayer, and spiritual formation. The church launched our Investing in the Future Church Capital Campaign in the fall of 2019 in order to help the church fulfill its mission for years to come. Like the church of old, the leadership of the church is asking its current church members to be generous as they look to and invest in the future.

As part of its mission, the church is developing its college and young adult ministry to both foster spiritual formation for young adults and to help bring new life into the congregation with the goal of growth in numbers and spiritual vitality. The hope is that the presence of college students and other young adults will bring greater energy into the church, and this new life and energy will subsequently attract all ages to come and find community. Since students often develop a passionate faith in Christ in the Christian college context, the church also believes college students will help increase its heart for mission to people on the margins.

Thus far, the presence of college students from George Fox University has brought new life, energy, and excitement into the church community. A few young families are now attending the church. On a strong Sunday, the church can have as many as ten children or youth in attendance in addition to five to ten college students or young
adults. The hope is that by welcoming young adults this will also influence further attendance and encourage participation of people between thirty to sixty years of age. Currently, Newberg First Presbyterian continues to attract people ranging from sixty to one hundred years old. The church even has a 101-year-old member named Harriet Fowler.

The participation of older adults in the church is largely due to the fact that Newberg has a number of retirement communities within the city limits. The largest community is the Friendsview Retirement Community. It was originally founded by Quakers in 1961 and is located next to George Fox University.\(^\text{15}\) In many ways, the Friendsview Retirement Community could be described as a college community for older adults. Because of shared similarities relating to campus life, the older adults relate to the college students well. In the same way that new college students are always attending George Fox University, so are many newly retired people moving to the Newberg retirement communities and visiting our church regularly.

As the pastor of Newberg First Presbyterian my challenge is to bring enough creativity and innovation to the church and its ministry without changing the style of worship or the culture of the church too quickly. The church culture when I arrived was fairly status quo. It was a family church that had grown insular and was resistant to change. Out of a real desire to grow, Newberg First Presbyterian is beginning to open

itself up to creative ministry. At the same time, some people remain who are more comfortable with how things have always been done.

The launching of the College and Young Adult Community (CAYAC) has brought new energy to the congregation. It remains to be seen whether the congregation will grow beyond 100 members, but there are many reasons to hope. One such reason is that the church was open to creating a blended worship service consisting of a traditional and modern style. In the future, the hope is to embrace an even more modern worship style that could be even more effective at attracting young people. As part of a modern approach, I have chosen to preach without notes in an informal preaching style. I do not wear a robe and I lead the worship team along with some of our college students in the band. My seven-year old daughter, Chiara, dances during the worship songs as part of our worship team. Perhaps someday the church will have a separate, informal worship service targeted toward eighteen to forty-year olds, but for now the church will continue to minimally to offer a blended style of worship.

In the fall of 2019 Newberg First Presbyterian Church started a women’s ministry that is helping to support the spiritual formation of women of all ages. Karen Murphy and Mary Kalesse, a retired minister, helped start the effort. A strong number of women are participating in this ministry, now named Space for Grace. The focus of the women gatherings is helping women grow soul friendships. The church is also hoping to extend outreach to the community with the hope of bringing in more young families.

As part of reaching out to the community, conversations are taking place as to whether our church should form a Prayer Center on the back of the church property that
is currently vacant. One of my dreams is to build a Prayer Retreat House and to create a labyrinth in that area for people to use for prayer and reflection. The capital campaign is focused on current improvements to existing facilities rather than on the creation of new buildings, but the church is dreaming about ways to expand in the future.

The church community of Newberg First Presbyterian Church is excited about its developing college and young adult ministry. The college students who are active in the church feel loved and supported. The spiritual direction and prayer retreat experiences being offered at the church seek to build upon the growth that is already happening in the church community as it desires to grow in love of Christ and active participation in Christ’s ministry to those on the margins of society.

The future of Newberg First Presbyterian is bright as it continues to adapt to the changes in the local community. The city of Newberg is expected nearly to double in size in the next thirty years. Hopefully, population growth will translate to more young families joining both the community and the church. If the church can welcome these young families effectively, it has the possibility of experiencing new growth and new opportunities to share the good news of Jesus. The church’s desire is to reach the neighborhood, George Fox University, and the retirement communities nearby that bring older residents to worship with us. Connecting younger members and older members together, while also growing the numbers of those between thirty and sixty is a good challenge.
PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER 3:
RESOURCES IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD, SPIRITUAL DIRECTION, AND THE FUTURE CHURCH

This doctoral project aims to have a deep theological foundation for ministry offered through Newberg First Presbyterian Church in order to support the spiritual formation of emerging adults. As part of the study, seven books were reviewed: three in the area of emerging adulthood, two in the field of spiritual direction, and two with a focus on the future church. These resources have provided helpful theological reflection and visioning in the area of spiritual formation for young adults.

The first book, Growing With by Kara Powell and Steven Argue of the Fuller Youth Institute, focuses on emerging adulthood.¹ The book is designed as a guide for parents as they support the growth in faith of their teenagers and young adults. The premise of Growing With is that parenting teenagers and young adults today is different than it was in the past. Young people are facing new challenges and it takes intentional support from parents and other adults to help them grow in faith.² On the one hand,

¹ Kara Powell and Steven Argue, Growing With: Every Parent’s Guide to Helping Teenagers and Young Adults Thrive in their Faith, Family, and Future (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2019).
² Ibid., 17.
according to research, youth are exposed through media content to adult related
information at a younger age. In Chapter 1, the authors suggest that fourteen is the new
twenty-four, since the pressures on teenagers are more consistent with what other
generations faced in their twenties. Today, young women are starting puberty earlier,
and the pressures to stay busy and to grow up fast are more pronounced than in the past.
The average teenager who has a smart phone uses it 4.38 hours each day. The
connection time between youth and parents has greatly decreased, since students are
pressured to stay busy with so many extracurricular activities. Parents often feel
overwhelmed with driving youth everywhere without making real connections with kids,
especially when it comes to faith.

Although it is true that young people feel pressure to grow up quickly, it also
appears that young adults are less ready to enter traditional adulthood with the
responsibilities of work, marriage, home ownership, and kids. According to Growing
With not only is fourteen the new twenty-four, but twenty-eight is the new eighteen.
Today, the average twenty-eight-year-old is similar to the eighteen year-old of the past,
because twenty-eight years old is the more common age at which young adults are ready
to pursue marriage, a career, and other traditional adult-like decisions.

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3 Ibid., 29.
5 Ibid., 28.
6 Ibid., 30.
7 Ibid. 28-29.
8 Ibid., 31.
In *Growing With*, Kara Powell and Steven Argue suggest that intentional relational support is needed to help teenagers and emerging adults (eighteen to twenty-five year-olds) negotiate the new landscape of personal and faith development. They suggest three keys ways for parents to journey with teenagers and emerging adults through life and faith. These ways are called “withing”, “faithing”, and “adulting.”

“Withing” is defined as “a family’s growth in supporting each other as children grow more independent.” This intentional focus on building a relational connection between parents and young people through all the stages of development is critical for the healthy growth of youth. “Faithing” is defined as “a child’s growth in owning and embodying their own journey with God as they encounter new experiences and information.” This style of support focuses on giving autonomy to youth and emerging adults as they grow in faith instead of trying to force feed faith. Studies show that as young people differentiate from parents, it is common for people in their twenties to pull back from churches. Instead of reacting negatively to this resistance, “faithing” encourages walking alongside young people as they discern how best to approach faith. “Faithing” is an invitation to offer grace and love as young people decide how to grow in faith, rather than the creation of unnecessary pressure to encourage specific faith goals. Finally, the term “adulting” refers to “a child’s growth in agency as they embrace opportunities to shape

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9 Ibid., 37.
10 Ibid., 36-43.
11 Ibid., 37-39.
12 Ibid., 39.
the world around them.” Parents who support “adulting” try to let go of control and offer encouragement and at times guidance as young people makes choices about personal values and specific decision related to things like education, work, and family.

Growing With is an insightful book with great stories and suggestions on how to walk alongside teenagers and young adults. It provides helpful explanations as to why college students and other emerging adults are both growing up fast and growing up more slowly than other generations. The younger generations are beginning to outnumber older generations. Millennials, those born between 1977 and 1995, outnumber baby boomers, who are those born between 1946 and 1964. The generation of current and upcoming college students are called iGen or Generation Z. This group represents those born in 1996 or later. If millennials and the iGen represent the future church, then the church must journey with them and learn from them. Growing With offers key tips on how to journey with emerging adults, which lays a critical foundation for the work of spiritual formation being done at Newberg First Presbyterian Church. Rather than being critical of the younger generation, adults would do well to support the personal and spiritual growth of the next generation.

13 Ibid., 42.
14 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
Growing With also helpfully emphasizes how best to support youth and young adults at various stages of faith and personal development. Powell and Argue break down the ages from thirteen to twenty-nine into three distinct stages. According to the authors, thirteen to eighteen is the learner stage. The learner stage is “a season of rapid physical, emotional, relational, intellectual, and spiritual growth and change.”18 Youth in this stage are in an intense time of learning because so much change is happening. The next stage includes young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three. It is known as the explorer stage and is considered the beginning of emerging adulthood. In this season emerging adults are exploring career paths through education or work experience.19 They are exploring their own talents, interests, and gifts. They are exploring possible romantic interests and personal goals that could one day lead to marriage. They are exploring how best to relate to parents. Finally, they are exploring different beliefs, including beliefs about faith and personal spirituality. The last stage includes young people between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-nine who are identified as focusers.20 During this period of life, people make choices that shape the future more directly. Focusers are making decisions about careers, relationships, beliefs, and sometimes are seeking to restart life after making significant mistakes.21

18 Ibid., 52.
19 Ibid., 54.
20 Ibid., 55-56.
21 Ibid.
After identifying the developmental stages, Powell and Argue provide suggestions on how best to support young people through these stages of learning, exploring, and focusing. During the learner stage, parents are encouraged to act as teachers for their teenagers. This is considered learner-centered teaching and involves helping youth with new ideas, skills, and competencies.\(^\text{22}\) For the emerging adults defined as explorers, the parent is to be a guide on the journey of life. As Steven Argue suggests, “With explorer kids, we shift our parenting focus away from setting goals for our kids and toward guiding them on the journey of setting their own goals.”\(^\text{23}\) Argue mentions that empathy is key in the guiding process, so that emerging adults feel a connection with the parent.\(^\text{24}\) Lastly, for young adults in the focuser stage (ages twenty-three to twenty-nine), it is important that parents serve as resourcers rather than guides. According to Argue and Powell, “Parents as resourcers intersect with their kids lives during crucial points by exercising patience, offering perspective, and preserving their relationship with their kids, even if their kids beliefs, values, or goals diverge from their own.”\(^\text{25}\)  

The insights on developmental stages and how to parent emerging adults is particularly helpful for Newberg First Presbyterian as it seeks to journey alongside the college students at George Fox University. As a church desiring to minister to college students and young adults, it is acting as a guide to young people who are primarily in the

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 58.  
\(^{23}\) Ibid., 62.  
\(^{24}\) Ibid., 61  
\(^{25}\) Ibid., 66.
explorer stage. Through “withing,” “faithing,” and “adulting,” the church is seeking to support the students and young people who actively participate in the College and Young Adult Community.

The second book to be reviewed was *Emerging Adulthood* by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett. Arnett does extensive research on those who are eighteen to twenty-five in the United States and internationally. Additionally, he includes data related to people of different ethnic backgrounds and different genders. Of interest are the detailed statistics he highlights that reveal the rising age for those making decisions related to marriage, vocation, having children, and owning a home. The age continues to rise particularly in western-influenced cultures in Europe, the United States, and in some industrialized countries in Asia such as Japan. According to Arnett’s research, the median age of marriage for females in the United States is twenty-six as compared to twenty-eight for females in Japan and thirty for females in Germany, France, and Italy. Developing countries continue to have an early age for marriage. In Ethiopia, the average age for women to be married is seventeen, and, in India, the average age for women to be married is eighteen. The average age for men to be married is normally two years older than the women in each of these countries.

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27 Ibid., 25.

28 Ibid.
The great contribution of Arnett’s book and research is that he is the one who created the term, “emerging adulthood.”\(^{29}\) He explains that the years eighteen to twenty-five are critical to personal growth and that it is vital to understand this period as a developmental stage that requires specific knowledge.\(^ {30}\) It is important to note that before Arnett’s emerging adulthood research it was common in the 1990s and early 2000s to view young people in the eighteen to twenty-five year old age category as demonstrating qualities consistent with late adolescence.\(^ {31}\) Arnett found the idea of late adolescence for this age group as limiting as he worked with college students, since adolescents experience puberty and other developmental changes not consistent with emerging adulthood.\(^ {32}\) Arnett is not approaching this topic from a faith perspective, so he freely explores in great detail the trends within emerging adulthood relating to sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual behavior, and other topics.\(^ {33}\) Arnett shows that although there are cultural differences, many developing countries are showing similar trends in how emerging adults are taking more time to move into adulthood.

As Newberg First Presbyterian partners with international students at George Fox University, it is insightful to discover how emerging adulthood is taking shape internationally as well as in the United States. Since emerging adulthood is a journey of

\(^{29}\) Arnett, preface to *Emerging Adulthood*, xv.

\(^{30}\) Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood*, 2.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 20-21.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 83-113.
growth, it is helpful to remember that personal mentors can support this process. By
describing the experiences of young people without sharing his personal opinions, Arnett
clearly shows respect for and support of emerging adults. His research is unbiased even
as he seeks to challenge the assumptions by some generations that would look less
favorably on younger people.

In his book, Arnett highlights four revolutions in U.S. history that shaped
emerging adulthood into the specific life stage that it is for the young today. The four
revolutions are the Technology Revolution, the Sexual Revolution, the Women’s
Movement, and the Youth Movement.34 The Technology Revolution refers to the
development of specific technology that moved people from traditional manufacturing
jobs to other forms of employment as machines were used to do work previously done by
people.35 The U.S. now functions in a service economy, which requires more post-
secondary education. The need for college and graduate education naturally pushes young
people to pursue further education and at times to postpone some of the major choices
that shape our cultural understanding of adulthood. For example, many emerging adults
wait until after graduate school to pursue career jobs, home ownership, and for some
marriage.36

34 Ibid., 3.
36 Ibid., 4.
The second revolution that helped shaped the developmental stage of emerging adulthood is the Sexual Revolution.\textsuperscript{37} The Sexual Revolution of the 1960s brought more relaxed standards of sexual morality.\textsuperscript{38} People began to recognize that many young people were becoming active sexually prior to marriage and that some chose to have multiple sexual relationships before pursuing a long term committed relationship or marriage.

The Women’s Movement also shaped the culture of young people. Thanks to the Women’s Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, women had the opportunity to pursue more work opportunities and, with the help of contraception, to postpone having children in order to pursue goals in the area of work.\textsuperscript{39} Many women are choosing to remain single during the emerging adulthood period in order to keep options open for the future.\textsuperscript{40}

The fourth movement that has shaped the stage of emerging adulthood is the Youth Movement.\textsuperscript{41} The Youth Movement also of the 1960s and 1970s tended to look negatively on adulthood and favored a lifestyle that included the freedoms of being young without as much responsibility.\textsuperscript{42} According to Arnett, young people in the 1950s sought stability and wished to settle into adulthood quickly, possibly in response to the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 4-5.
  \item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 5-6.
  \item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 6-8.
  \item \textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
challenges of the Great Depression and World War II. Couples also wished to have children earlier, since they hoped to have three or four children. Today, many emerging adults wish to pursue personal goals without taking on the demands of historic adulthood prematurely. They are not necessarily in a rush to grow up. Most emerging adults still wish to eventually pursue the normal goals connected to adulthood like career, marriage, having children, and owning a home. They just do not wish to pursue those goals until the later twenties or early thirties.43

Since the College and Young Adult Community at Newberg First Presbyterian centers on young people who are emerging adults, it is helpful to explore the distinctive features of emerging adulthood. According to Arnett, there are five key features. The stage of emerging adulthood is characterized by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and possibilities/optimism.44

Identity exploration is the process whereby emerging adults develop an identity apart from parents.45 They discern who they are and what they wish to experience out of life. According to Arnett,

Emerging adults have become more independent of their parents than they were as adolescents and most of them have left home, but they have not yet entered the stable, enduring commitments typical of adult life, such as a long-term job, marriage, and parenthood. During the interval of years when they are neither beholden to their parents nor committed to an assortment of adult roles, they have an exceptional opportunity to try out different ways of living and different possible choices for love and work.46

43 Ibid., 7.
44 Ibid., 9.
46 Ibid., 9.
Arnett goes on to highlight that identity formation begins in adolescence but intensifies during the period of emerging adulthood.\textsuperscript{47}

The second characteristic of emerging adulthood is instability.\textsuperscript{48} The natural result of exploring identity during this stage of life is instability. Arnett explains that although emerging adults develop a plan for the future, such as choosing a major in college, pursuing a relationship, or exploring a vocational path, these plans often change.\textsuperscript{49} Due to the variety of choices available, it is common to keep one’s options open during this time of instability.\textsuperscript{50}

The third quality of emerging adulthood is self-focus.\textsuperscript{51} According to Arnett, the emerging adult years are the most self-focused time in life.\textsuperscript{52} Children and adolescents also are self-focused, but they have more people who are offering direction and boundaries. Once people reach the age of thirty, they usually have other commitments that require less self-focus, but the period between eighteen to twenty-five is usually a time of significant freedom to make personal choices without being responsible for others.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 11-13.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 13-14.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 14.
The fourth aspect of emerging adulthood is the feeling of being in-between. Those who are emerging adults are between adolescence and young adulthood. They normally are not living at home and going to secondary school, nor are they normally married and entering parenthood. Arnett conducted hundreds of interviews with emerging adults, “When asked whether they feel they have reached adulthood, their responses are often ambiguous, with one foot in “yes” and the other in “no”.” Arnett’s book includes the stories of many emerging adults who feel in between. Here is the response of Lillian, age twenty-five:

Sometimes I think I’ve reached adulthood and then I sit down and eat ice cream from the box, and I keep thinking I’ll know I’m an adult when I don’t eat ice cream right out of the box anymore!’ That seems like such a childish thing to do. But I guess in some ways I feel like an adult. I’m a pretty responsible person. I mean, if I say I’m going to do something, I do it. I’m very responsible with my job. Financially, I’m fairly responsible with my money. But sometimes in social circumstances I feel uncomfortable, like I don’t know what I’m supposed to do, and I still feel like a little kid. So a lot of times I don’t really feel like an adult.

Arnett’s research doing interviews with real life eighteen to twenty-five year olds validates his conclusion on the experiences of young people. His insights confirm my own work with college students and graduate students. According to Arnett, the three criteria that young people consistently use to define adulthood are to: “1. Accept responsibility for yourself. 2. Make independent decisions. 3. Become financially

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54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 15.
independent.” These ‘Big three’ are consistent across different ethnic groups and social classes in the United States.

The final category for understanding the stage of emerging adulthood is that it is a period of possibilities and optimism. Young people in this age range normally have high hopes and are open to many possibilities for their lives. As Arnett describes, “Still, more than any other period of life, emerging adulthood presents the possibility of change. For this limited window of time—seven, perhaps ten years—the fulfillment of all their hopes seems possible, because for most people the range of their choices for how to live is greater than it has ever been before and greater than it will ever be again.” This flexibility for emerging adults makes this an exciting season to explore options for the future.

David P. Setran and Chris A. Kiesling provide a third resource in the area of emerging adulthood titled *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry*. This book builds on the research of Jeffrey Arnett and provides encouragement for those doing college ministry with young adults both in university and church settings. Five specific contributions from Setran and Kiesling’s work provide a foundation for doing ministry among college students. These

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57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 15-17.
60 Ibid., 17.
topics include: (1) the importance of spiritual disciplines for young adults, (2) the spiritual journey of young adults in relationship to the church, (3) the role of vocational call for emerging adults, (4) the need for moral formation for students, and (5) the necessity of helping young adults form a sexual ethic.\(^{62}\)

First, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood* offers key suggestions as to which of the spiritual practices best support the spiritual growth of college students.\(^{63}\) Spiritual disciplines are broken into two categories: disciplines of abstinence and disciplines of engagement. Drawing from the insights of Dallas Willard, disciplines associated with abstinence and fasting include silence, solitude, celibacy, frugality, sacrifice, and secrecy.\(^{64}\) Disciplines connected to engagement and attachment include worship, celebration, study, prayer, service, fellowship, submission, and confession.\(^{65}\)

According to the authors of *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood*, college age students especially benefit from specific spiritual practices of abstinence:

While all of the disciplines of abstinence are extremely valuable, some seem especially poignant for those in the emerging adult years. Solitude and silence, for example, can serve as powerful agents of personal formation in the midst of the frenetic pace of daily life. In terms of uncovering the idols of the heart, solitude reveals the way in which emerging adults rely on words to provide meaning, significance, and a sense of identity in their lives….solitude and silence can help emerging adults break free from the illusion that they are defined by their productivity and accomplishments.\(^{66}\)

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 44, 82, 111, 139, 161.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 44-53.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 46.

\(^{65}\) Ibid.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 47.
The writers go on to explain that the gift of silence and solitude helps young adults experience greater humility and open themselves to a deeper dependence on God.67

The disciplines of abstinence ultimately provide a pathway for disciplines of engagement.68 Study of God’s Word is a good beginning place for spiritual disciplines of engagement. In the section on engagement, the suggestion is made for students to meditate on Scripture through a slow, thoughtful reading of a biblical text, also known as *lectio divina*. Singing worship songs is another meaningful way to engage God in prayer and reflection on the truths of God’s Word. The primary aim of the spiritual disciplines of engagement is to open the young adult to a deeper experience of the presence of God and to create a humble posture of worship. According to Setran and Kiesling, “In the end, emerging adult spiritual formation is not a process of therapeutic personal improvement as much as a process of reorienting the heart’s affections, counting the cost of discipleship, and abiding with Christ in all of life.”69 The spiritual disciplines of engagement help young adults form a relationship with God that becomes the foundation for all other aspects of life.

Second, *Spiritual Formation In Emerging Adulthood* explores the relationship between young adults and the church in helpful ways. Young adults are described as commonly experiencing a religious slump that includes a decline in belief:

While 78 percent of 18-23 year olds claim to believe in God without reservation—certainly a sizable majority—this represents a 7 percent drop when

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67 Ibid., 48.

68 Ibid., 49.

69 Ibid., 53.
compared with American teenagers. Furthermore, this decline is actually sharper among those who spent their teen years within the church. Conservative Protestants, for example, see an 8 percent decline in belief in God while mainline Protestants see a more precipitous 17 percent decline. In every religious tradition, emerging adult belief in God is also lower than belief in God for those over the age of 30.70

The struggle with belief makes it difficult for emerging adults to be motivated to attend church.71

Setran and Kiesling reflect on the research done by David Kinnaman on a group of young adults ages twenty to twenty-nine years old.72 According to Kinnaman, six impressions exist among young adults that strongly impact alienation from church life. The church is viewed by many young adults as overprotective and sheltered, shallow, anti-science, repressive, exclusive, and unsafe for expressing doubts.73 Churches also struggle to attract young adults, because young adults are not normally ready to settle down and often move for work or further studies. The delay of marriages and parenting for emerging adults may be one of the more important reasons to explain church decline, since churches often lose single adults by tending to focus more on couples and families.74 In addition, emerging adults who are prone to idealism struggle to attend churches that are imperfect and that fail to inspire them spiritually.75

70 Ibid., 13.
71 Ibid., 13-14.
73 Ibid., 93.
74 Setran and Kiesling, Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood, 87.
75 Ibid., 86-87.
Setran and Kiesling encourage church leaders to do more to support the mentoring and teaching of emerging adults. The teaching should be both deep and experiential in order to keep young adults engaged in spiritual formation in a church setting. Teaching should engage Scripture deeply, while also addressing the social concerns that are often highlighted in academic settings. Mentors should encourage young adults to remain committed to being part of the church body, but churches should also develop communities that are designed to listen to the interests and concerns of young adults. The hope is that young adults are then empowered to provide leadership for the church rather than to be marginalized to simply receive ministry. The church potentially can provide an intergenerational community that will support young adults through the journey of spiritual formation, but this will take older adults that are humble enough to invest in the younger generation. The experience of community and mission opportunities will also be key for young adults to stay in church.

Third, vocation is another key area of exploration for emerging adults as they experience spiritual formation. Setran and Kiesling highlight the fact that students need to have a strong sense of God’s kingdom purposes in the world in order to choose a specific calling or vocation. Since emerging adulthood allows space for exploration, anxiety is often an experience for young adults as they make decisions that will shape vocational pursuits. Prolonged schooling may also extend the journey of discernment regarding

76 Ibid., 101.
77 Ibid., 97.
78 Ibid., 112.
possible vocational paths. Setran and Kiesling suggest that work in secular settings may become deeply spiritual if done in faithfulness to God’s calling and that jobs should be chosen that allow for space to pursue spiritual growth through involvement in church.\textsuperscript{79}

Fourth, \textit{Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood} emphasizes the need for emerging adults to be mentored in a way that supports the development of a strong understanding of morality.\textsuperscript{80} The fear is that moral relativism within the broader society has made it difficult for young adults to have a clear understanding of morality, even within the church. By reflecting on stories from Scripture and other stories of people who showed deep character, young adults may develop clarity on what true wisdom looks like today.\textsuperscript{81}

Fifth, a last key area of exploration is wisdom in the area of sexual ethics.\textsuperscript{82} Setran and Kiesling effectively show that sexuality is part of the beauty of being made in the image of God. Being sexual is natural, normal, and a gift from God. However, it is important that emerging adults receive guidance on how to best care for this gift and to be given space to reflect with strong mentors how to be faithful to God’s purposes through avoiding pre-marital sex, the viewing of pornography, the sending of sexually explicit texts, and other actions that are harmful to God’s loving purposes for human sexuality.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 121.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 139-160.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 152-153.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 161-183.
Education is also needed on the serious problem of sex trafficking, other forms of sexual abuse, the danger of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, and experiencing unwanted pregnancies. Setran and Kiesling provide a historical overview of romantic love in America and highlight that sexual freedom remains a high value among the majority of young adults. The freedom to explore unfortunately leads to many broken relationships and personal regret for past sexual behaviors and choices. According to statistics of people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three in the United States, 84 percent have had sex. In addition, 86 percent of men view pornography monthly, and according to another study pornography is acceptable to 67 percent of men and 49 percent of women.

Drawing from various Scriptures, Setran and Kiesling suggest that a Christian sexual ethic focuses on affirming human sexuality within proper relationships. “Christianity proclaims the goodness of our embodied and sexual natures. Both Jesus’s incarnation and the promise of bodily resurrection reinforce the goodness of embodiment, both now and in the future. Likewise, Scripture proclaims the goodness of sexual intimacy when pursued in God-honoring ways within a marriage relationship.”

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83 Ibid., 171.
84 Ibid., 169.
85 Ibid., 171.
86 Ibid., 173.
87 Ibid.
The value of sexuality is clear, but wisdom is needed on how to embody sexuality in a way that supports healthy relationships.

*Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood* is a helpful resource both theologically and practically as the College and Young Adult Community at Newberg First Presbyterian Church is developed. Setran and Kiesling intentionally reflect the goals of spiritual formation for this age group. One of the final paragraphs in the book expresses the hope for emerging adults:

> Christian spiritual formation in emerging adulthood cuts against the grain of self-absorption, pointing instead to a life of costly discipleship marked by personal and cultural investment. Rather than a time marked by freedom from authority, emerging adulthood is defined as a time of growing responsibility for others and the world. At the same time, such formation ‘stands on one’s own,’ pointing instead to a life of humble dependence on God and interdependence with others. The growing competence, identity, and responsibility of adulthood becomes a place of wonder and gratitude for God’s provision, continued reliance on his grace, and loving stewardship of his gifts for others’ good and for his glory. The emerging adult must move beyond childishness while simultaneously sustaining the childlike qualities of humility, trust, and wonder.\(^88\)

This summary provides hope and direction for the spiritual formation of young adults that all churches can seek to embody.

The resource provides specific direction for how a church or campus ministry may support emerging adults on the journey of adulthood. A minor critique is that the evangelical style of the resource at times comes across as overly parental toward young people. Although the focus on morality and the need for good sexual ethics is important, at times Christians downplay the virtues that may develop even in young people who are

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 236.
working through difficult moral questions outside of traditional religious contexts. The hunger for freedom within young people today is largely because of the pressures to conform to more conservative expressions of Christianity or other moralistic religious views. Might there be a happy medium that supports the journey of freedom for young adults while encouraging growth in responsibility and spiritual formation? Overall, the pastoral desire is appreciated to help emerging adults engage this season of life with the support of caring mentors, parents, and supportive friends, especially within the church community. The hope of Newberg First Presbyterian Church is to embody such formational support to the college students who participate in the College and Young Adult Community.

The next two resources to be reviewed relate to the art of spiritual direction. The first resource is Jeanette Bakke’s book, Holy Invitations- Exploring Spiritual Direction.89 In Holy Invitations, Jeanette Bakke begins her first chapter by defining spiritual direction with the help of a quote from Eugene Peterson:

Spiritual direction takes place when two people agree to give their full attention to what God is doing in one (or both) of their lives and seek to respond in faith…Whether planned or unplanned, three convictions underpin these meetings: (1) God is always doing something: an active grace is shaping this life into a mature salvation; (2) responding to God is not sheer guesswork: the Christian community has acquired wisdom through the centuries that provides guidance; (3) each soul is unique: no wisdom can simply be applied without discerning the particulars of this life, this situation.90


Bakke builds on Peterson’s definition by exploring the role spiritual direction plays in helping people grow in relationship to God. She writes, “Spiritual direction is a way to give caring attention to our relationship with God—attention that is focused on life’s foundations underneath ordinary busyness. We offer ourselves and our hopes and fears to God in an openness that affirms our intention to listen.”91 Bakke gives examples of real-life direction sessions and unpacks the experiences of those who receive direction.92

Furthermore, Bakke effectively describes the differences between spiritual direction and other fields like pastoral counseling, mentoring, and discipling. She notes that spiritual direction is less about problem solving and more about listening and noticing the movement of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life.93 She offers specific advice on how to prepare for a spiritual direction session, how to design a practice including payment fees, and how to shape the spiritual direction relationship.94 She suggests different areas that can be explored in spiritual direction, such as one’s experience with God, Scripture, prayer, discernment, and Christian disciplines.95

For those who offer spiritual direction to college students, resources in spiritual direction such as Bakke’s are a good reminder of how to journey with students and offer them a safe place to listen to the movement of the Holy Spirit in their individual lives. It

92 Ibid., 68-69.
93 Ibid., 29.
94 Ibid., 118-120.
95 Ibid., 173-211.
is helpful to remember that a spiritual director is not generally offering advice, but is instead listening and noticing God’s work in a student’s life. As a spiritual companion for the student, she or he is led by the Holy Spirit to grow deeper in relationship to God and to develop different passions and pursue personal dreams that connect to God’s mission.

The second book related to the field of spiritual direction is *Spiritual Direction—Beyond the Beginnings* by Janet K. Ruffing. Ruffing’s monograph is particularly helpful because she provides an in-depth exploration of how seasoned spiritual directors can grow in the field. She recognizes that there is a lack of literature on the experience of seasoned spiritual directors and on the unique insights that are gained as one grows as a director. In her book, Ruffing explores the many key skills needed to be a seasoned spiritual director, and specifically reflects on the deeper psychological elements of transference. She describes how transference as, “understood in the clinical sense…develops over time in a relationship when one person responds to the other “as if” the other actually were the person’s parent or someone else from the distant past.” She then suggests that “countertransference refers to a director’s transference reactions to the directee.” When spiritual directors are careful to navigate the realities of transference and countertransference, they can guide directees to center more effectively on an intimate relationship with God.

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97 Ibid., 156.

98 Ibid., 60.

99 Ibid., 171.
Ruffing goes on to explain that spiritual direction can be helpful in the pursuit of a more mutual relationship with God and that directors are helpful in affirming the connection between romance and intimacy with God.\textsuperscript{100} The theme of mutuality in relationship with God as being similar to the mutuality found between lovers is engaging. According to Ruffing,

Mutuality in loving makes lovers vulnerable to one another. This way of knowing results in joy and pleasure in the presence of one’s beloved. Absence of the beloved evokes feelings of grief and sometimes anxiety. Mutual joy can become mutual sorrow and vice versa…The distance between God and humanity is overcome through Jesus’ incarnation, death, resurrection, and the gift of the indwelling Spirit. Mystically, one comes to experience this gift of intimacy with God through mutuality with Jesus first, usually, and then with the Godhead, whom Jesus manifests.\textsuperscript{101}

Ruffing’s willingness to highlight the depth of intimacy possible with God, and the role spiritual directors play in helping people experience such depth is instructive.

To summarize, the main argument of Ruffing’s book is that spiritual directors have the ability to grow in the field as they gain experience and that thoughtful reflection can assist in developing greater competency in this calling. The insights from the book suggest that greater self-awareness and spiritual depth within the director can assist the directee in developing a more mutual relationship with God. Ruffing exhibits boldness in exploring human desires and especially in examining erotic energies and how these energies surface in spiritual direction. Because college students are curious about human sexuality, it is helpful for spiritual directors to be aware of how to empower directees to

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 139-140.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 140.
connect sexual energy to spiritual intimacy with God. One’s work as a spiritual director must have integrity and wisdom, so reminders about the psychological dimension of spiritual direction, transference, and countertransference are additionally important even for seasoned spiritual directors.

While the entirety of Ruffing’s book is insightful for all spiritual directors, the aspects of her book that address spiritual direction for younger people are the most helpful for work with college students and young adults. Since the resource focuses primarily on the work of spiritual direction, it does not explore in depth the state of the church or how to design spiritual direction for a college ministry. In that sense, it has its limitations. Notwithstanding, spiritual direction is one of many valuable tools in supporting the ministry of the church today.

Next, the field of future church studies will be explored in order to discern how it can support a vision of spiritual formation for young adults. In *The Great Spiritual Migration*, Brian McLaren suggests that Christianity is moving from a faith that centers on beliefs to a Jesus movement that seeks to follow a way of life connected to Jesus. This way of life centers on the goal of growing in love and is fully inclusive of all people. The focus is on relationship with Jesus and following the values of Jesus in the world. The emphasis is on grace rather than judgment of others.

Brian McLaren thoughtfully argues that Christianity is in a desperate need of conversion. The type of Christianity that seems to emphasize belief as the key to the

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103 Ibid., 8.
Christian life is breaking down as more people feel alienated from the church and its attachment to dogma over love. McLaren suggests that the church has the opportunity to define itself less as the only bearers of all truth and more as the ones who wish to embody the love of Jesus in the world. McLaren is honest in his commitment to inclusion of all people, including the LGBTQ community, and that this embrace of all people is key to the future of the church.\(^{104}\)

The *Great Spiritual Migration* is exploring what the future church will look like. It is a helpful resource for seeking to connect George Fox University college students with Newberg First Presbyterian Church, since the church is trying to adapt to future generations. Brian McLaren provides inspiration to find a better way to be a Christian in the world. Many young people do not go to church because it either feels boring, feels divisive, lacks spiritual depth, lacks innovation, or it does not inspire enough justice activism in the world.

McLaren speaks to the struggle of the church and provides a new vision on how to move forward. His language on the importance of growing in love as the basis of the church will be implemented in CAYAC at Newberg First Presbyterian. McLaren’s point is well taken that the church is often used as a tool for violence in the world, and we need to disarm ways of interpreting Scripture that depict God as violent.\(^{105}\) It is not enough to lead a college ministry in connection with Newberg First Presbyterian. I hope to also partner with students in a movement of the gospel that centers on growing in love and

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 90.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 72.
becoming like Jesus. McLaren offers a compelling depiction of what the future church should resemble:

In my travels, people repeatedly ask me what I think the church of the future will look like... What I believe can and should happen is that tens of thousands of congregations will become what I call “schools” or “studios” of love. That’s the desired future to which I am passionately committed. I’m not concerned about a congregation’s denomination, musical style, or liturgical tastes; I don’t care if they meet weekly in a cathedral, monthly in a bar, annually at a retreat center, or daily online. I don’t care whether they are big or small, formal or casual, hip or unhip, or whether their style of worship is traditional or contemporary or whatever. What I care about is whether they are teaching people to live a life of love, from the heart, for God, for all people (no exceptions), and for all creation. These churches would aim to take people at every age and ability level and help them become the most loving version of themselves possible.106

McLaren often speaks at universities and his examples of reaching out to college students makes this a practical resource for doing college ministry. McLaren’s thoughts give inspiration to ‘do’ church in a different way and to help the college group focus more on relationship with God than simply having correct beliefs about God or agreeing on every aspect of Christian doctrine.

The limitation of this resource is that George Fox University, the local college connected to Newberg First Presbyterian, is theologically more conservative than McLaren. Therefore, the language could not be quite as radical in my church context as McLaren tends to be. Because he is no longer working in a church, he has the freedom to speak a prophetic word to churches or to Christian organizations without the worry of a backlash. By contrast, the context of Newberg First Presbyterian and George Fox

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University demands wisdom as to whether they can grasp the idea that growing in love is more important than correct beliefs.

Another fear is that McLaren’s lack of emphasis on beliefs could eventually lead to a lower Christology than is helpful. Some of the churches that are embracing McLaren’s viewpoint might ultimately view Jesus only as a good man who shows humanity how to love, rather than as the Son of God who seeks a relationship with humanity and who empowers humanity to love through the power of the Holy Spirit. Despite the limitations of this book, it nevertheless supports thoughtful reflection on how to prepare Newberg First Presbyterian for a type of Christianity that is more inclusive and loving and less violent in nature.

Another helpful resource in the area of leadership for the future church is Tod Bolsinger’s *Canoeing the Mountains - Christian Leadership in Unchartered Territory*. Tod Bolsinger is an ordained Presbyterian minister who currently serves as the Vice President and Chief of Leadership Formation for Fuller Theological Seminary and as an Associate Professor of Leadership Formation. Bolsinger compares the challenges of navigating the future of the church to the challenges that explorers Lewis and Clark faced as they went on an expedition to find the water route to the Pacific Ocean. Of course, Lewis and Clark faced many obstacles and only accomplished their task by going on a

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brave adventure, needing to adapt to mountains and other unexpected terrain. Bolsinger suggests leaders of the church can learn from business leadership theory how to adapt to the challenges of ministry and therefore support the mission of the church today.110

Bolsinger follows the perspective of other significant authors in the area of missional leadership by challenging the church to move out of a traditional mindset that the church is a place that continues the status quo and that hopes people will enter its doors to being a missional church that experiments with new ways of doing church and other forms of mission outreach that bring the gospel to people who would not normally enter the church.111 As the former pastor of San Clemente Presbyterian Church, Bolsinger shares stories of his own efforts to help his church support young people. He led a church that was willing to try new things, which helped it stay vibrant when other churches were getting smaller.112

In *Canoeing the Mountains* Bolsinger models a hope in the future of the church through his work at Fuller Seminary, even as he recognizes the significant challenges people are facing in ministry. He uses leadership theories from people like Ronald Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Patrick Lencioni to assist the church in creating cultures that are adaptive to change.113 At the beginning of Chapter 10, Bolsinger quotes Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky who define leadership as “disappointing your own people at a

110 Ibid., 13-16.
111 Ibid., 30.
112 Ibid., 91-92.
113 Ibid., 40-41, 77-78.
rate they can absorb.” In other words, as leaders make changes in a church, they must be a leader that can journey with people in the disappointment as new growth and culture slowly forms and begins to support a new direction for the church.

Bolsinger writes, “Transformational leadership, therefore, equips people to make hard choices regarding the values keeping them from growth and transformation necessary to see in a new way and discover new interventions to address the challenges they are facing.” Although the college and young adult ministry begun at Newberg First Presbyterian Church is designed for the purpose of spiritual formation growth for college students, it is also seeking to bring greater life into the whole church as part of adapting to the changes facing the church as an older congregation in need of growing younger. For the most part, supporting young adults has been embraced by the church. However, in order to prioritize young people further in the coming years, some who wish to do church in a way that has mainly appealed to older members of the congregation are likely to be disappointed.

As I lead the College and Young Adult Community (CAYAC) at Newberg First Presbyterian Church I am seeking to connect the best leadership theory with a specialized focus on mission engagement with college students at George Fox University to help our church grow younger and be more impactful for mission in the city of Newberg and beyond. Experts in spiritual formation with young adults have explored spiritual

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115 Bolsinger, Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Unchartered Territory, 139.
practices, church culture, and mission engagement, but little specific work engages in the
value of spiritual direction and prayer retreats for young adults.

My doctoral project highlights the value of spiritual direction and prayer retreats in empowering college students to grow in spiritual formation. The field of spiritual direction is often focused on working with people over the age of forty. Some leaders in the field of spiritual direction feel adults need to be older and experienced in human suffering to benefit from spiritual direction. I disagree and show in this doctoral project that college students are ripe to benefit from intentional spiritual direction. Lacy Borgo, a colleague of mine who teaches for the spiritual formation ministry Renovaré and Portland Seminary recently wrote a book on spiritual conversations with children.116 In her book, she summarizes many significant spiritual direction sessions with children who are living in Haven House, a transitional facility for families who are homeless.117 The spiritual direction sessions with children are designed for that age group and include active play, but she proves that spiritual direction benefits young and old.118

I am adding to the spiritual formation and spiritual direction literature by showing how college students specifically benefit from one on one spiritual direction and a prayer retreat experience that enables them to spend extended time with God in solitude. Spiritual direction for college students is designed for the season of emerging adulthood. The questions of identity, vocation, and personal exploration of relationship with others


117 Ibid., 3.

118 Ibid., 44-48.
and God is woven into the style of spiritual direction.\textsuperscript{119} The agenda of spiritual direction for college students is through the lens of this age group. Spiritual direction and prayer retreats with college students are shown in this doctoral project to be a beneficial addition to any vision of spiritual transformation for emerging adults. It is true that the broad category of spiritual mentoring is often mentioned as a source of support for youth and young adults, but this doctoral project adds to the spiritual mentoring conversation by exploring how spiritual direction as a unique approach to spiritual care specifically supports emerging adults in spiritual formation.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{119} Arnett, \textit{Emerging Adulthood}, 8-9.

\textsuperscript{120} Setran and Kiesling, \textit{Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood}, 205-230.
CHAPTER 4:
A THEOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The theological foundation for spiritual formation and spiritual direction of young adults is supported well by studying the ‘I Am the Vine’ passage located in John 15:1-17 and the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. The ‘I Am the Vine’ passage offers a rich understanding of the journey of spiritual transformation for those that follow Christ. The story of Mary and Martha provides an image for contemplative listening that is applicable to both spiritual direction and prayer retreats for young adults. Along with these Scriptures, additional insights from modern spiritual writers and theologians will be included to support the theological foundation for the spiritual formation of young adults.

John 15 begins with Jesus communicating to his disciples that he is the true vine and his father is the vine grower. The disciples are then described in verse five as the branches that need to stay connected to the vine in order to produce fruit. The disciples are then reminded that apart from Jesus they can produce nothing. This beautiful metaphor of the vine and the branches remains one of the most helpful ways by which to explore the theological foundation of spiritual formation for young adults.
Jesus wants his followers to abide in his love just as he abides in the love of his father. In John 15:9 Jesus says, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.” Many young adults are longing to receive God’s love. In his commentary on the Gospel of John, Dr. Dale Bruner explores the original Greek word for ‘abide,’ which is menein and which means ‘to remain or stick with.’121 Bruner suggests that a modern translation of this verb is ‘make my home with you.’122 Further in his reflection, Bruner emphasizes that to live with Jesus or make our home with him happens when we deepen our relationship with Jesus in four specific ways. Bruner explains,

We make our home with Jesus…(1) by ‘talking with him’ in prayer-conversation or in conversion-response to the proclamation of Christ’s Word; (2/3) by ‘feeding on’ his Word and his Meal in the communion fellowship of our brother and sister Christians; and then (4) by ‘moving out’ into the world in his friendship and loving one another out of the power of his friendly love for us that is already at work within us.123

As Bruner highlights, Jesus encourages his followers to make their home with him through personal prayer and to find love and connection through the gift of community.

In John 15:12, Jesus calls his followers to love each other. “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.” Jesus’ call to community ultimately overflows in mission to a broader world. In John 15:16 Jesus says, “You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I

122 Ibid.
123 Ibid., 883.
appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.” Ultimately, the call is to bear fruit in showing love to others.

The theological foundation for the spiritual formation of young adults is that Jesus is the source of love. As young adults abide or make their home with Jesus, they will love one another and bear fruit in the world. As students live closely in relationship to Jesus, they are encouraged to love one another in community. CAYAC follows Bruner’s guidance on how to make our home with Jesus. The students ultimately demonstrate the fruit of God’s love by loving one another and by bearing fruit in ministry on the campus of George Fox University, in the church, and potentially through mission efforts beyond the campus. The students also develop vocational interests in college with the support of Newberg First Presbyterian that will enable them to bear fruit in future work opportunities and other forms of service.

The community of love within the Trinity is the foundation for the love of any effective Christian community, including one designed to support the spiritual formation of young adults. Lacy Finn Borgo in her book *Spiritual Conversations with Children* highlights the role of the Trinity in her approach to caring for children:

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit is Love’s Family, and children are on a journey of awaking to their membership within the family. Learning of and leaning into Love’s Family is at the heart of spiritual formation with children. Acknowledging and encountering the reality of God as the trinitarian presence is an important step toward developing a theology of children’s Christian spiritual formation.\(^{124}\)

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\(^{124}\) Borgo, *Spiritual Conversations with Children: Listening to God Together*, 20.
Spiritual formation of children, youth, and young adults grows out of a deep experience of the community of love found in the community of God. The community of a college and young adult ministry provides a family atmosphere to experience closeness with the family of love found in the Trinity.

Dallas Willard’s impactful book, *Renovation of the Heart*, stresses the idea that spiritual formation occurs in those who abide in a deep relationship with the Trinity. Willard emphasizes that humans are called to be spiritually formed into the likeness of Jesus Christ and that this process of formation comes from the inner depths of the heart. Willard writes, “Genuine transformation of the whole person into the goodness and power seen in Jesus and his ‘Abba’ Father—the only transformation adequate to human self—remains the necessary goal of human life.” Willard’s understanding of the value of spiritual formation is critical to instill in the lives of young adults. Willard and other writers of spirituality, such as Richard Rohr, encourage followers of Christ to engage in spiritual practices for the purpose of growth in the practice of abiding in Jesus.

In the spiritual formation of young adults, spiritual practices are central tools utilized to support spiritual growth. Richard Rohr suggests a few such practices in his reflection on going deeper within one’s faith. He mentions the value of contemplative practice, sabbath, shadow work, and spiritual direction. Regarding contemplative practice, Rohr believes that “contemplation is a ‘laboratory’ in which you learn to die and

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to be reborn. The rest of your life becomes the field in which you live out this way of surrender and participation in Love.”\textsuperscript{127} Rohr encourages people to commit to a daily practice of contemplation, such as silent meditation, chanting, yoga, or another practice that offers rest. Regarding the sabbath, Rohr recommends taking periods of time for extended retreat and quiet with the goal of resting in the presence of God. The goal of sabbath is a rhythm of work and rest. He understands that contemplative practice will overflow in actions of love, compassion, and justice in the world. When speaking of the shadow, Rohr encourages people to embrace the parts of themselves that are hidden and easy to ignore. The shadow is an area of vulnerability that requires care and compassion, so it does not hinder personal growth.\textsuperscript{128}

Lastly, according to Rohr, a spiritual director is a sacred companion that joins one on his or her spiritual journey and is trustworthy. Rohr says, “If you do not have someone to guide you, to hold onto you during the times of not knowing, you will normally stay at your present level of growth. Seek out a sacred companion you can trust to be honest and present to your journey, who can reflect back to you God’s presence in your life and the world.”\textsuperscript{129} The ministry of spiritual direction naturally parallels the ministry of Jesus with his followers as he joined them on their journey and was trustworthy.

In addition to John 15, it is helpful to explore the approach that Jesus took with Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 as a model of listening and spiritual direction. The

\textsuperscript{127} Rohr, “Going Deeper.”
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
well-known Mary and Martha story describes two sisters who host Jesus. Mary chooses
to sit at Jesus’ feet with a posture of listening, while Martha is focused on different tasks
and appears distracted. After Martha complains to Jesus that Mary is not helping her and
that Jesus should tell Mary to help her, Jesus replies in Luke 10:41-42, “Martha, Martha,
you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has
chosen the better part, which will not be taken from her.” Jesus is not suggesting in this
passage that being busy serving others is wrong, but he is suggesting that there are times
to pause one’s activities and to focus on relationship and listening.

Mary’s approach of sitting at Jesus’ feet mirrors the ministry of spiritual direction.
In spiritual direction, one person sits with a spiritual companion for an extended time
together of listening to the Holy Spirit and seeking the guidance of Jesus. A mutual
relationship of listening takes place. The spiritual companion, or spiritual director, helps
the directee encounter Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit through paying attention
to God’s presence and action in the story of the directee. In Margaret Guenther’s book on
spiritual direction, *Holy Listening*, Guenther connects spiritual direction to welcoming or
hosting a stranger.\(^{130}\) Guenther recommends making the space for spiritual direction
comfortable. She begins with silence and normally allows the directee to break the
silence by sharing from his or her life. The goal is for the spiritual directee to feel
unhurried and safe.\(^ {131}\)

\(^{130}\) Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (Boston, MA: Cowley

\(^{131}\) Ibid., 16-17.
Guenther recognizes that people receiving spiritual direction often come with feelings of distraction even from good things possibly happening in their lives. Guenther alludes to the story of Mary and Martha, when she suggests that the person who is seeking spiritual direction is needful of one thing:

Sometimes I wonder if the care of souls was easier in simpler times, for people sometimes come looking for a spiritual director because they are overwhelmed with good things: challenging work, useful charitable activities, more books than they can read and cultural events than they can ever absorb, more information than they can process, more paths of self-improvement than they can follow. Like overindulged children, they are inundated by good things; and they simultaneously yearn and fear to hear: “One thing is needful.” They come because they want one thing even when they cannot articulate their need. They want help clearing away the clutter, or at least in arranging it so that it becomes useful spiritual furniture rather than an impediment to wholeness.\textsuperscript{132}

Guenther is aware that spiritual direction is the art of listening and helping people slow down enough to be present to Jesus, for he is the one who will ultimately bring wholeness and life. Jesus is the one thing people need most, and spiritual direction helps people encounter Jesus.

The story of Mary and Martha in Luke and Jesus’ words to his disciples in John 15 support a model of spiritual formation for young adults that includes spiritual direction and prayer retreats. Young adults need extended times of listening to God through prayer and personal spiritual guidance through a spiritual director or other type of spiritual mentor. The spiritual formation of young adults is also strengthened through loving community and opportunities for service, mission work, and vocational pursuits.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 24.
In *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adults*, Setran and Kiesling highlight that the habits of young adults are important for developing spiritual routines that lead to real growth. They differentiate between spiritual practices that are beneficial and other habits that are detrimental to spiritual health:

Some practices, on the one hand, must be identified as deforming in that they shape loves in directions antithetical to the kingdom of God. Christian practices, on the other hand can be identified as formational (in that they are directed toward a growing love for and obedience to Christ) and counterformational (in the sense that they seek to oppose the deforming aspects of cultural liturgies that adulterously lure their loves in unhealthy directions).

Young adult ministries help support positive formational practices. The rhythm of attending church and a college and young adult ministry builds positive habits that challenge other habits that are less fruitful for spiritual growth.

Spiritual direction for young adults mirrors the listening ministry of Jesus with his disciples. Jesus often takes time in his ministry to listen to the questions of his disciples and to ask them question that encourage deeper spiritual growth. Jesus is unhurried in the attention he gives his disciples. He is fully present to them and enjoys being with them. In his book, *Unhurried Life*, Alan Fadling articulates how Jesus models for his disciples a rhythm of prayer and ministry. Jesus often took time to break away from the crowd to be with his Father in heaven. For example, in Mark 1:35, Jesus gets up early in order to spend time in solitary prayer. The intimacy Jesus had with his Abba Father helped him

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134 Ibid.
undertake ministry led by the Holy Spirit and be relaxed enough to be present for his disciples and others. Jesus models for his disciples how to cultivate a closer relationship with God through a life of prayer, friendship, and ministry.\footnote{Fadling, \textit{An Unhurried Life}, 93-96.}

A life of prayer is also modeled historically in the lives of the desert fathers and mothers beginning in the third century. The desert dwellers chose to seek lives of solitude and prayer in order to grow in love with God and love of others. According to church historian Roberta Bondi, the desert dwellers encouraged spending time alone in silence in order to experience God. She explains,

\begin{quote}
Sitting in silence is an essential characteristic of prayer, particularly for naming God. Abba Moses tells his monks who ask him questions, “Sit in your cell and your cell will teach you everything” (Apoth., Moses 6, p. 139). Perhaps there is nothing more important that our ancient Christian ancestors have to teach us than how much we are in need of silence.\footnote{Roberta Bondi, \textit{To Love as God Loves} (Philadelphia, PA, Fortress Press, 1987), 138.}
\end{quote}

Silent prayer and other forms of restful prayer are ways to enrich an experience of God’s love and grow in intimacy with God.

Ultimately, a good young adult ministry follows the example of how Jesus engaged with his disciples. Alan Fadling asks a good question about what the impact of following Jesus’ rhythm of life might have on our lives. “What would happen if following Jesus included his habit of withdrawing often to give the Father his full attention? Would we learn to live Jesus’ own unhurried rhythm of life and work? Would we become people who model the life Jesus invites us to know?”\footnote{Fadling, \textit{An Unhurried Life}, 93.} The hope of a vibrant
young adult ministry is that those who join the community become spiritually formed into people who embrace the fullness of life in Jesus.
CHAPTER 5:

THE THEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF THE COLLEGE AND YOUNG ADULT COMMUNITY OF NEWBERG FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The theological content of the college and young adult ministry at Newberg First Presbyterian Church is rooted in three goals. The first goal is for our emerging adults to form a deep and intimate relationship with God. Spiritual practices such as Bible studies, personal prayer, and solitude with God through prayer retreats help support that goal. Spiritual mentoring and direction also help students cultivate a closeness with God. The second goal is that young adults experience a community of love and learn to love one another as they love themselves. Weekly gatherings foster a loving community as the students share vulnerably and pray for one another. The third goal is to equip students to be missional agents in the world. Through service opportunities, vocational mentoring, and mission trips, the hope is that students will have a better sense of how to serve God through sharing the message of the gospel and participating in actions of compassion and justice in the world.

The weekly gathering begins at 5:00 p.m. with a homemade meal cooked by a member of the church. Following the meal, the group then moves into a time of singing with guitar and piano, a time of individual check-in, prayer, and Bible study. On Monday
nights, CAYAC has between five and ten young adults who attend the group on a regular basis. My family of four, which includes my wife and two daughters, joins the group for dinner. The church has seen many of the students who participate in our community also attend our church regularly and participate in worship leadership, musical leadership, audio/video support, and hospitality. Three of the students have served in internship roles with the church.

The design of the College and Young Adult Community supports the spiritual formation of young adults. Chapter 4 explored the theological context of the spiritual formation of young adults by looking at John 15. Inspired by this text, CAYAC was designed to reflect the three goals of John 15. Another way to articulate the three goals mentioned earlier are to: (1) abide in Jesus, (2) love one another, and (3) bear witness. These goals of spiritual formation are drawn from the ministry of The Leadership Institute led by Dr. Paul Jensen.¹ The Leadership Institute equips leaders in spiritual formation through The Journey, which is a two-year formation program that includes regular week-long retreats. At the retreats, Christian leaders take classes and have extended times of solitude in which they commune with God. At one of these retreats, the Leadership Institute staff member, Chuck Miller, introduced participants to the insights from John 15 on abiding in Jesus, loving one another, and bearing witness.²

¹ I had the privilege of serving with The Leadership Institute part-time from 2008-2013.

² Chuck Miller, Journey Retreat (Generation 17), Pine Springs Ranch, CA, July 2010.
In his book, *The Spiritual Formation of Leaders*, Chuck Miller explains that abiding in Jesus needs to be the first priority for Christian leaders. Miller quotes John 15:7. “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” (NASB). Miller goes on to say,

At the center of God’s passion for us is intimacy, connection, and dwelling. You and I may not use the word abide in everyday conversations, but it is vital in the writing of the apostle John. He uses it forty times in his gospel and twenty-six time in his epistles. What exactly does that word mean? As one commentator explained. ‘Abide is used to communicate the enduring character of Christ, and more importantly, when used with the preposition ‘in’ and a personal object, it points to the relationship of mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son and the believer.’ The key to both effective Christian living and Christian leadership is to abide in Christ.

Miller understands that spiritual formation begins with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that is cultivated in times of abiding in the presence of Christ.

The ministry of CAYAC cultivates abiding in Jesus as a priority. It does so by offering weekly opportunities to share prayer requests and to study God’s word but also by encouraging students to participate in prayer retreats and spiritual mentoring or direction. Newberg First Presbyterian currently offers an annual prayer retreat on Good Friday. The plan is to offer regular prayer retreats that will be available both for college students and for other members of the congregation. As will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, a prayer retreat was included as a portion of this doctoral project as a way of initiating the prayer retreat experiences that we hope to offer more students in the future.

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4 Ibid.
The spiritual direction support offered to students at George Fox University through CAYAC will be available in the future for multiple students who wish to receive direction. As a pastor who also is a certified spiritual director, I plan to offer direction to students from George Fox and to recruit other spiritual directors in the Newberg area to help me. Our plan is to offer up to ten students each year spiritual direction for eight months, from September to April. The goal is for students to begin spiritual direction as freshmen and to continue until graduation from college.

Spiritual direction will take place monthly for one hour each session. It will be affordable for students at $25 per session and scholarships will be possible for students who need financial support. The same students who participate in direction will be encouraged to also attend a fall and winter prayer retreat. The opportunity for spiritual direction will be offered through our CAYAC ministry but will be part of our ongoing partnership with the Spiritual Life Office of George Fox University. My hope is that other churches might follow our lead in Newberg and in other regions of the United States or globally where churches are located near universities. In my experience, spiritual direction is one of the most effective ways for students to grow spiritually.

I understand that I am unique as a pastor who is also a spiritual director, but even pastors who do not have skills in the area of spiritual direction could work with their leadership teams to hire spiritual directors to serve on staff or to provide part time support to offer spiritual direction to young adult ministries at different churches. It would be amazing if multiple churches located near universities offered spiritual direction to students helping them grow spiritually during four or five years of college studies. These
students would effectively learn how to abide in Christ and deepen intimacy with God through contemplative spiritual practices. Deep inner transformation would take place.

The second priority of Christian lifestyle and leadership, according to Chuck Miller, is loving one another. Miller starts his reflection by quoting from the words of Jesus in John 15:12. “This is my commandment that you love one another, just as I have loved you.” (NASB). Miller explains that the key to a ministry of making disciples and serving Christ is love. He suggests that Christians are to love one another in the same manner that Jesus loves them:

But in the Upper Room, as Jesus passes the torch of leadership to the first generation of leaders who will soon be without His physical presence, the Lord straightforwardly issues a commandment, His commandment. It isn’t just a suggestion, an idea, or a recommendation. Jesus commands His people-then and now- to love one another. To be honest, I wish the verse stopped at that point. I wish the Lord had left His command at ‘love one another’ If He had, I could define for myself just how I’m to care for the people of God with whom I come in contact. But the Lord didn’t stop with that phrase. Instead He said, ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.’ Whoa! Jesus expects us to love with the same selfless attitude and in the same sacrificial manner in which He has loved us.5

Miller insightfully captures the key goal of spiritual formation as the ability to love others well and to love with the type of love shown through Jesus Christ. CAYAC fosters close community as it meets weekly for a meal together, builds strong friendships, and as students share their burdens with one another. Inspired to love with the same sacrificial heart as Christ, CAYAC is learning how to love one other well as it journeys together in community.

5 Ibid., 87.
The third priority of lifestyle and leadership for Christians, according to Chuck Miller, is the work of Christ’s mission in the world. Miller begins by looking at John 15:26-27. “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” (NASB). Miller suggests that the mission of Christ in the world includes both an evangelistic mandate and a cultural mandate:

We are sent out to share good news with lost people (Isaiah 61:1-4). We are to bring light to those in darkness, hope to those who are hopeless, and new beginnings to those who are defeated…In addition to the evangelistic mandate, God also sends us a cultural mandate: We are in the culture in order to give a cup of water to people in Jesus’ name. We are in the culture to minister God’s love and mercy.⁶

Miller understands that mission must flow out of an abiding relationship with Christ and the love given to others in community. In addition, the mission of Christians must also include a focus on social justice concerns, such as issues of racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and other prejudices that hinder God’s love from being experienced fully in the world. A broadening of mission as social justice might lead to political protest and other forms of activism as inevitable to instigating the transformation of society.

The desire of the leadership of CAYAC is to help students explore the fullness of mission through learning to share the message of the gospel and by doing actions of justice and service for the most vulnerable in our community. Newberg First Presbyterian and CAYAC, in particular, hope to reflect on the social concerns of the time and to find

⁶ Ibid., 92.
service opportunities by which to effectively address these concerns in the community and elsewhere. Newberg First Presbyterian has effectively raised awareness for immigrant rights and highlighted the need to address support for those living in poverty in the city of Newberg.

The model for the College and Young Adult Community (CAYAC) at Newberg First Presbyterian Church follows the relational nature of Jesus with his disciples. Jesus develops close relationships with his disciples. He calls them friends (John 15:15). In the same way, my wife and I seek to develop friendships with the young adults who come to CAYAC. We experience life together. My wife Karen is a professor at George Fox University and cultivates relationships with students both inside and outside the classroom. I often meet with students for coffee on campus and help them navigate the journey of college, relationships, faith, and vocational goals. The relational approach to ministry that Jesus offers the disciples is the basis for CAYAC’s approach to spiritual friendships with students. Out of these friendships, space is created to open conversations about God.

Jesus and the disciples provide a natural model for young adult ministry since Jesus and the disciples are young adults. Jesus starts his ministry with the disciples when he is thirty years old. He dies at the age of thirty-three. It is reasonable to assume that many of his followers were young men and women who were a few years younger than him. Jesus hung out with emerging adults and other young adults most of the time. He chose this group to start a movement, which eventually became the Church.
I imagine Jesus chose young adults to be his closest disciples, because the young people who followed him needed to be flexible enough to journey with him from town to town. Peter is married, but it appears some of the disciples are single. It does not appear the twelve disciples have children, although other followers of Jesus have children. The point is that Jesus, as a single man who is a rabbi, needs close followers who are in a similar season of life to journey with him. The young adults who follow Jesus also are young enough to be open to the teachings of Jesus. The disciples at times come up against older religious leaders who struggle to see Jesus as God’s Son.

In my own experience, many times young adults are more flexible and open to faith, since they are longing for God’s guidance and direction. Young adults often desire spiritual friendship and mentoring from adults who are trustworthy and supportive. CAYAC is designed to cultivate close relationships with young people who want to go deeper in faith and who need encouragement during the collegiate journey.

The model of Jesus in his own spiritual practice also supports the vision of the young adult ministry at Newberg First Presbyterian Church. Jesus mentored his young adult disciples on how to take time for prayer in solitude. It was the normal pattern of Jesus to go out in nature by himself or with a few disciples to pray (Mark 1:35). The prayer retreats at Newberg First Presbyterian are designed to support a habit of prayer in solitude for our college students.

In his research on young adults, Dr. Paul Jensen found a correlation between spiritual practices like prayer in solitude with more productive ministry in sharing the good news of the gospel through words and actions. Jensen summarizes his findings in
Subversive Spirituality, Transforming Mission through the Collapse of Space and Time.⁷ He discusses the value of spiritual practices for postmodern generations. In discussing his thesis, Jensen writes, “Empowered inward spirituality- expressed in creating time-space for God through solitary and communal spiritual practices- correlates with transforming outward mission, expressed in word and deed; and the collapse of space and time in the postmodern age requires the church to devote more plentiful space-time to spiritual practices in her structures of mission, church, and leadership development.”⁸ Jensen understands that true spiritual formation of young adults will enable them to overflow in love to the world around them.

The young adult ministry at Newberg First Presbyterian Church is rooted in the theology from John 15 of abiding in Jesus, loving one another, and bearing fruit. The weekly young adult gatherings offer an ongoing space and experience for formation. In addition, spiritual direction and a prayer retreat experience were provided for four George Fox University students last year. Spiritual direction and prayer retreats effectively support our times of ongoing community connection.


⁸ Ibid., 259.
PART THREE

MINISTRY PRACTICE
CHAPTER 6:
MINISTRY PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The ministry of the College and Young Adult Community (CAYAC) at Newberg First Presbyterian Church provided an on ramp for students of George Fox University to develop a relationship with the church. As relationships developed with these students, I wanted to give them a deeper experience of God’s love than could happen on an individual night of college ministry. As a result, the decision was made to implement a spiritual formation experience for four students that could enhance their spiritual formation and tangible experience of relationship with God. The hope was that the students who participated in this experience would be able to feel closer to God and would grow spiritually.

During the first six months of ministry, CAYAC welcomed about ten students who regularly attended the group. Out of this initial group, four George Fox students were invited, two women and two men, to participate in a special spiritual formation experience. Gratefully, all four students chose to participate. Demographically, it was helpful to have some diversity among the students. As mentioned, the group was comprised of two women and two men. One of the men and one of the women students
also represented non-European ethnic backgrounds. The male student was Filipino American and had grown up in Seattle, and the female student was born in Ethiopia and moved to North Hollywood, CA, at the age of nine. The other two students, one male and one female were Caucasian, one from Oregon and the other from central California.

The spiritual formation experience that was developed included four individual spiritual direction sessions followed by a prayer retreat. The spiritual direction sessions for each student occurred during the months of February, March, and the beginning of April in 2019. The sessions lasted approximately one hour each. The spiritual direction sessions normally occurred every two weeks for each student, but, in a couple of instances, spiritual direction sessions happened on a weekly basis. All spiritual direction sessions took place on the church campus in the pastor’s office.

Before the first spiritual direction session, each student was asked to sign a spiritual direction covenant and was given a questionnaire to fill out in order to assess how the students felt about their own relationship with God and where they were in their own individual spiritual maturity.\(^1\) After completing the four spiritual direction sessions and the prayer retreat, each student was then asked to fill out another questionnaire to evaluate how spiritual direction and the prayer retreat had impacted personal spiritual formation. A final conversation happened after the prayer retreat during which the final questionnaire was debriefed.

The first spiritual direction session largely focused on getting to know the personal spiritual journey of each student. Initially, each student shared his or her story

\(^1\) For an example of a spiritual direction covenant, see Appendix F.
and verbally shared responses to the questionnaire that he or she had already filled out.

The initial questionnaire included the following questions: (1) What interests you in exploring spiritual direction and prayer retreats? (2) What are some of the highlights from your spiritual journey? (3) What challenges have you faced in your spiritual life? (4) How do you currently feel about your relationship with God? (5) What are your hopes for your relationship with God? (6) And what are some of your current spiritual practices that support you spiritually?²

In the second spiritual direction session, students were invited to discuss where they felt they were in their relationship with God or to share what was on their heart? The third session had a similar focus to the second session. Students were encouraged to open up about personal desires and struggles. The final spiritual direction session included further sharing about personal spiritual questions, but it also provided space for students to articulate how they felt they were growing in relationship to God through spiritual direction and through the retreat experience.

Students had the option of choosing from two retreat date options. One retreat took place on Saturday, April 13, and the other retreat occurred on Good Friday, April 19. The retreat on April 13 was designed only for these specific college students.³ The retreat on Good Friday was open to other members of the church congregation.⁴ Both

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² See Appendix C.
³ See Appendix A.
⁴ See Appendix B.
retreats were contemplative in nature and were designed to foster an intimate experience of God’s love.

The schedule for each retreat was similar. Both retreats began at 9:00 a.m. and ended at 1:00 p.m. Both began with a welcome, opening prayer, and song followed by a reflective reading of Scripture called a *lectio divina*. At approximately 9:30 a.m., people were dismissed to spend two hours of solitude with God. The entire church campus was available to explore and utilize as prayer space. The neighboring park adjacent to the church was also available as an option for a reflective prayer walk. Retreatants returned to reflect on the prayer retreat experience as a community at 11:30 a.m. and enjoyed a light lunch together at noon. The retreat officially ended at 1:00 p.m. Two students participated in the prayer retreat specifically geared to members of CAYAC, and the other two students participated in the Good Friday retreat along with about ten members of the congregation.

During the time of solitude, questions for reflection were available that were based on the chosen Scripture passage employed in the *lectio divina*. Retreatants were also encouraged to experience a number of different prayer stations to help them encounter God. One station gave students an opportunity to paint or draw. Another station encouraged students to meditate on a painting and reflect on God’s abundant love and grace. A third station provided water to drink as a symbol of receiving God’s refreshment. A fourth station offered paper for participants to write either prayers of thankfulness or prayer requests to God. Finally, during the Good Friday retreat, the church fellowship hall exhibited fourteen stations of the cross that were spread out with
artwork and thoughtful meditations. The stations of the cross were set up as a means to help retreatants journey with Jesus to the cross and resurrection.

The CAYAC prayer retreat specifically designed for the college students on April 13 utilized John 15:1-17 as the basis of the *lectio divina*, which is the well-known ‘I am the vine’ passage of Scripture. The students were introduced to an illustration of God’s abundant love and grace called ‘pitcher, cup, saucer, and plate.’ In my office hangs a painting of a pitcher, cup, saucer, and plate created by one of my former seminary students. The painting is based on the teaching found in Chuck Miller’s book, *The Spiritual Formation of Leaders*. The idea is that God’s love is like a pitcher of water that flows into a cup, the cup representing each person. Since God’s love is like a waterfall that never runs dry, the water flows over onto a saucer, which represents those closest to the person. The saucer then fills with water and overflows onto a larger plate beneath the saucer, the plate standing for the broader ministry outreach of the person.

In the prayer retreat materials, the students were invited to reflect on the image and how they personally experienced God’s overflowing love. They also were invited to ponder John 15:1-17 and to consider how Jesus is the vine and the importance of abiding, or remaining, in the vine of Christ in order to experience God’s love and bear fruit in the world.

The Good Friday prayer retreat used the scriptural passage of Jesus’ prayer in the garden of Gethsemane found in Luke 22:39-46. The focus of the retreat was identifying

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5 See Appendix A for an image of the painting.

with Christ’s journey to the cross and inviting God to meet us in our vulnerability and suffering. The image of the pitcher, cup, saucer, and plate was also used in the Good Friday retreat as one of the prayer stations.

In order to connect to Jesus’ prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, the retreat packet included questions for reflection on the story. Prayer retreatants were able to engage this story in one of two ways. The first way included questions based on the lectio divina model for reflecting on Scripture. The questions were simple and aimed at allowing people to connect personally to the suffering of Jesus. The questions included: What words or phrases stand out to you in the story? How does your life connect with them? What is God’s invitation to you in this story? Finally, the retreatant was encouraged to bring the gamut of their feelings and thoughts to Jesus in prayerful conversation.

The second way retreatants could connect with the passage involved using imagination prayer which is a style of prayer most naturally connected to the teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola. In imagination prayer one is invited to imagine one’s self being in the story and to connect to the five senses as a participant in the story. Therefore, the questions for this approach included: (1) What character are you? (2) Why did you choose that character? (3) What happens to you in the story (using your five senses of taste, touch, hearing, sight, and smell)? After engaging the text in this way, the last invitation was to authentically engage Jesus in conversational prayer.

After the retreat experience, each of the four students filled out the final questionnaire which asked them to reflect on how they grew spiritually through the
experience of the retreat and the four spiritual direction sessions. The questions for the final questionnaire included: (1) How was your experience with spiritual direction? (2) What makes spiritual direction different than some of your other experiences of discipleship or mentoring? (3) How did spiritual direction support your own growth in relationship with God? (4) Would you consider receiving spiritual direction in the future? (5) How did you feel about today’s prayer retreat? (6) How did today’s retreat support your relationship with God? (7) How has spiritual direction or this prayer retreat helped your own experience of prayer or other spiritual disciplines?

See Appendix D and E.
CHAPTER 7:

RESULTS OF MINISTRY PROJECT

Spiritual direction is a spiritual conversation that involves personal sharing about one’s faith in God. It was a true privilege to listen to the spiritual journeys of the four students that met with me for spiritual direction and the prayer retreat. After reading through the questionnaires and reflecting on the conversations that took place with each student about their journey with God both before and after the spiritual formation experience, I was profoundly encouraged that all four students spoke highly of their personal spiritual growth. To clarify the results of the ministry project, the spiritual formation awareness of students prior to the ministry experience will be reflected on, as will the insights the students gained from the experience. Additionally, my own observations of the spiritual formation growth of the students will be discussed.

The students who participated in the spiritual formation experience were already involved in the college ministry, so that seemed to help them trust me as their spiritual director. When asked about what drew them to spiritual direction and to the prayer retreat, they universally showed an interest in growing in their faith. Everyone was new to spiritual direction and had never heard of spiritual direction as a ministry. All were
excited to try new forms of prayer and spiritual practice. All students had a level of discontentment in their current walk with God. One person mentioned feeling lost in her faith. Another felt close to God but wanted the freedom to talk more about her spiritual journey, since she struggled to find safe places to discuss her faith journey with others.

All of the students grew up in the Christian faith and actively attended worship services. They also demonstrated the humility to acknowledge that they were young and were still learning how faith impacts them as young adults. A couple of the students said that even though they have faith, there is room for improvement. The transition to college made many of them feel more dependent on God for help. They all expressed having a practice of prayer, but desired that their prayer life would grow and deepen. A couple expressed feeling guilty for not reading the Bible more often.

When asked to reflect on struggles in faith, a couple mentioned grief related to the loss of loved ones. One person mentioned having a hard time with accepting himself when he struggles to learn from past mistakes. Another talked about worldly pleasures as a temptation.

Although the students had experienced some youth group and college related faith gatherings like church camps, none had ever experienced a prayer retreat. They were open to the experience, but initially unsure as to what to expect. Both spiritual direction and the prayer retreat felt new to them. They felt vulnerable, though for each of them the experiences were ultimately rewarding.
The results of the ministry experiences were overwhelmingly positive. The students were first asked about their experience with spiritual direction.\(^8\) They were all grateful to participate in spiritual direction. One person called it “fantastic (Student A)!”\(^9\) Another said, “It was a good experience (Student C).”\(^10\) One student spoke of the value of personal reflection in spiritual direction. “My experience with spiritual direction was very helpful in helping me see what God is calling me to do by reflecting on my past and present relationship with God, I was able to see the strength of my faith and how that might lead me (Student B).”\(^11\) The students felt grateful to be given the chance to share their stories and have someone listen and help them be aware of God’s presence of love.

The students were thoughtful about the difference between spiritual direction and other forms of discipleship or mentoring.\(^12\) One person spoke of the value of someone listening to both the ups and downs of his life. Direction helped him become open to a different mindset towards God. Another said that spiritual direction felt more personal than other forms of mentoring. One student spoke about the value of sharing her deepest desires before God as she shared during direction. As shown in the following comment, many students spoke about being more aware of God’s presence through the day as the result of spiritual direction. “Spiritual direction is different because it’s about relating

\(^8\) For verbatim student responses to their experience with spiritual direction, see Appendix D: “Student Questionnaire’s after Prayer Retreat.” Student names are withheld by mutual agreement.

\(^9\) See student response to question #1 in Appendix D.

\(^10\) Ibid.

\(^11\) Ibid.

\(^12\) See student responses to question #2 in Appendix D.
everything going on in your life to what God is doing and to see God in everything (Student D).”\(^{13}\) It was encouraging to hear that the students became more aware of God’s actions of love and support.

Especially rewarding was the feedback received from students as to how they had grown spiritually as the result of spiritual direction.\(^{14}\) Students spoke of the value of learning new spiritual practices and experiencing new forms of prayer. One person appreciated the growth in her faith as she reflected on her gratefulness to God for the positive things happening in her life. One student thought spiritual direction helped him be aware of areas that are lacking in his life. As demonstrated in the following comment, all students felt closer to God because of spiritual direction. “I feel today I have gotten closer to God. I feel that he is more approachable. I learned some facts about his will for us (Student C).”\(^{15}\) Another student spoke of seeing God in everything. This student shared also about seeing more of her gifts and passions through different conversations that were had as part of spiritual direction. All students were open to pursuing spiritual direction in the future and articulated that it would be helpful to know the director ahead of time before pursuing regular meetings.\(^{16}\)

\(^{13}\) Ibid.

\(^{14}\) See student responses to question #3 in Appendix D.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) See student responses to question #4 in Appendix D.
Not only was spiritual direction transformational for all students, the prayer retreat experience was equally beneficial to the four students.\textsuperscript{17} The students spoke about having clearer direction about God’s will and a greater appreciation for God’s presence in their lives. One student said he felt low during the retreat, but the space enabled him to lean on God’s shoulders and find support. He enjoyed one of the prayer stations that invited people to use art as a means of prayer. He talked about the retreat as a huge blessing. Another student mentioned finding peace with God at the retreat. “It gave me a sense of peace about our relationship and about the future and things I worry about (Student B).”\textsuperscript{18} It was clear that the experience of solitude opened students to a deeper experience of prayer and a deeper awareness of God’s presence of love.

In further reflection on the value of the retreat, students highlighted growing in a more mutual relationship with God that involved a closer conversation with God. As one student shared about the retreat, “It showed me that prayer is not just asking, but also conversation. God is willing to listen to us regardless of what we are going through (Student C).” Students highlighted that the retreat offered time to enjoy nature, sit in God’s presence, journal, learn prayer practices, and grow in offering praise to God.

As the spiritual director and prayer retreat leader for this group, I learned a great deal about the faith experience of these four students. Both spiritual direction and the prayer retreat helped them to grow significantly even within the short time frame of two months. I was encouraged that by simply listening to these students in spiritual direction,

\textsuperscript{17} See student responses in Appendix E: “Student Questionnaire’s after Prayer Retreat.”

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., question #2.
a whole new experience of faith was introduced to them. Very few young adults have a mentor who regularly listens to them as they reflect on their faith. Because young people typically do not have spiritual mentors or directors walking with them, many students feel isolated, lonely, worried, guilt ridden, and possibly fearful of God. By reflecting on experiences of prayer, personal doubts, images of God, personal relationships, family issues, vocational call, and other topics related to faith, students found spiritual direction to be a safe place in which to explore spiritual formation.

The prayer retreat occurred after the completion of the spiritual direction sessions. As a result, it seemed to be a natural outgrowth of spiritual direction and a culmination of the formation process. The power of solitude and prayer in aiding young adults to experience the presence of God was amazing to observe. Taking such a large quantity of time to be alone with God was revolutionary to them and it opened students to a new world of deeper intimacy with God. The retreat contrasted with the media saturated world of iPhones, YouTube, and other technology-centered experiences that occupy the lives of so many students in this day and age. Students found the disconnection from technology refreshing and different. Students who only two months before were somewhat new or immature in the Christian faith were suddenly more confident and hopeful about growing in relationship with God.

This project has its limitations. Only four students participated, and the students experienced a relatively short quantity of spiritual direction sessions and only one retreat. These students also knew me prior to the project and could easily have wanted to demonstrate appreciation for the experiences as a way to support me. To offset this, I
clearly communicated prior to both spiritual direction and the prayer retreat that authenticity is the goal before God and before one’s spiritual director. The positive comments about spiritual direction and the retreat were genuine, and this ministry project served to enforce my belief that spiritual direction and prayer retreats are some of the most effective means to help young adults grow in faith and make progress on their spiritual journey.

Spiritual direction helps students as they explore questions about God and life. As Jeffrey Arnett highlights, emerging adulthood is a time of growth in personal freedom and identity.\textsuperscript{19} The freedom to explore is key in this season of life, and spiritual direction gives space to ask questions, explore faith, and come to personal conclusions about God’s love and purposes for one’s life.

In addition, prayer retreats impact young adults positively, because this age group is ready to do more intentional personal reflection and to explore dreams about the future. Emerging adults care about having life experiences that are relational in nature. They often dream about the future and bring ideas before God and others in prayer. The beauty of emerging adults who are in college is that they are in a season of study, so reading Scripture or other spiritual writers often draws them into further learning. They are often open to creative expression and prayer through art. Since they are younger, they often have more physical energy to enjoy the outdoors and connect to God in nature.

Students find times of solitude and silence countercultural as they spend time in prayer with God during a prayer retreat. Most of the college students in CAYAC have a

\textsuperscript{19} Arnett, \textit{Emerging Adulthood}, 9.
strong attachment to cell phones. The retreat gave them a break from the constant engagement found in technology and allowed them to be more reflective and prayerful while enjoying nature. Furthermore, the students seemed less stressed and more peaceful as a result of the prayer retreat experience. Time in spiritual direction also fostered a greater comfort level in relating to God.

I recognize that these four students are exceptional people who attend a strong Christian college and already have developed personal faith in God. Not all college students will be attracted to spiritual direction or prayer retreats. However, the results of this ministry project suggest that churches, campus ministries, and other groups that offer ministry to emerging adults will see great growth in faith in the lives of students who pursue spiritual formation in this way. Therefore, the need is to have enough spiritual mentors available to journey with students as they experience emerging adulthood and as they become mature Christians who will lead the future church.

In order to further reflect on the experience of spiritual direction for the students who participated in the study, it is helpful to share a paraphrase of a portion of a spiritual direction session.20 The topics mentioned occurred in more than one session, but this example provides a taste of how the students who participated in this doctoral project, grew in spiritual formation:

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR: Today, I wonder if you would be willing to share with me about how you image God.
COLLEGE STUDENT: I am still getting to know God. I believe God is loving, but also is like my parent and expects me to do the right thing. God is a bit like an old man in the sky with a white beard to me.

20 Spiritual direction session with Student D, February 26, 2019.
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR: Thank you for sharing about this image. How do you feel about your relationship with God these days?

COLLEGE STUDENT: I feel lost sometimes. I know God loves me, but it is hard for me to feel that love. I wish I wanted to pray more and read the Bible more, but it is hard to be motivated. I sometimes wonder if God is disappointed with me.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR: Have you considered talking with God about your feelings as you would a friend?

COLLEGE STUDENT: I like the idea of talking to God as a friend. I guess normally I talk to God about what I need. I worry that God is upset with me for not being more focused on my faith. I feel like my relationship with God needs more effort. Can you tell me more about friendship with Jesus?

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR: I find imaging God as a friend helps me to form a closer relationship with God where I can come to God with my struggles and joys. I talk to Jesus as a friend and listen to him as my friend.

COLLEGE STUDENT: This feels like a new idea to me. I want to have a closer relationship with God rather than just know about God. This feels different than seeing God as a parent. Thank you for helping me see God in this new way.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR: Great. I am glad this image is helpful. Sometimes I picture Jesus sitting at a chair or on a couch talking to me or I might go for a walk with Jesus and imagine him walking by my side. This might help you have a conversation with Jesus that feels more like a friendship.

COLLEGE STUDENT: I look forward to exploring my relationship with God in this way. I feel like I am learning more about my faith as I am in our college group and at church. I sometimes feel lost, but I feel better about my faith when I go to church and try to pray.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR: It is nice having you in our college group and hearing more about your faith. You mention church and prayer are helpful for you. Can you tell me more about what helps you feel connected to God?

COLLEGE STUDENT: I appreciate the times we pray for each other in the college group and going every week to church and doing bible study all help me feel closer to God. You are one of the first people to really talk to me deeply about my faith. It is nice to have a spiritual mentor in my life who listens to me reflect on where I am with God.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR: I am glad to journey with you in this way. Spiritual mentors have also made a big difference in my faith journey. I sense God is doing some great things in your life and I am grateful that you are part of our community.

This example of a spiritual direction session reveals the difference spiritual mentoring makes in the lives of the students involved in CAYAC. The best way to describe the
growth of the students who participated in spiritual direction and the prayer retreat is that they developed a deeper friendship with God. It was a humbling experience to hear from all the students that my mentoring was significant in their lives. Based on my experience, spiritual mentoring opportunities like spiritual direction may be the most impactful for helping young adults grow in spiritual formation.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This doctoral project has focused specifically on a group of college students from George Fox University who attend CAYAC (College and Young Adult Community) at Newberg First Presbyterian Church. This project has offered historical background and current information on Newberg, Oregon, George Fox University, and Newberg First Presbyterian Church as a way to describe the context for this ministry project. Additionally, it has articulated a model of how other churches might approach a spiritual formation ministry to college age students that incorporates both spiritual direction and prayer retreats. The results are clear that spiritual direction and prayer retreats provide two tools which can aid emerging adults in growth in faith and spiritual formation as followers of Jesus Christ. Additionally, this project suggests that spiritual direction and prayer retreats have the potential to cultivate spiritual formation in students in a relatively short time period as compared to other experiences of faith, such as simply attending church. If students are able to experience spiritual direction and prayer retreats for all four years of college even greater spiritual growth may be expected. The intentional conversations that include deep reflection on prayer, faith in God, and personal calling make spiritual direction and the prayer retreat experience unique and fruitful.

The future hope is to introduce a minimum of two prayer retreats, one per semester, to students within the George Fox community through Newberg First Presbyterian Church. Although, prayer retreats are normally offered at the church campus, the possibly of leading one of the prayer retreats at a camp or retreat setting will be explored. I will continue to serve as a spiritual director to a few students associated
with George Fox University. Additionally, I will work to make other spiritual mentors available within our congregation or from the George Fox faculty and staff to walk with our students as they grow in faith. George Fox University and Portland Seminary, which is associated with the university, already have resources available for students who desire spiritual direction. However, many students do not take advantage of these resources. My goal is to make both spiritual direction and prayer retreats a well-known option for spiritual formation among college students and other emerging adults. My hope at Newberg First Presbyterian Church is to offer spiritual direction to a minimum of ten students each year. I would meet with a few students and I would invite other spiritual directors to connect with our students. The plan is to invite other church based young adult ministries in Newberg connected with George Fox to also hire spiritual directors to meet with their students. Hopefully, by God’s grace a movement of spiritual direction and retreats will take root as a partnership with George Fox and the churches in our area and our example could be duplicated in other college towns.

The future church will one day be in the hands of the emerging adults of today. They will have the creativity to lead the church as they grow in relationship to Christ. Ministries to young adults that help foster spiritual formation through regular meetings, spiritual direction, prayer retreats, and mission experiences will be key in supporting the spiritual formation of young adults. I hope this doctoral project offers one model from a small church with a heart for college students that might inspire others to empower the next generation to follow Christ with grace, hope, and love.
The spiritual formation of young adults is encouraged by spiritual practices such as spiritual direction and prayer retreats, but it also benefits from ministry outreach. Many young adults are asking the church to be relevant by showing concern for social justice. Although it was mentioned earlier that mission and social justice efforts build spiritual formation in young adults, this particular project focuses mostly on the individual relationship between young adults and God and the experience of Christian community through a young adult ministry. A further study in the area of spiritual formation of young adults might explore how social activism and other mission efforts help the spiritual formation of young students. The College and Young Adult Community at Newberg First Presbyterian Church hopes to provide more opportunities for justice outreach in the future, but for now the emphasis remains on meeting weekly for community, having occasional prayer retreats, and offering one-on-one spiritual direction, or mentoring.

An encouraging aspect of the young adult ministry of Newberg First Presbyterian Church is the church’s willingness to experiment by creating connections with college students at George Fox University. The goal of the church is to be a thriving force in the future. Subsequently, it is intentionally connecting with young people, so it remains relevant not only to the older members of the church but to the younger generations as well. Building a partnership with George Fox University is one way that Newberg First Presbyterian is trying to adapt to the ministry context of Newberg.

Tod Bolsinger highlights the need for churches to remain adaptive in order to thrive. He recommends that the best way to keep a church from dying is to “focus on your own
transformation together, not on your church dying. Focus on the mountains ahead, not the rivers behind. Focus on continually learning, not what you have already mastered.”

Newberg First Presbyterian Church is looking ahead by caring for the next generation. It has not mastered young adult ministry, but it values college students and the partnership that is deepening with George Fox University. As both a former campus minister at a college and a chaplain at a seminary, I realize my spiritual formation comes alive by being with young adults. I need them as much, if not more, as they need me in order to stay motivated to do ministry with the whole congregation.

Bolsinger reminds leaders that a focus on personal formation is necessary in order to remain healthy in ministry:

Since leadership is ‘energizing a community of people toward their own transformation in order to accomplish a shared mission in the face of a changing world,’ then it requires that leaders are first and foremost committed to their own ongoing transformation. In a changing world, the leader must be continually committed to ongoing personal change, to develop new capacities, to be continually transformed in ways that will enable the organization’s larger transformation.2

Bolsinger’s advice is humbling, since being a lead pastor at a small church feels overwhelming at times. Time for personal growth is hard to find through gaining new abilities or seeking personal transformation in other ways. Doing a doctoral project that includes spiritual direction and a prayer retreat was motivated by my own need for solitude with God through prayer retreats and my own need for spiritual direction and friendship. The students in our college and young adult ministry provide me with the

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1 Bolsinger, Canoeing the Mountains, 215.
2 Ibid., 216.
small group community that I need to stay fresh in ministry. I also need colleagues in ministry who can support my own spiritual formation and who remind me to rest. Out of times of rest and reflection, I can explore what areas of learning may help me be a more effective leader for my congregation.

In his book, *An Unhurried Leader*, Alan Fadling gives sound advice for leaders who wish to deepen their own spiritual formation. Before leaders can do ministry, they are called to come to Jesus in prayer:

> Jesus invites us to come to him and follow him, but sometimes I am more focused only on where I am *going*. We travel here, have an appointment there, and attend a meeting after that. Going here and going there. We are always going! And of course leaders go. Leaders take initiative. Leaders act. And quite understandably our first thought as leaders is often what we are going to *do*. This action orientation is a valuable gift. But we are not to lead alone, in our own power, according to our best thoughts, so we cannot fixate on this gift of doing; we need to also open those gifts that bring us into deeper communion with the one who is the great leader, the one who longs to lead with us. We will lead better when we lead in the presence of our King.³

My goal is to prioritize my prayer life and other spiritual practices that help me stay connected to God’s presence. I wish to be an unhurried leader that can mentor young adults well, empowered by the grace and love of Jesus. As I remain connected to God’s presence of love, I can model for our church how to support the spiritual formation of young adults.

Brian McLaren offers creative proposals for churches that wish to be part of a new movement of change that supports young people. He proposes a fresh approach to

Christianity for children, youth, and college-aged adults. McLaren believes that the church of the future will be led by young leaders who have creative ideas. He reminds us that Jesus was one such young leader.

We forget that Jesus was thirty when he launched his movement- a movement that, if it were happening today, might be called a youth movement by the aging leaders like me who run many religious institutions. In that light, let’s dare to propose that Christianity should become a movement of young people again, supported by older mentors who know how to encourage without controlling. McLaren’s perspective reminds me that one goal of spiritual formation of young adults is to help them grow in faith, so that they can shape the future of the church. As Newberg First Presbyterian Church prepares for the future, it is crucial that young people are empowered to lead the church.

The College and Young Adult Community at Newberg First Presbyterian Church is supporting the spiritual formation of young adults with the hope that they will lead the church with new ideas not just in the future, but also today. Newberg First Presbyterian and other churches cannot afford to have emerging adults during college or after college distance themselves from the church. Many choose to never come back to church once they walk away. It is paramount that the church make a home for young adults now and help them know that Jesus wishes to abide with them and will help them bear the fruit of love in the world (John 15). The church is to be a home for young adults who will then become young leaders that will guide the future church.

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5 Ibid., 161.
CAYAC Prayer Retreat

Abiding In The Vine- April 13, 2019
Saturday Retreat Schedule:

9 AM – Welcome and Introduction

9:30 AM- Solitude for Prayer and Reflection

11:30 AM- Gathering for Reflection

12 Noon- Lunch and Conversation

John 15:1-17 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes[a] to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed[b] by the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become[c] my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants[d] any longer, because the servant[e] does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.
Questions for Reflection and Prayer

What words or phrases stand out to you in this passage?

How does your life connect with these words?

What is God’s invitation to you in this passage?

Notice the grace filled rhythm of abiding in God’s love, loving one another, and bearing fruit. How is this rhythm experienced in your own life?

Pitcher- God’s love poured out in each of our lives.

Cup- Us. We receive God’s love and grace and allow it to overflow.

Saucer- Our close friends in family that receive love from us out of the overflow.

Plate- The broader community of mission that experience God’s love through us.

How do you feel about the metaphor of the the Pitcher, Cup, Saucer, and Plate? How have you experienced God’s overflowing love? Reflect on who represents your saucer and plate and your sense of your mission in the world. What might God be calling you to be and do?
April 19, 2019

Retreat Schedule:

9 AM- Welcome, Introduction, and Lectio Experience

9:30 AM- Solitude for Reflection and Prayer

11:30 AM- Community Sharing

12 Noon- Light Lunch

1 PM- Finish

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives (The Garden of Gethsemane)

39 He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. 40 When he reached the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” 41 Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, 42 “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” 43 Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. 44 In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. 45 When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, 46 and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”
Questions for Reflection and Prayer

Way 1

• What words or phrases stand out to you in this story?
• How does your life connect with them?
• What is God’s invitation to you in this story?
• Talk to Jesus.

Way 2

• Use your imagination and place yourself in the story.
• What character are you?
• Why did you choose that character?
• What happens to you in the story? (Use your five senses of taste, touch, hearing, sight, and smell).
• Talk to Jesus about your experience.
Praying the Jesuit Examination of Conscience*

1. **Thanksgiving**
   
   Lord, I realize that all, even myself, is a gift from you.
   
   Today, for what things am I most grateful?

2. **Intention**
   
   Lord, open my eyes and ears to be more honest with myself.
   
   Today, what do I really want for myself?

3. **Examination**
   
   Lord, show me what has been happening to me and in me this day.
   
   Today, in what ways have I experienced your love?

4. **Contrition**
   
   Lord, I am still learning to grow in your love.
   
   Today, what choices have been inadequate responses to your love?

5. **Hope**
   
   Lord, let me look with longing toward the future.
   
   Today, how will I let you lead me to a brighter tomorrow?

(*Adapted from *Through All the Days of Life*, a collection of prayers compiled by Fr. Nick Schiro, S.J.*)
APPENDIX C

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES PRIOR TO SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual Direction Questionnaire Prior to Beginning Direction

1. *What interests you in exploring spiritual direction and prayer retreats?*
   a. The opportunity to grow in my faith and understanding of Christianity. (Student A).
   b. Reflect on what I have done in my life. Prayer retreat will allow me to acknowledge what God has done in my life. (Student B)
   c. I want to clear my mind through the meditation and quietness of reflection. Talking about faith with others. (Student C)
   d. I am interested in this because I am feeling lost in my life right now and I feel that through this process I can grow closer to God. (Student D)

2. *What are some highlights from your spiritual journey?*
   a. There aren’t many yet, however as I grow they continue to show themselves. I love the feeling of reconnecting with the truth after a dry spell. (Student A)
   b. The Lord has transformed my life from what I have born into giving me opportunities I wouldn’t have had. The Lord became part of my life at the age of around six. (Student B)
   c. Having a close family and church family. Bike accident. (Student C)
   d. I got baptized when I was a sophomore in high school. I believe I got saved when I was six or seven. This transition has definitely made me close to God. (Student D)

3. *What are some challenges that you have faced in your spiritual life?*
   a. Growth and development. (Student A)
   b. Accepting the places the Lord has put me into even with many questions. Understanding denominations. Why I can’t learn from my mistakes. How I can live like Jesus and become a better person while I’m growing academically. (Student B)
   c. Death of loved ones. Worldly pleasures. (Student C).
   d. I have had periods of doubt and then periods of faith. I fluctuate a lot in my spiritual life and that really bothers me. (Student D)
4. How do you currently feel about your relationship with God?
   a. I feel that while its good there is lots of room for improvement. (Student A)
   b. I am being constantly reminded his everlasting love. I’m always being called to be in his presence to fall and share everything in my mind and heart to the Lord. Helping me to grow and have a sustaining faith in him. (Student B)
   c. Close. I feel like I understand his love for me. Through that, whatever happens, I try to look at the positive. (Student C)
   d. I feel the closest to God than I have felt in a long time. This transition has been harder than I expected with no one to lean on, I had to really rely on God. (Student D).

5. What are your hopes for your relationship with God?
   a. That I find myself in constant communion with him and can continue to give everything to him. (Student A)
   b. To live by Scriptures that I hold closely to my heart. To be the person the Lord wants me to be. Hope that I can share my story in hopes that those who don’t have fellowship with God to begin to have one and realize his life. (Student B)
   c. I want to trust him more. I know that he will provide for me but it is hard to live it out sometimes. (Student C)
   d. But even in this closeness, I feel that I don’t really know Him even if we are physically close. I hope to get to know Him through this process. (Student D)

6. What are some of your current spiritual practices that support you spiritually?
   a. Prayer I suppose. I love to lift things up to God. (Student A)
   b. Attending church. Making the time to talk to God. Reflecting on what God has done in my week and life. (Student B)
   c. Aside from going to church, I don’t really do much. I thank God for the good times but I also ask and plead when I struggle with something. (Student C)
   d. I pray a lot, but I do not read my bible, which I have guilt about as I get distracted throughout the day and forget to do it. I have also neglected a devotional that I have. (Student D)
APPENDIX D

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES AFTER SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual Direction Questionnaire After Doing Four Spiritual Direction Sessions

1. How was your experience with spiritual direction?
   a. Fantastic. It has been a huge blessing (Student A)
   b. My experience with spiritual direction was very helpful in helping me see what God is calling me to do by reflecting on my past and present relationship with God, I was able to see the strength of my faith and how that might lead me. (Student B)
   c. It was a good experience in terms of wrestling with myself and God. I realized that it okay to question/ spend time with God in a different relationship than when worshipping. (Student C)
   d. I really enjoyed it as it was nice to just slow down and not think about what I need to do next but to think about God and the big picture of my life. It was nice just to sit and think and to reflect about all that God has done for me. (Student D)

2. What makes spiritual direction different than some of your other experiences of discipleship or mentoring?
   a. It feels more personal. It had a great impact. (Student A)
   b. Spiritual direction helped me to know that the Holy Spirit is present in our daily conversations with God. This helped me share my deepest thoughts and desires for life to God knowing that I was being spiritually directed. (Student B)
   c. Somebody who was willing to listen and learn about me and my life (good and bad, ups and downs) brought me to a different mindset in approaching God. (Student C)
   d. Spiritual direction is different because it is about relating everything going on in your life to what God is doing and to see God in everything. (Student D).

3. How did spiritual direction support your own growth in your relationship with God?
   a. It gave me new techniques for prayer/ thanking and praising God; It helped me come to an understanding of parts of my spiritual life that were/are lacking. (Student A)
   b. By being able to converse about all the good things that God has done in my life, I was able to give thanks to God during my time in spiritual direction. This helped in growing my relationship with God. (Student B)
c. I feel today I have gotten closer to God. I feel that he is more approachable. I learned some facts about His will for us. (Student C)
d. It helped to talk things out and then reflect on how God might be using me or my gifts/passions in that event or to help others. To see God in everything. (Student D).

4. Would you consider receiving spiritual direction in the future? If so, why? Would you have met with a spiritual director without knowing the person previously?
   a. I would. Spiritual direction is a place to pour yourself out with a guide to help you understand where/what/how the Spirit is leading. I would have/did meet with someone I barely knew. (Student A)
   b. Yes, I would be willing to receive spiritual direction in the future as I have found this one very helpful and supportive of my faith journey. I would prefer that I know the person beforehand, before receiving spiritual direction. (Student B)
   c. Yes, I would because I usually don’t make the time to isolate myself from distractions. Not sure if I would have met with a spiritual director without knowing the person previously. (Student C)
   d. Yes, as I really enjoyed my time with Chris. It was nice to take time and slow down and contemplate stuff going on. It was nice to get some advice from someone who has walked through this before and hash things out within myself. I don’t think I would have done this without knowing Chris as it is pretty vulnerable. (Student D)
APPENDIX E

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES AFTER PRAYER RETREAT

1. *How did you feel about today’s prayer retreat?*
   a. Again, fantastic. It was a huge blessing. (Student A)
   b. Today’s prayer retreat was amazing! It gave me the time that I usually don’t have for myself. I was able to write down many of my thoughts in a form of prayer where I gave thanks to God and asked for guidance in my future. (Student B)
   c. I felt good about it. It was productive and reassuring/assuring about the situations and events happening in my life. (Student C)
   d. I enjoyed it. It was nice to spend time alone with God and my thoughts/feelings without distractions. (Student D)

2. *How did today’s retreat support your relationship with God?*
   a. It brought me low, so low that I was forced onto God’s shoulders. That’s a great place to be. (Student A)
   b. As I always give thanks for all that God has done in my life, I was able to do that today at this retreat. This allowed me to see my strong relationship with Him as his child and has changed since I have been giving thanks. (Student B)
   c. It strengthened it. I feel like His will for me is clearer than before. I was reminded of the blessings in my life. (Student C)
   d. It gave me a sense of peace about our relationship and about the future and things I worry about. (Student D)

3. *How has spiritual direction or this prayer retreat helped your own experience of prayer or other spiritual practices?*
   a. Prayer of examen. Open with God even when it’s terrifying. (Student A)
   b. Both the spiritual direction session and the prayer retreat helped me see the goal I have for myself in the near future. I was able to see through my conversation and prayer requests. I was asking God to help me find the way to be any support to others. As a future teacher, I have many goals of making a positive impact in any education field that I go into and in this spiritual direction time I saw that my experiences thus far are preparing me for this. (Student B)
   c. It showed me that prayer is not just asking, but also conversation. God is willing to listen to us regardless of what we are going through. (Student C)
   d. I am not the most prayerful person, but I have been adding more and more prayer into my life. I pray through journaling or going outside or staring at nature and doing activities I like. It was nice to just sit in God’s presence. (Student D)
APPENDIX F
EXAMPLE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION COVENANT

Spiritual Direction Covenant*
Christopher B. Murphy, MDiv
501 N. Mission Drive
Newberg, OR 97132

A Covenant for Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction is the art of Christian conversation and listening carried out in the context of a trusting relationship. A Spiritual Director is a faith companion who listens to your life stories with an ear for discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life. God is the true guide and director, while the human spiritual director is like a coach or midwife, assisting you in noticing and responding to the inner voice of God. The director is primarily interested in your experience of God and how you can follow God’s call. That process is a spiritual journey into the truth about God, yourself, your relationship, your work, and the world.

The premise of Spiritual Direction is that God is present and active in your daily life in a multitude of (usually unnoticed) ways. When you slow down, begin to reflect, and take a long, loving look at what is happening around you, you begin to become aware of the experience of the presence of God. The more you know yourself the more you know God; and the more you know God, the more you know yourself and your direction and purpose. Intimacy with God leads naturally into transformation, healing, and action.

My work as your director is to focus my attention on your spiritual experience and points of self-discovery, to explore with you God’s will and purpose in your life. Therefore, I will not try to analyze or fix you, even though our conversations may involve deep personal sharing and exploration of personal crisis and suffering. Spiritual direction is a conversation of the heart and uses all our human faculties (intuition, emotion, imagination, senses, and intellect) to discern God’s presence and will for you, as you understand it. I pledge myself to listen with you for the voice of God and to help you notice God’s movement in your life.

Our conversations are always confidential; however, for my professional growth I ask your permission to share pieces of information with my supervisor. It is customary for directors to be under direction and supervision as part of our commitment to improving our practice.
In agreement__________________________, College Student Name, Date________

In agreement__________________________, Christopher B. Murphy, Date________

[*Covenant for Spiritual Direction Adapted from Christian Formation and Direction Ministries Spiritual Direction Program (Cofounders Doug and Catherine Gregg)]
APPENDIX G

CHARTER FOR A JUST AND GENEROUS CHRISTIANITY TEN COMMITMENTS FROM BRIAN MACLAREN

*This excerpt is taken from the appendix of Brian McLaren’s book, The Great Spiritual Migration (p. 209). The ten commitments listed here provide further reflection on the direction of the future church.

**Ten Commitments:**

We love Jesus and have confidence in his good news of the reign, commonwealth, or ecosystem of God, and we seek for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven by making love our highest aim-love for God and neighbor, for outsider and enemy, for ourselves and the good earth.

We affirm God’s preferential option for the poor and the young in the struggle for justice and freedom…through advocacy, relationships, organizing, and action.

We seek to honor, interpret, and apply the Bible in fresh and healing ways, aware of the damaging ways the Bible has been used in the past.

We seek to reconnect with the earth, to understand the harm human beings are doing to it, and to embody more responsible, regenerative ways of life in and with it.

We seek the common good, locally and globally, through churches of many diverse forms, contexts, and traditions, and we imagine fresh ways for churches to form Christlike people who join God in the healing of the world.

We build inclusive partnerships across gaps between the powerful and vulnerable—including disparities based on wealth, gender, race and ethnic identity, education, religion, sexuality, age, politics, and physical ability.

We propose new ways of encountering the other in today’s pluralistic world through the creative and nonviolent wisdom of peacemaking, and we collaborate with other religious and secular groups in alliance for the common good.

We host safe space for constructive theological conversation, rooting our practice in theological reflection, and translating our reflection into practical action.

We value the arts for their unique role in nurturing, challenging, and transforming our humanity.

We emphasize spiritual and relational practices to strengthen our inner life with God, to build healthy families, and to deepen our relationships with one another.
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