Table of Contents

About This Journal iii-v

Editorial 1-4

Keynote Address

Can Theology Be Practical? Part I: A Discussion of Theory, Practice, Wisdom, Spirituality and Context 5-19
Ps Mark J Cartledge

Can Theology Be Practical? Part II: A Reflection on Renewal Methodology and the Practice of Research 20-36
Ps Mark J Cartledge

Peer Reviewed Articles

Theology and Social Sciences in Ministry Research 37-57
Rev Dr Philip Hughes

Spiritual Knowing: A Case Study in Entitlement 58-66
Dr Bruce A Stevens

Appreciative Inquiry – A Strategy for Being a Healthy Church 67-81
Dr Nigel Pegram

Gender and Leadership Issues in the Australian Church: Leadership Effectiveness – men vs women 82-100
Dr Lewis McMaster and Assoc Prof Juhani Tuovinen

Pastoral Reflection

Reflecting on 40 years of Christian Ministry 101-105
Ps Richard Warner

Student Article

'Four Pentecostal Views on Healing 106-118
Christopher Cat

Theses/Dissertation Listing
2016 119-121
Book Reviews 122-141
Forthcoming Conferences 142

Journal of Contemporary Ministry

About This Journal

Editorial Board

The Editorial Board of the Journal of Contemporary Ministry is comprised of:

Editorial Team

The Editorial Team of the Journal of Contemporary Ministry is comprised of:

Dr Jon Newton - (Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research, Harvest Bible College); Editor.

Ms Kerrie Stevens - (College Librarian, Harvest Bible College); Journal Manager, Layout Editor.

Dr Astrid Staley - (Adjunct faculty, Harvest Bible College); Section Editor for Pastoral Reflections and Student Articles, Layout Editor.

Rev Dr Clayton Coombs - (Academic Dean, Planetshakers College); Book Review Editor.

The Journal of Contemporary Ministry will act as a place for reporting research and discussing issues related to contemporary ministry, including related theological and biblical questions.

Its goals are to:

- Stimulate informed discussion regarding issues faced by contemporary Christian churches and ministries worldwide;
- Encourage research, including empirical research, into diverse forms and contexts of contemporary ministry and the practical, theological and biblical issues that arise from ministry practice;
- Enable students and graduates in postgraduate Ministry programs to speak to a wider audience;
- Build the credibility of Ministry as a field of study and research.

The Journal of Contemporary Ministry will provide a specific forum for Harvest Bible College research students and faculty, and other interested people, to publish the results of their research.

It will also provide a potential publishing venue for paper presenters at Harvest's annual research conference.

The Journal of Contemporary Ministry will contain these kinds of material:

- Peer-reviewed articles based on scholarly research (empirical or theological) into diverse forms and contexts of contemporary ministry, and the practical, theological and biblical issues that arise from ministry practice;
- Pastoral reflections and articles that contribute viewpoints, based on personal experience or theological reflection, on contemporary ministry issues. These may be responses to articles from the Journal;
- Book reviews and/or notes of new publications related to contemporary ministry;
- Articles contributed by postgraduate students, which would also be refereed but may not come up to the level required in the first category;
- A list of recent doctoral research theses completed on contemporary ministry relevant to this journal's focus.

The material we invite covers such topics as:

- Results of empirical research into aspects of contemporary Christian ministry, e.g. youth ministry, children's ministry, pastoral counselling, pastoral leadership, intercultural ministry;
- Theological and biblical reflection on issues that have arisen from the practices of contemporary Christian churches and ministries, e.g. manifestations of the Spirit, worship styles, leadership culture, interfaith matters, political and social engagement, etc;
- Underlying theological questions that lie behind Christian ministry issues, e.g. the role of women's ministry in local churches, ethnic identity, ordination, apostleship;
- Proposals for new expressions or forms of Christian ministry based on social analysis, e.g. how to reach specific sub-cultures.

The Journal of Contemporary Ministry is indexed in Informit's Humanities & Social Sciences Collection database.

For further information, please visit the journal website
www.journalofcontemporaryministry.com

Journal of Contemporary Ministry

Editorial

Focusing our Efforts

A few weeks ago, I read an opinion piece about Contemporary Christian Music by Jonathan Aigner (http://www.patheos.com/blogs/ponderanew/2017/04/28/reasons-dont-listen-christian-music-entertainment). The author was highly dismissive of contemporary Christian music as not even really contemporary, let alone Christian or theologically valid. It is "mostly unremarkable garbage", he wrote. I was interested in the reasons he advanced for giving up on listening to CCM for entertainment: it's a poor derivative of mainstream pop music, Christians should engage positively with secular culture rather than withdrawing into a kind of Christian ghetto (my phrase, not his), buying CCM increases its unhealthy presence and influence in church worship and "it perpetuates lame, bogus, or just bad theology". Instead, Aigner urges Christians to listen to classical music, other pop music or just no music at all (we don't need to constantly fill our heads with music just because it's there).

He has some legitimate points, though I think he probably overstates the case. However, whatever you think of Aigner's piece, or the so-called "worship warfare" debate that particular engages a lot of American Christians; it raises some broader issues related to contemporary Christian ministry, the focus of this journal. In particular, how much should contemporary ministry (which for this journal is not a "style" of ministry but just ministry of today) be influenced by trends in society at large? It's not a new issue and ministers tend to oscillate between some form of "spiritual purity" and some kind of contextualisation as we try to engage people "outside" the church world with the gospel. One of the articles in Issue 1 of this journal was critical of the use of visual technology in contemporary church worship. However, if the church only sings eighteenth century hymns to a pipe organ accompaniment, reads from the King James Version and preaches pure biblical exposition to a congregation dressed in their "Sunday best" and sitting in pews, it is danger of dying from lack of engagement with a rapidly changing (western) world. On the other hand, if churches are fully "contemporary" in the sense of "smoke machines", loud music, casual dress, smart professional presentation, catchy mini-sermons and the like, they may have nothing significant to say to a culture that's becoming more and more distant from its Christian roots.

The question I want to raise is, how much actual empirical research has been done on such dilemmas? Do we actually know whether contemporary styles of church attract, keep or alienate young people, or indeed anyone? Both sides of such debates are in danger of parading their own preferences, anecdotes or experiences as evidence. And even the Bible doesn't give us precise answers to these questions.

The purpose of a journal like this is to provide a place for scholars and ministers to discuss contemporary ministry and all the issues and questions that impact on that (like the points above) in a way that draws on good research and scholarship. The problem is that there are so many issues that can be discussed and this is reflected in the range of topics that postgraduate students at Harvest Bible College choose to do research projects on as well as the topics of articles submitted to this journal and the papers presented at our annual research conference. When a potential Doctor of Ministry student contacts me, one of my first questions is (obviously), "What do you want to do research about?" As it is a DMin program, I automatically reject topics that are purely theological or biblical in nature, as there are better programs that suit such areas of investigation. But even within that category of ministry, there is such a broad range of possibilities. DMin students at Harvest are investigating such topics as pastoral care of same-sex-attracted people, sacred space, hearing from God, GenY and the church, overseas aid by local faith organisations, relationships between Christians and Jews, Pentecostal churches and people with long-term problems, speaking in tongues, inner healing, local churches and social welfare, integration of Asian migrants into Australian churches - and so on.

For this reason, and to stop our resources being stretched too thin (always a danger with any postgraduate program), at Harvest we have chosen five research domains to focus on, based partly on the research interests of our five leading academics:

1. **Leadership in Local Churches and Society** led by Dr Albert Haddad, Chief Academic Officer at Harvest, whose doctoral research was about leadership and change. He is the author of *Arise to Lead: 5 Fundamentals to Becoming an Effective Leader* (High Bridge Books, 2015).
2. **Ministry and Society**, led by Dr Philip Hughes, Chief Supervisor at Harvest, author of many books and articles in his former role at Christian Research Association.
3. **Intercultural Ministry and Global Christianity** led by Dr Ian Grant, Vice-President Emeritus at Harvest and a leading Pentecostal missiologist. His doctoral research was about leadership in a cross-cultural context, specifically in Papua New Guinea.
4. **Wellbeing and Ministry** led by Dr Nigel Pegram, Postgraduate Fellow at Harvest. Nigel's doctoral research was about the role of emotional intelligence in the prevention of ministry burnout. He is co-author of *Ministry Life Skills Foundations: Key Lessons in Leadership and Discipleship* (Ministry Life Skills Centre, 2010, with Roger Tan).
5. **Issues in Pentecostal Ministry and Local Churches** led by Dr Jon Newton, Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research at Harvest, Editor of this journal and author of *The Revelation Worldview: Apocalyptic Thinking in a Postmodern World* (Wipf & Stock, 2015). Jon's research interests include Revelation, Christian worldview and Australian Pentecostalism.

These are still very broad categories but we hope they will help Harvest and its associated entities, including this journal, to focus its research efforts. In the future, we may decide to present themed issues of the journal focusing on each of these domains, or at least to classify articles under these five headings.

Let me introduce our authors for this issue and their articles.

We start with a new feature: the keynote addresses at last year's Harvest Research Conference. Our keynote speaker in 2016 was Rev. Professor Mark Cartledge, who serves as Professor of Practical Theology at Regent University in Virginia, USA. He has been a minister in the Church of England (UK) for over twenty-five years and has worked in parish ministry, overseas theological education in an Anglican seminary in Nigeria as well as campus ministry in the UK (Universities of Liverpool and Durham). He has taught in seminary (Durham) and secular University departments (Lampeter and Birmingham) over the last sixteen years. He is the author of several books, including most recently *The Mediation of the Spirit* (Eerdmans Publishing, 2015), which our journal reviewed in 2016 (Issue 2). In his addresses, he spoke to the conference theme "Can theology be practical?" In the first address, Cartledge discussed theory, practice, wisdom, spirituality and context, exploring the whole concept of "practical theology". His second address was entitled "A Reflection on Renewal Methodology and the Practice of Research". Here he seeks to show a renewal (i.e. Pentecostal-charismatic) perspective can contribute to practical theology and empirical research on the church and its mission for the benefit of church, academy and society. These addresses are academic in nature, but they underpin the kind of research that the conference and this journal wish to promote.

The next section of the journal consists of four peer-reviewed articles.

Rev. Dr Philip Hughes is the Chief Supervisor at Harvest Bible College and one of the most experienced researchers on Australian Christianity during his long tenure as chief researcher for the Christian Research Association. He has a string of publications to his name. In this article, "Theology and Social Sciences in Ministry Research", he picks up the debate about how much Christian researchers should draw on the methods and findings of the social sciences. He particularly discusses an empirical research project about youth ministry of local churches in Australia today. Since reaching youth is a central concern of contemporary ministers, this article has some important conclusions.

Professor Bruce Stevens holds the Wicking Chair of Ageing and Practical Theology at Charles Sturt University, Canberra (funded by the J. O. and J. N. Wicking Trust) and author of *Crossfire! How to Survive Giving Expert Evidence as a Psychologist* (Australian Academic Press, 2008), and *Happy ever after?: A Practical Guide to Relationship Counselling for Clinical Psychologists* (Australian Academic Press, 2011, with Dr Malise Arnstein). His article is entitled "Spiritual Learning: A Case Study in Entitlement". In this article, Stevens explores the sense of entitlement people often have as a factor in how people fail to learn and grow spiritually. This article provides a different perspective for the contemporary Christian minister seeking to build emotional and spiritual health in themselves and those they serve.

Dr Nigel Pegram is a Postgraduate Research Fellow at Harvest Bible College. In his article "Appreciative Inquiry - A Strategy for Being a Healthy Church", he explores how Appreciative Inquiry, a strategy originally developed in the business world as a change-management strategy, can help local churches renew themselves by tapping into what God is already doing in their midst. Pastors of local churches, especially those who may

feel their church is somehow "stuck", will find some stimulating ideas here that have been used successfully in other local churches.

Dr Lewis McMaster is the senior pastor of Emmanuel Christian Outreach in South Australia. Together with a mixed gender leadership team he pioneered the development of two churches and two Christian Schools in rural South Australia and completed doctoral studies on women and church leadership in the Australian church. **Dr Juhani Tuovinen** is an Associate Professor at the Australian Institute of Business, Senior Research Fellow at the Global Centre for Work-Applied Learning and a freelance Education and Research Consultant. In their article, entitled, "Gender and Leadership Issues in the Australian Church: Leadership Effectiveness - Men Versus Women", they draw on the National Church Life Survey from 2006 to discuss the comparative effectiveness of male and female church leaders. Their analysis of this research and other research on gender and leadership explores new dimensions of these issues.

Our **pastoral reflection** for this issue comes from a pastor who is presently completing a term of thirty-seven years at the same church, Lighthouse Christian Church in Keysborough, a suburb of Melbourne. **Pastor Richard Warner** was born in the UK but migrated to Australia in pursuit of God's call on his life. Since Richard and his wife, Pauline, accepted the call to what was then Springvale Assembly of God, Lighthouse Church has been a significant participant in the Pentecostal world in Melbourne, spawning a number of church plants and a multi-campus Christian school among other achievements. He reflects on some of the lessons he has learned in ministry over the long period.

Our outstanding **student paper** for this issue has been written by a member of our Doctor of Ministry cohort, **Christopher Cat**. Christopher lives in Sydney and attends Life Church in Parramatta. The original version of this essay was written as part of a DMin course unit in "Theology, Hermeneutics and Research". Christopher is researching how Pentecostal theology and pastoral care operate with people experiencing long-term suffering. In this essay, he explores four major Pentecostal writers, representing two different approaches to the issue of health and sickness, a key issue for Pentecostal and charismatic ministers.

Two important resources for readers and students in the area of contemporary ministry are the **book reviews** and lists of relevant **theses** from around the globe. Reading these sections of our journal will help you keep abreast of developments in this and related fields of enquiry.

I commend all the contents of this issue to you as discerning readers and adventurous, enquiring ministers.

In closing, I also want to thank my editorial team - Kerrie Stevens, Astrid Staley and Clayton Coombs - for all their effort in making Issue 3 happen.

(Dr) Jon K. Newton

Editor

Journal of Contemporary Ministry

Can Theology be 'Practical'?
Part I: A Discussion of Theory, Practice, Wisdom, Spirituality and Context

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Introduction

Can theology be 'practical'?[1] One of the clergy at my church asked me what my job title was at Regent University. I told him that I was Professor of Practical Theology. He laughed out loud and said: 'Isn't practical theology an oxymoron?' To which I replied, 'Well, it all depends on what you understand theology to mean and indeed whether you buy into a particular kind of dichotomous thinking: theory and practice, with that which is "practical" reduced to things like hints and tips for ministry. For example, how not to drop the baby at its baptism and what not to say at a funeral, for example, "Have a nice day!"'. But what we mean by the term 'practical' when we use it in this context is an interesting question. Similarly, what do we mean by 'theology'? As Pete Ward has observed, practical theology has been derided for neither being properly practical nor properly theological.[2] We can easily trot out the standard definition of 'speaking about God', or theological discourse about God, but actually theology is not just

[1] The question has been asked many times before. See, for example, the discussion by Duncan B. Forrester, 'Can Theology be Practical?' in Friedrich Schweitzer and Johannes van der Ven (eds.), *Practical Theology – International Perspectives* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 16-27.
[2] Pete Ward, 'The Hermeneutical and Epistemological Significance of Our Students: A Response to Bonnie Miller-McLemore', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16.1 (2012), pp. 55-65.

about what we say but what we do, how we think and feel, our dispositions as well as our speech and actions. And then there is the question of how we put these things together. Is there a wise way of integrating thought and speech with action as patterned, repeated activity or skill-based activity, i.e. 'practice'?[3]

So, in order to explore these ideas, I would like to think about our terminology, define our terms and look at some practices or models that arise from the field of practical theology.[4] In the first keynote address, I shall consider this material largely in terms of the discipline/field of practical theology. In the second keynote address, I shall ask questions as to how a Pentecostal and Charismatic or Renewal perspective might begin to orient the answers to these questions in a particular way. In other words, I shall offer a theological approach that answers these basic questions in a tradition-specific manner, but with an eye to the relationship between academy, church and society.

Terminology and Assumptions

Let me begin by attempting to clarify some terminology and the assumptions behind their use.

Theory versus Practice

Many of us are inheritors of modern, Enlightenment thinking. In this way of thinking we distinguish between theory as abstract thinking that provides models of understanding reality through the use of ideas, diagrams expressed in words and numbers. These theories describe the nature of the reality that we are seeking to understand and they also provide explanations as to why certain things happen in a patterned way. They offer clues about how we might begin to change certain outcomes, intervene and use the patterns of our natural world. This second phase is often referred to as the 'applied' phase or the 'application' of the theory. And, in some cases, this makes sense and appropriately describes what is happening. However, for most of us, while we are programmed to conceptualize things in theory and practice terms, in our own life practices we integrate our knowledge in a kind of intuitive manner. Thus, in our everyday lives we do not think: 'now I am doing theory, now I am doing practice, now I am doing theory, now I am doing practice'. They are intertwined and necessarily so.[5] In almost all of what we do in our life situations, we act and reflect together. We do something and then we learn from the doing of it, such that we change our approach. Sometimes we do not really do this as clearly or as intentionally as we should, but in general terms it is already happening. And yet, academically, this distinction holds sway.[6]

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[3] Duncan B. Forrester, *Truthful Action: Explorations in Practical Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), pp. 3-4.

[4] For a very useful and interesting American assessment of the development of the discipline/field of practical theology, see: Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, 'Five Misunderstandings about Practical Theology', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16.1 (2012), pp. 5-26.

[5] My latest book, *Mediation in the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015) seeks to challenge the marginalization of religious experience from practical theological discourse and the lack of integration with first order thinking and acting.

[6] See my discussion in 'Christian Theology for Ministry and the Quality Assurance Agency Criteria: An Epistemological Critique', *Discourse* 4.2 (2005), pp. 26-42.

The problem is accentuated when practitioners of one kind or another are frustrated by discourse that seems overly abstract and irrelevant to everyday life. While scientists turn theories into technology through experiments and product designs, which are in turn commercialized and form part of our economic system, the ordinary consumer is less interested in the theory behind technology and more interested in the use of the technology to make their lives more enjoyable, convenient and efficient. I am typing this address on a MacBook Air. I do not really understand the scientific theory behind the electronics that make the computer work. I do not care, if I am honest. I am pleased that some clever people have understood the science, have the imagination to create a tool and I am complicit in an economic system that mass-produces these items for global consumption. You may question my ethical stance on the use of Apple products, but I find them very 'practical'. They help me to do what I want to do in an enjoyable and efficient (or at least fairly efficient) manner. I, too, am a product of modernity. I cannot escape it. I find technology to be very 'practical'!

But the very same problem can be seen in the world of vocational practice, whether that be in social work or pastoral work. Practitioners are very interested in what can be 'useful'. There is a desire for 'tools'. What will make my job easier or more effective? How can I reach this group of people? How can I change this situation? The engagement with theory can be cursory or shallow because of the drive for utility. I find this problem with my own Doctor of Ministry students. There can be a rush to intervention, without first fully understanding the problem as deeply as it deserves to be understood in order to address it appropriately.

The Nature of Theology

What about the nature of theology? Theology is 'speech about God', but it is not just speech about God. It reflects thinking about God too. Of course, there are people who speak about God without thinking about God! And in personality terms there are some people who simply do not know what they think until they have spoken because it is only in the process of speech that they begin to understand what they think. But it can be a little frustrating when we have to listen to a lot of half-baked ideas or even nonsense because people are always processing their thoughts in confused and problematic ways. This highlights an important point, namely that theology is a process of thinking that develops over time. We might come out with statements of faith or position papers on certain things, but these texts have a process history, even if we have never been party to the process. We all process our thinking in some way and then we share it in some other way.

There is, of course, an allied point. Theology is also a 'practice', that is, a set of patterned activities carried out by individuals and communities.[7] We perform the practice of theology in very different contexts. So, what I am doing now is a well-established academic practice of giving a lecture to a group of people. I am offering a reflection in a public context and that is itself a practice. Similarly, writing is a practice and if you were to analyze different theological journals, you

[7] James W. Fowler, 'The Emerging New Shape of Practical Theology', in Friedrich Schweitzer and Johannes van der Ven (eds.), *Practical Theology – International Perspectives* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 75-92 (p.79).

would discover a set of different conventions to do with the practice of publishing. Publishing writing is a distinct form of theology. It is a second order discourse that allows the author/s to reflect on their faith and consider it in the light of specific sources, whether Scripture, tradition or contemporary experience in local contexts.

The role of experience is an interesting source but it is also context for theology. Theology is performed in sets of practices, which are themselves experienced by individuals and communities. The performance of an action that has itself theological commitments embedded in it reinforces the theological beliefs but can also lead to a change of beliefs and commitments. For example, how you baptize a person depends on a number of theological assumptions. What amount of water should be used? A small bowl or a large tank? How many times should the person be dunked or sprinkled? Once or three times? Should the person have already confessed the faith with their own lips before the ritual or can we baptize those who cannot yet confess the faith on the assumption of parental covenantal promises? In other words do we baptize babies or believers? And do we baptize in the name of Jesus only or in the name of the Trinity? This liturgical practice is loaded with theological assumptions about what is believed in a descriptive sense, but also what should be believed in a prescriptive sense. In this important ritual they are combined. The whole community is 'traditioned' in a particular understanding every single time this practice is performed and their 'experience' is shaped by this understanding. It cannot be otherwise. This means that theology is practised in action and action reinforces existing understanding.

Of course, in the diverse world of Christianity, it is not long before you observe theological practices that are different to your own. Or you meet people whose experience in their past has been different to what you are offering them in the present. In one of my congregational studies, I had a conversation with a Ugandan Pentecostal woman. She asked me a series of faith-based questions, because her assumption was that because I was an Anglican I was not really a true Christian. I think she was deciding as to whether I was a conversion project. 'Was I saved, baptized in the Spirit and did I speak in tongues?' When I answered all of these questions in the affirmative, she simply shrugged her shoulders and said 'Huhh!' and walked off. She could not believe that an Anglican could have remained an Anglican if these experiences had been true. In the same church, I was often asked: 'Why aren't you a Pentecostal? You know so much about Pentecostalism'. I would reply: 'Because I am committed to the Anglican tradition, and in any case you don't accept my baptism. I was baptized as an infant and I don't believe that I should be re-baptized because to do so would be to deny the validity of my first baptism'. They usually got the point, even if they disagreed with my theology. I would then point out that believer's baptism is not universal among Pentecostals around the world, so that it is not a Pentecostal distinctive but rather an Anabaptist position. Usually, at that juncture, historical and contemporary information was somehow less interesting, presumably because it problematized their cherished position.

The Central Question

So, we come back to our question: Can theology be practical? In reply, I want

to say: how can it *not* be practical in the sense that theology is itself a practice that shapes not only how we construct it but also in the sense that it informs and gives expression to theological commitments that are deeply held and reinforced by communal dimensions, as well as individual preferences. But I suggest this question is a practitioner's one that is concerned about utility. How can all this theoretical stuff be useful when all I want to do is plant a church, grow a congregation or solve a pastoral problem? For me, bringing existing theoretical sources to bear on a contemporary practice means the possibility of analyzing a practice and understanding it better. It also means listening to Scripture, tradition and the insights of contemporary scholarship in theology, the social sciences and humanities in such a way that a critique can be offered and a more authentic practice performed. The problem that we face is that our contemporary practices may just as well be informed by contextual and cultural factors as they are by Christianity. What practical theology has done is to give us processes and tools to analyze the contemporary end of the question in a theological manner in order to revise contemporary practices for the sake of the kingdom of God. Poor practice, inconsistent practice, bad practice, unhealthy practice and even abusive and toxic practice do not glorify God. We are called to higher things in the service of Jesus Christ. Amen?!

The Process of Practical Theology

I move now to the process of conducting or going about practical theology. How do contemporary practical theologians actually do what they do? Are there models of how this is done and what may be said about them in terms of the central question before us?

Liberationist Hermeneutics

Contemporary practical theology is indebted to the hermeneutics of liberation theology, which also focuses on the concrete particularities of the experience of the poor around the world.[8] Thus, the attention is primarily on the need to alleviate adverse conditions under which people exist. In this context there has been a focus on another word, namely 'praxis'. Praxis is used to give expression to the idea that concrete lived experience is always a mix of values and action or behaviour. They are blended together and cannot be pulled apart. Practical theologians often mix Aristotelian and Marxist connotations in terms of the integration of action and reflection and the subversion of hegemony.[9] In my work I tend to follow the Aristotelian heritage as 'value-laden practices'.[10] I have just shown how the practice, or we could say praxis, of baptism is shaped deeply by theological assumptions. So, it is the case that praxis is also shaped by deeply held values and these values are supported or not by wider cultural systems of belief that can marginalize different groups. Truth is not only what is said or written: orthodoxy, but also what is done: orthopraxy. In order to understand

[8] See, for example the discussion by Nancy J. Ramsey, 'Emancipatory Theology and Method', in Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 183-192.
[9] Fowler, 'The Emerging New Shape of Practical Theology', p.80.
[10] For a discussion of the Aristotelian background to praxis, see Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980).

how things should be changed towards orthopraxy, liberation theology sought first to understand the nature of existing praxis, which affected the poorest people in the community. This was analyzed not only theologically but also socially in order to construct a new praxis based on different assumptions: usually the dichotomy between oppressed and oppressor, and the exodus motif as a theological response. Liberation theology has now been used by different marginalized groups around the world to promote their cause and seek change. There are a number of different problems with liberation theology, which I cannot delve into here, but the point I wish to make is that academic practical theology borrowed this move to praxis. If you ask most practical theologians around the world about the focus of their attention, in other words the direct object of their enquiry, most will say either contemporary belief and practice or praxis (because they amount to the same thing).[11]

The hermeneutical move away from starting with either Scripture or tradition to starting with experience or praxis has meant that the focus of attention has become the contemporary end of the question. Now, in some of my work I have critiqued the consequences of this move, rather than the move itself. I believe our focus should be the contemporary end of the question, I just do not believe that we should have downplayed the use of Scripture, tradition and systematic theology in the ways that the academy has done so. In my latest book, *The Mediation of the Spirit*, I have attempted to address what I regard as these weaknesses in contemporary scholarship.[12] But in order to give a sense of the processes, I should like to describe two models of practical theology viewed as a process. I like the process idea because it resonates with the idea of research as a process of investigation.

The Pastoral Cycle

The first model, which in certain contexts (e.g. the UK) appears to be ubiquitous, is the so-called pastoral cycle.[13] It is derived from the liberationist approach and contains four or five phases. It is a process that can be used individually to guide a research project or a collaborative learning process with a

[11] For example, see the discussion at the International Academy of Practical Theology in 2013 and the papers associated with the discussion published in a special issue of the Academy's journal: Christiaan A.M. Hermans and Friedrich Schweitzer, 'Theory and Methodology of Praxis in Practical Theology: Introduction to the Panel', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18.1 (2014), pp. 88-90; R. Ruard Ganzevoort and Johan Roeland, 'Lived Religion: the Praxis of Practical Theology', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18.1 (2014), pp. 91-101; Wilhelm Gräb, 'Practical Theology as a Theory of Lived Religion Conceptualizing Church Leadership', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18.1 (2014), pp. 102-112; Christiaan A.M. Hermans, 'From Practical Theology to Praxis-Orientated Theology: The Study of Lived Spirituality and Lived Religion in Late Modernity', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18.1 (2014), pp. 113-126; Gerrit Immink, 'Theological Analysis of Religious Practices', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18.1 (2014), pp. 127-138; Friedrich Schweitzer, 'Professional Praxis in Practical Theology: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18.1 (2014), pp. 139-149; Birgit Weyel, 'Practical Theology as a Hermeneutical Science of Lived Religion', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18.1 (2014), pp. 150-159.

[12] (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 2015).

[13] For a discussion of the pastoral cycle see Emmanuel Larty, 'Practical Theology as a Theological Form', in James Woodward and Stephen Pattison (eds.), *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 128-134.

group of people. The first stage in the process is the experience of something. It can be something routine, such as the practice of counselling or taking funerals or it can be a critical incident of some kind, like a pastoral crisis. In this phase the issue, event or practice is described as thickly or as nuanced as possible. Once this is done, the second phase offers an analysis based on some theoretical or analytical perspective from the social sciences. So, for example in the case of the funeral, an analysis could be in terms of the nature of bereavement and where the congregation might be situated in terms for the process of bereavement. Alternatively, it could draw from social psychology and personality theory, and the kinds of things different people are listening for in a sermon. Attention to personality differences could inform how pastoral themes are communicated in a relevant manner. Third, we have the theological response. What one thinks about death and what has happened to the person who has died will inform what is said. This reflective stage explores the kinds of theological responses such an event might elicit. The fourth and final stage in the process of theological reflection returns to praxis and asks in light of the following analysis and reflection, how might the existing practice be changed or renewed in order to be more authentic and relevant.

The Four Voices

The second model emerged from the action-research literature in ministry studies, which is where a team of academics work with congregational participants to design and implement a research project collaboratively.[14] But the model is not limited to its action-research framework and can be used in a number of different ways. It is called the four voices approach. In this approach, the model uses the metaphor of listening to voices from different sources in order to suggest how a practice in context might be appreciated and then addressed in order to improve it in some meaningful way. Take for example the use of the gift of prophecy in a congregational setting. The four voices approach considers it in terms of espoused (what is said), operant (what is practised), formal (academic literature) and normative (Scripture and tradition) perspectives. So, taking the theme of congregational prophecy and applying it to the four voices, we could begin with any of the four perspectives, but from a practical-theological approach it makes sense to start at the contemporary end of the question. If we start with the espoused theology, we would ask what does the congregation say about prophecy in its literature, through its teaching material, via its online material? Is there a clear understanding of what it is? It may be that this voice is unclear, limited or confused. If so, this needs to be recorded as extensively as sources permit. Alongside this voice, the approach listens to the operant voice. How do people actually go about prophesying? What kinds of things do they say? Who prophesies and when? Are there any limitations or controls in place? How is the process of prophecy managed and by whom? This material is then brought into conversation with another set of sources, namely the formal sources of the academy. What does the most recent academic discussion of contemporary prophecy have to say about the phenomenon and, importantly, is there a critical perspective that can be brought to bear? Do the

[14] For a description of the four voices see Helen Cameron, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney and Clare Watkins, *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010), pp. 53-56.

formal sources assist in the evaluation of both the espoused and operant theology? Finally, the normative voice is added to the conversation. How do Scripture and tradition help us to understand the nature of prophecy and do they provide a critical way of evaluating the contemporary practice? It is here that the formal theology also helps because it will draw from the normative voice in its own constructions. Of course, the research will need to appreciate the different perspectives in their own terms before seeking to bring them into conversation with each other. But the outcome can be a recommendation for change in terms of espoused, operant and formal theology, and indeed a renewed understanding of Scripture and tradition.

The Role of Wisdom and Spirituality

One of the main questions that practical theologians have faced over the years is: how can we integrate theology into the Christian life when (a) it appears remote, abstract and irrelevant to the concrete realities of church life in society; and (b) it does not always connect with individual and corporate intuitions concerning the spiritual life? There have been a number of responses to this question and the processes of doing practical theology noted above reflect ways of integrating theory and practice, but there are other possibilities as well. I shall comment on only two in this address. As I do so, I am conscious of the critique of Ward that the use of at least one of these terms, phrónēsis (although he also refers to poeisis and theoria), can be understood as a theology replacement term because of the doctrinal deficit in practical theology.[15] I think that this is partly true in the sense that there has been a doctrinal deficit but not because of the use of these terms per se. Rather, I would suggest that this doctrinal deficit emerges out of an historical and tradition-specific amnesia aligned with a low view of Scripture and an interest in the social sciences found within the wider practical theological academy.[16]

Phrónēsis

First, there is an approach, drawing from the Aristotelian tradition that focuses on the concept of phrónēsis, often referred to as practical wisdom. In this tradition, the way in which we guide our knowledge, technical abilities and praxis towards ends that are appropriate and good is through *phrónēsis*.[17] Aristotle defines *phrónēsis* as 'a true state involving reason, concerned with action in relation to human goods'.[18] This can actually sound quite vague. Theologians who have used this idea in terms of virtues have stressed the nature of moral insight and judgment at specific moments or with regard to particular

[15] Ward, 'The Hermeneutical an Epistemological Significance of Our Students', p.61. The irony concerning this particular statement is that when I analyzed Ward's own work, I discovered that he was light in terms of his use of both Scripture and doctrine, see *Mediation of the Spirit*, pp. 40, 117.
[16] See my *Mediation of the Spirit*, pp. 32-44.
[17] Nigel Rooms, 'Paul as a Practical Theologian: Phronesis in Philippians', *Practical Theology* 5.1 (2012), pp. 81-94 (p.82-84).
[18] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. and ed. Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Bk VI.5, 1140b20.

circumstances.[19] In some respects it coheres with what we might today call 'integrity' but it also includes feelings and motives as well as judgment.[20] In essence it refers to 'fittingness' in the synthesis of action and reflection that is morally committed and informed by tradition, as well as the cultivation of excellence.[21]

It is a concept that has been used within the practical theological literature, most famously by Don Browning.[22] He argued that practical reason or *phrónēsis* should be seen as a way of reconstructing experience using the outer core of traditional narratives and practices and the inner core of the second greatest commandment (Mtt. 19:19) or golden rule (Mtt. 7:12; Lk. 6:31).[23] Some might understand this deontological approach as problematic because it ignores the teleological perspective of the overall Aristotelean perspective, which strives for the highest possible good.[24] However, if it is understood within a framework of thought that is shaped by the past in terms of Scripture and tradition while anticipating a redeemed future, it is able to combine both deontology and teleology for the sake of wise judgment in the present. It allows us to look backwards and forwards in order to make appropriate judgment.[25] This is especially the case if we acknowledge that *phrónēsis* is communally nurtured and sustained. It is about our own making sense of things, but it is also about making value judgments since making sense of what is happening is also a making of *good* or *appropriate* sense of what is happening.[26] It is not something that we exercise exclusively as individual Christians. Rather it is something that we exercise in relation to others around us in the community of faith that share our beliefs, values and commitments. In this sense it belongs to and arises out of a communal *habitus* or way of living that is dispositional and virtuous.[27] It is from *habitus* that action flows naturally and spontaneously rather than from excessive calculation and labour.[28] This context for *habitus* already exists in the community of the church; that which is 'practical' and 'theological' needs to be connected to the life of the church,[29] even if 'godly criticality' also needs to be employed, especially in relation to the church (there is no perfect church and its members are sinners as well as saints).

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[19] Linda Zagzebski, 'The Place of *Phronesis* in the Methodology of Theology', in Stephen T. Davis (ed.), *Philosophy and Theological Discourse* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 204-28 (p.212).
[20] Zagzebski, 'The Place of *Phronesis*', p.213.
[21] Elaine Graham, 'Is Practical Theology a Form of "Action Research"?', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 17.1 (2013), pp. 148-178 (pp. 170-171).
[22] Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996).
[23] Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, p.11.
[24] Robert L. Smith, 'Black Phronēsis as Theological Resource: Recovering the Practical Wisdom of Black Faith Communities', *Black Theology* 6.2 (2008), pp. 174-187.
[25] Rooms, 'Paul as a Practical Theologian', p.85.
[26] Charles W. Allen, 'The Primacy of *Phronesis*: A Proposal for Avoiding Frustrating Tendencies in our Conceptions of Rationality', *The Journal of Religion* 69.3 (1989), pp. 359-74 (p.363).
[27] Rooms, 'Paul as a Practical Theologian', p.84; Graham, 'Is Practical Theology a Form of "Action Research"?', p.171.
[28] Forrester, *Truthful Action*, p.5.
[29] Ward, 'The Hermeneutical and Epistemological Significance', pp. 61, 64.

In this approach the *telos* of Christian theology and ministry is assessed in terms of its contribution to the good of the gospel. Wise living, appropriate action, faithful, true and loving responses to the issues of our day are ultimately guided by *phrónēsis*: practical wisdom. This is something that is very rarely taught in theology and ministry courses. Why is this the case? How can we rectify it? What can be done to integrate it as a way of looking, thinking, appreciating and ultimately acting in the world today?

Spirituality

The second integrating centre in the practice of theology is spirituality. This subject has found its way into the literature because most practical theologians are committed to some form of Christian tradition and there is an interest in correlating spiritual disciplines with the practice of speaking about God.[30] There has been a certain amount of work done on this feature and I have contributed to it from a Pentecostal and Charismatic perspective. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians may on occasion 'park' their Christian commitments for the sake of contributing to certain kinds of theological discourse. I have done this myself when writing for journals that are either objectivist in outlook (they do not wish to see any religious commitment identified in an author) or hostile to Pentecostal and Charismatic perspectives. But, the basic intuition is to take scholarship and integrate it into our spirituality, thus allowing spiritual intuitions to inform the academic conversation and allowing the academic discourse to inform the spiritual intuitions.

I am an integrationist by nature and I have worked in both Christian and secular institutions. I can honestly say that beliefs and values are just as alive and kicking in the secular as in the Christian context. But the politics of values are different. There are always ideologies at work and these can shape what values are regarded as acceptable and what are regarded as unacceptable. This occurs in both sacred and secular settings. There is always some kind of boundary line, which is policed by some kind of authority. The question is what kind of leeway is granted to faith commitments and, of course, which kinds of faith commitments. Even in the most secular of contexts there are faith commitments. For Christians, their spirituality informs their faith commitments and is resourced by it. To maintain a clear separation is to accept the modernist dichotomy once again and to undermine the holistic nature of the Christian life.[31]

Context: The Interface of Three Publics

Finally, I wish to address the issue of the context of practical theology by means of the three publics identified by David Tracy some years ago now.[32] I have often referred back to these three publics and I have found them to be

[30] Graham, 'Is Practical Theology a Form of "Action Research"?', p.176.
[31] For a discussion of theological education and issues of integration and the academy, see: Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (*Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); and David H. Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). For a discussion of a Pentecostal educational journey in the Australian context, see: Denise A. Austin and David Perry, 'From Jerusalem to Athens: A Journey of Pentecostal Pedagogy in Australia', *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 12.1 (2015), pp. 43-55.
[32] David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), pp. 3-46.

helpful ways of thinking about the interface between different domains. These different domains are not mutually exclusive, how could they be? But they are distinct and form a context in which we all do our theology, however we do our theology.[33] I take as an assumption that whichever is our primary focus, we nevertheless address all three publics to a greater or lesser extent.[34]

First, for Tracy, there is the public of society. Both the church and the academy are situated in a wider cultural context of a society, and here he has an advanced and industrial model in mind. He observes that social scientists use the word 'society' to encompass three realms: the technoeconomic, polity and culture. The technoeconomic realm represents the organization of society and the structure of goods and services. It gives shape to occupations and social stratifications and uses modern technology for instrumental ends. The second realm is polity and concerns the organization, meaning and structure of authority and power. It regulates society and seeks to embody justice. Then there is the third realm of culture, the patterns of meanings transmitted by narratives, practices and symbols and which includes art and religion, as well as the reflection upon it in terms of philosophy and theology.[35] Given the publication date of this book, Tracy did not fully appreciate the nature of globalization and so we shall need to add this dimension to the conversation of what constitutes the public of society in our discussion. In this contemporary world, with its globalization, we are all part of an interconnected global society. Both the local and the global influence the church and the academy. This means that voices that had been previously ignored from different contexts than western ones are now being heard with even greater force. It also means that external factors influencing how society acts in educational and religious terms begin to exert increasing pressure. For example, the interaction with transnational migrant religious communities is something that we cannot ignore and not just because of a terrorist threat, which is very real but not usually associated with Pentecostals! These factors cannot be ignored but should be engaged with curiosity and criticality. But, perhaps, the most important feature of theology as it engages with society and the issues that preoccupy public life is rather simple: does it have anything *theologically* interesting to say?[36] Does it shed some *accessible perspective* to an audience outside the church and the academy? If not, then its voice will be regarded as sectarian and irrelevant.

The second public is the academy. It is 'the social locus where the scholarly study of theology most naturally occurs'.[37] For Tracy, theology should not be limited to confessional contexts but has the right to stand as a legitimate and respected form of academic discourse within secular universities too, even if he regards its status as a discipline as 'diffuse' and 'would-be', as opposed to clear and 'compact'. At the time of writing back in 1981, Tracy argued that 'diffuse' and 'would-be' disciplines lack a clear sense of disciplinary direction agreed upon by the community of academic practitioners and therefore live with a host of

[33] Also see the earlier discussion in David Tracy, 'Revisionist Practical Theology and the Meaning of Public Discourse', *Pastoral Psychology* 26.2 (1977), 83-94.
[34] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.5.
[35] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.7.
[36] This important and obvious point is helpfully made by Miller-McLemore, 'Five Misunderstandings about Practical Theology', p.24.
[37] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.14

unresolved problems; in addition, professional organization is lacking to give legitimation to the findings of research.[38] The situation is a little different today in the sense that there are stronger and more numerous academic societies, but with the greater influence of postmodern discourse, it could be suggested that the academy is even more diverse and 'diffuse' than when Tracy first wrote his book. A glance at the offerings from a typical American Academy of Religion conference might support this observation.

Nevertheless, the academy serves a very important role in society by training its younger generations in certain scholarly virtues and thus contributing to the development of character for the sake of wider society. In more recent times it has suffered from specialization, such that students become ever more proficient in the narrowest of subjects, to the exclusion of other branches of knowledge. Although, the increased interest in interdisciplinary enquiry has been one way in which the narrowness of specialization has been ameliorated. What I think is problematic, even if it is inevitable, is the massive influence of government on education so as to harness and shape the next generation for the purpose of economic growth and national development, rather than the pursuit of knowledge, character and virtue for their own sake. I am not against the role of government in education, quite the opposite, but I am against instrumental rationality, whereby students become products of a particular economic system that in effect reduces their humanity to slaves to narrow economic goals rather than human flourishing in a richer sense. If we are not careful, theology designed and taught for the sake of church ministry can fall foul of such instrumental thinking.

Third, Tracy identifies the church in an ecumenical sense as a 'public' for the theologian, which is not true for other academics who simple address the academy and society. He argues that in terms of its inner logic 'all Christian theology is, in some meaningful sense, church theology'.[39] The church functions sociologically as a reference group, to which theological discourse is directed. It is a community of (largely) voluntary association mediating between individuals and wider society. If the theologian is himself/herself part of an ecclesial body then there is a commitment to its beliefs and values, as well as its tradition and disciplines, and these, inevitably, will influence the outcomes of theology and command attention. While this may be true, there are, of course, different types of theology, different expressions of theology and different church audiences for theology. Writing a book for a Roman Catholic theological audience will be very different to writing for an Evangelical audience. The sources and approaches will be very different. How we write our theology will be influenced by the audience we expect to address. This is inevitable. But it does mean that it limits accessibility, unless we have managed to write in such a way as to transcend certain boundaries of ecclesial particularity. Theology written for a very specific constituency will hardly have a wide audience. Increasingly research projects that are publicly funded will have a number of different so-called outputs. Some of these outputs will be produced in a way that makes them accessible to a wider church audience for the sake of influencing existing church practice. Theology

[38] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.18
[39] Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p.21.

has to find ways of speaking that translates across ecclesial traditions, while also remaining rooted in those traditions.

It is here that the church also works in and with the academy. I would not be here except for this partnership. The academy works with the church for economic and cultural reasons and not for religious reasons, except that it regards religion as a product of culture. Once again economics cannot be ignored: students bring in finances that allow programs to run and colleges to function. This context also influences how we go about our task of theology for ministry since the academy regulates what it regards as good practice educationally. Again, I am not against this and I have been involved in Quality Assurance processes internally and externally in the UK. On the whole I think proper engagement with these processes is a good thing. But there are tensions, not least when government bodies impose values upon Christian institutions and expect them to comply. In the past, this has influenced how theology has been taught.[40] For example, when I studied for my BA in Theology at a certain British Theological College in the early 1980s, it was expected that we would engage in theological discourse in an 'objectivist' manner. This approach was required by the accrediting body. Again, I am not entirely against such discourse, but confessional institutions, in my view, should be allowed to construct their own confessional-critical accounts of theology as they see fit because these accounts are part of the theological landscape in an academic sense.

The church exists in relation to both the academy and society, and this is especially the case for a theological institution. It cannot escape either but is embedded in both, for good and ill. This embeddedness influences the context of theology and its relationship to practice. This is because theology is always contextual, even when we wish to downplay particularities for the sake of universalities; we cannot escape their interplay in our own context. Therefore, I would suggest that they be examined critically in order to better understand in what ways the theological discourse that is being produced is influenced by social and cultural factors so that we can better construct and perform theology that is authentic and relevant to the church's ministry and mission in the world.

Conclusion

In this paper I have roamed around a fair bit. I have roamed around questions to do with the nature of theology, hermeneutics and process, wisdom and spirituality, as well as the context of theology and how it influences how we go about the task today. I have attempted to sketch out the issues that confront us when we begin to ask the question: can theology be practical? Of course, I have problematized the question and I think the person who suggested it as a title for my presentation expected me to do so! Nevertheless, it has prompted us to consider a number of different issues that are relevant to practical theology and that we need to reflect upon in order to decide how practical theology as a discipline can develop in different contexts around the world. Given this backdrop, it now remains for me to suggest a distinctly Renewal (Pentecostal and Charismatic) approach to theology as practice, or practical theology,

[40] See the discussion in my 'Christian Theology for Ministry', pp. 29-32.

drawing upon Scripture, my experience of research, as well as my own spiritual journey. I address these features in Part II.

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Journal of Contemporary Ministry

Can Theology be 'Practical'? Part II: A Reflection on Renewal Methodology and the Practice of Research

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Introduction

In this second keynote address, I shall focus especially on the nature of Renewal as it informs practical-theological research. Practical theology can be used in an individual manner as a form of reflective practice or it can be used as an educational process in a congregational context. These uses of practical theology are important and have their place in the range of how practical theology is used. However, in this address I am assuming that we are talking about the role of research in practical theology in different contexts. In other words, like other academic disciplines, we can talk about practical-theological research as a process of investigation leading to insights that are effectively shared. But in this case we are also aiming to use these insights to renew theological praxis in the life of the church and its mission in the world.

So, let me begin by defining some key terms. What is methodology? What is Renewal? And when we put them together, what exactly are we talking about?

Let me begin with the term 'methodology'. Methodology can mean a number of different things. For the sake of this discussion, let me indicate three senses or uses of the term 'methodology'. In sense (1) it can mean an overall approach in terms of epistemology and ontology, or assumptions about the nature of

knowledge and how it related to reality.[1] For example, in the social sciences positivism understands that the world is captured by language in a fairly straightforward manner so that the word 'tree' corresponds simply with the object in the real world so designated by it. In other words, there is an *a priori* understanding of what constitutes knowledge in relationship to the reality beyond language or what we might call ontology. This particular approach contains assumptions about the nature of reality and the ability of language through concepts or images to represent it in academic or ordinary discourse. I call this a 'standpoint', even if the standpoint is denied because the tradition (e.g. positivism) emphasizes neutrality and objectivity. We all view reality from somewhere and the assumptions about knowledge and reality belong to that standpoint. It enables us to understand what we are doing and why we do what we do in the way that we do it. Many academics do not examine their standpoints and in fact many simply follow the procedures of the discipline as in for example scientific method. But as the philosophy of science has taught us, there are a number of assumptions at play that can be examined and scrutinized, which make a difference to our appreciation of why we think and act in the way that we do.

In sense (2) 'methodology' can mean an overall procedure or process of investigation.[2] For example in quantitative survey research in the social sciences, the process could be described as (a) the literature review, (b) the construction of the key research questions or hypotheses to be tested, (c) the operationalization of measures (i.e. design of questions), (d) the gathering of data, (e) the input of data into computer software, (f) the analyzing of data, (g) the presentation of results, (h) the discussion of the results in relation to the existing theory and (i) the statement of the implications for future research.[3] In practical theology this process can be seen in some of the empirical studies, but different approaches can be detected in the use of the pastoral cycle or the four voices, which has its roots in action research.

In sense (3) 'methodology' can mean a discussion of specific tools,[4] for example, the design of a questionnaire, or an interview protocol, or an ethnographic approach to field study and the observation of a community.[5] These specific tools often relate to both the standpoint and the overall process of enquiry, but not necessarily so. For example, in the past questionnaires,

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[1] See, for example, the discussion in standard textbooks like Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); for a discussion in practical theology see John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), pp. 74-77.

[2] This is how I understand the pastoral cycle of the empirical-theological cycle, and it is how I also understand the four voices approach, which is part of a overall process of investigation which revolves around a conversational process, see Helen Cameron, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney and Clare Watkins, *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010), pp. 56-58.

[3] See, for example, Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 9.

[4] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, p.74. However, I would distinguish between an overarching procedure and a specific tool of method, which is not a distinction that they make, so I think they conflate sense (2) with sense (3).

[5] See the discussion of congregational studies by Helen Cameron, Philip Richter, Douglas Davies and Frances Ward (eds.), *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook* (London: SCM Press, 2005).

perceived as 'objective' measures of beliefs and attitudes, would have been associated with positivism as a standpoint and scientific procedure as a process. Nowadays, with the greater sensitivity to the nature of hermeneutics, there is recognition that the questions that we ask are never neutral but are aligned with our assumptions and interests. So, while at one level the process of methodology might appear objectivist, there is recognition that the ways in which the tools are constructed are indeed influenced by the standpoint and necessarily so. Therefore, they should be open to evaluation like any other aspect of the academic process, including the influence of the standpoint on their construction. It also means that there is a greater fluidity in the use of the tools and previously tight approaches to the relationship between standpoint, procedures and tools has been relaxed leading to a more creative interplay between these elements, especially in the use of specific methods of data collection.

Now I move to the terminology of 'Renewal'. What exactly is Renewal? The language of Renewal has its roots in the Charismatic Renewal movement of the 1960s and 1970s.[6] It captures the idea that Pentecostal spirituality, associated with Spirit Baptism and the gifts of the Spirit were once again part of the experience of the denominational churches, revitalizing its life, ministry and mission. For many denominational charismatics they were fundamentally Evangelicals, Anglicans or Roman Catholics with Spirit Baptism and tongues speech. Their individual and corporate experience of 'coming alive' in the Holy Spirit gave impetus to innovation in worship practices, the use of the gifts of the Spirit by every believer, especially through prophecy and healing practices, greater energy for evangelism and a holistic view of mission.[7] In other words, there was considerable impact at the level of congregational life and ministry. But this was one of the main problems, there was very limited impact on the structure of their theology as a whole. The most interesting theologizing on the experience of the Holy Spirit came from Roman Catholic Charismatic theologians and some influence was seen in the statements of Pope Paul VI between 1972 and 1974,[8] as well the journal *Theological Renewal* in the UK edited by the Presbyterian-cum-Anglican, Thomas A. Smail.[9]

This renewing work of the Holy Spirit in the mainline churches influenced independent churches and energized a movement called the House Church movement in the UK.[10] It also renewed many classical Pentecostal churches that

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[6] See the description by Peter Hocken, *Streams of Renewal: The Origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1986, revised 1997).

[7] Michael Welker, a theological commentator notes (1) the experience of the power and presence of God, (2) a new emphasis on community, its proclamation and worship, (3) use of gifts of the Spirit, (4) an openness to ecumenism, and (5) the experience of Baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues, see *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), pp. 11-13.

[8] René Laurentin, *Catholic Pentecostalism* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1977), pp. 24-25.

[9] See my '*Theological Renewal* (1975-1983): Listening to an Editor's Agenda for Church and Academy', *Pneuma: the Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 30.1 (2008), pp. 83-107.

[10] William K. Kay, *Apostolic Networks in Britain: New Ways of Being Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

had succumbed to the drudge of institutionalization. These House churches, because of a limited attachment to historical church tradition, were able to develop what would be termed a 'Restorationist' narrative based on the fivefold ministry paradigm (Eph. 4.11).[11] In their ecclesiology they were restoring the fivefold ministry pattern of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to the church in preparation for the coming of Christ. This movement was to develop over the years and other tributaries, such as the Vineyard movement, were to flow into it and out of it, leading to a fluid landscape of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity.[12] In this latter movement from the 1980s onwards and into the 1990s, the earlier emphasis on Spirit Baptism as subsequent to conversion was diminished and a greater emphasis was placed on reception of the Spirit in conversion and gifts of the Spirit, especially words of knowledge.[13] The dominant theological motif was the kingdom of God and the role that Jesus played in inaugurating the kingdom of God now. Thus the motif of renewal of existing forms of Christianity became redundant as the kingdom took over as the central motif.

Historically, one can trace a 'charismatic' dimension to the life of the church over the centuries, as it comes and goes. Sometimes it is well received and sometimes it is marginalized and condemned.[14] The picture is mixed. I have argued that it plugs into and plays alongside other ecclesial traditions. With the growth of Pentecostalism in the latter half of the twentieth century, the separation between denominational Pentecostalism and independent charismatic churches has blurred quite considerably. This blurring has now been accentuated with the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism in the non-western world, where its expression varies enormously. Now there is a hybrid effect so that there are many types of Pentecostalism, such that scholars of Pentecostalism, like myself, would now talk in terms of 'Pentecostalisms'. With this diversity, it does not make a lot of sense to talk about Pentecostalism as if it were a homogenous group, although people still do so.[15] So, when the Pew Forum in their survey of Pentecostal beliefs and practices were looking for a label to describe the diversity of these movements, it landed on the label 'Renewal' as a useful way of describing a diversity of groups sociologically.[16] In many ways, the Pew Forum uses this term as a 'flag of convenience'. It lumps a

[11] Max Turner, 'Ecclesiology in Major "Apostolic" Restorationist Churches in the United Kingdom', *Vox Evangelica* 19 (1989), pp. 83-108.
[12] See, for example, the range of expressions observed around the middle of the 1990s in Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton and Tony Walter (eds.), *Charismatic Christianity: Sociological Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997).
[13] See the description of the move away from Spirit Baptism and initial evidence to the emphasis on multiple infillings in Wimber's theology by Vinson Synan, *In M. W. Wilson (Ed.), Spirit and Renewal: Essays in Honor of J. Rodman Williams* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 67-82.
[14] See my discussion in *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2006).
[15] See a discussion of the types of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity by Allan Anderson, 'Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definition', in Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers and Cornelius Van der Laan (eds.), *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories + Methods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), pp. 13-29.
[16] The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life Report, *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals* (October, 2006), www.pewforum.org/files/2016/10/pentecostals-08.pdf (accessed April 8, 2015).

diverse set of groups together in a manageable manner for convenient categorization.

Academically and theologically, there is a different story to tell about how theologians in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have reflected on their approaches. The older generation of American Pentecostal scholars tended to be historians of the movement.[17] These scholars were and are interested in understanding what happened and telling the story of the American movement centered on Azusa Street. In Europe a more global and critical approach was developed using intercultural theology and mission studies associated with the work of Walter J. Hollenweger.[18] The second wave of scholars tended to be biblical studies scholars, like Chris Thomas and Rickie Moore. Together with Steven J. Land they set out to retrieve their own traditions and use early Pentecostal sources to develop 'critical-constructive Pentecostal scholarship'.[19] Not far behind this group and to some extent overlapping in time is the third set of scholars, namely the systematic theologians. These theologians have taken into account what Chris Thomas and others have done, but go wider by engaging with more ecumenical sources. Examples of these folk are Frank Macchia, Amos Yong and Ken Archer.[20] It is this group that I think has been more open to the Charismatic Renewal tradition of the 1970s and 1980s as well as charismatic Roman Catholic systematicians such as the late Ralph Del Colle.[21] Finally, there are practical theologians, like myself, who are engaged in methodological discussions in their own disciplines and speak to both sides from the overlap between the two domains. To the practical theologians I speak as a Renewal theologian, drawing attention the weaknesses of the academy and provoking a dialogue about the nature of the discipline.[22] To the world of Renewal scholarship, I speak as a practical theologian, reminding them of a wider world

[17] For example, Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971, 1997); and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

[18] See his *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches* (London: SCM Press, 1972) and *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997). See my discussion of his work in relation to Pentecostal theological method in 'Pentecostal Theological Method and Intercultural Theology', in Mark J. Cartledge and David Cheetham (eds.), *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes* (London: SCM Press, 2011), pp. 62-74.

[19] Rick D. Moore, John Christopher Thomas and Steven J. Land, 'Editorial', *JPT* 1 (1) (1992), pp. 3-5 (p.3).

[20] Representative texts include: Frank D. Macchia, Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006); Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); and Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004).

[21] Sadly, for the Renewal academic community, Del Colle's death in 2012 robbed it of a brilliant academic and important dialogue partner from the Roman Catholic tradition. For examples of his work, see: 'Trinity and Temporality: A Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspective' *JPT* 8 (1996), pp. 99-113; 'Oneness and Trinity: A Preliminary Proposal for Dialogue with Oneness Pentecostals', *JPT* 10 (1997), pp. 85-110; and 'Postmodernism and the Pentecostal-Charismatic Experience', *JPT* 17 (2000), pp. 97-116.

[22] See my *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

and a broader conversation.[23] Sometimes, I also stray into the world of systematic or constructive theology as well.[24] If I take the three points in turn, what might be said in terms of a Renewal approach to methodology?

Standpoint

In the arts and humanities, generally speaking, the academic study of any subject is now largely regarded as a hermeneutical process. As part of that hermeneutical process, it is understood that we all look at things through lenses. Or to put it in a different language, we have presuppositions or assumptions. We assume certain things about the nature of reality. There is a 'taken-for-grantedness' about how we read the world. The reality 'out there' can and does change our presuppositions, our assumptions, but on the whole they remain stable once they are formed. They are shaped just as much by cultural values as they are by theological values. This is inevitable and problematic; hence Paul's injunction not to be conformed to the world but to be renewed in one's thinking (Rom. 12.2). How one thinks inevitably influenced how one acts.

By and large Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians, Renewalists, are transcendent realists. They believe not only in the fact that language to some extent corresponds to the thing out there in the real world, but that the language of faith inherited through the Renewal tradition also speaks clearly and authentic about the transcendent reality. Of course, this belief cannot be proven strictly speaking. What kind of evidence would count? God cannot be tested empirically. It is a faith position that is supported by a tradition expressed in a community that coheres with the religious experience and mission of that community in the world. The experience of worship, life in the Holy Spirit, fellowship, mission and ministry all combine to provide a plausibility structure that supports the worldview of the members of the group. This means that they live and work based on the assumption that certain beliefs are true. It becomes their standpoint and their identity informed by a tradition. In the context of postmodern academic discourse, they have a place at the table, provided that they do not take over the conversation at the theological meal!

When the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* (JPT) was launched back in 1992, it was edited by Classical Pentecostals, open to the input of broader charismatics on topics of interest. I had my first article published in JPT in 1993 on the subject of prophecy among charismatics in the Church of England.[25] From this journal and its associated monograph series, and now via a range of different book series from Bible commentaries to academic and confessional texts, a cluster of approaches have emerged that take a standpoint derived from aspects of the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions. So, what is this standpoint? I would say that the standpoint is attention to and the movement around the person and work of the Holy Spirit as distinctly expressed in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements of the twentieth century. It is not that other historical expressions of

[23] See my 'Pentecostalism' in Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 587-595.
[24] For example, 'Pentecostal Theology' in Cecil M. Robeck Jr. and Amos Yong (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 254-272.
[25] 'Charismatic Prophecy: A Definition and Description', *JPT* 5 (1993), pp. 81-122.

the person and the work of the Holy Spirit are denied. Indeed, increasingly, Renewal scholarship is informed by broader historical and ecumenical sources, and I, for one, have been advocating for this development. But, the standpoint does not depart from the territory of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements and it is actively resourced by the scholarship that emerges from them. This scholarship provides the tradition from which the hermeneutical engagement emerges and with which it interacts. It may move around the terrain a fair bit, but it does not depart from it. Otherwise, it becomes a different kind of standpoint. In other words, this reading tradition constitutes a positive and participatory predisposition towards the movement as well as engaging with other academic sources. Someone can have sympathy towards the movement but sympathy alone will not constitute a participation in the Renewal standpoint. Sympathy is an external attitude from the outside, whereas a participatory predisposition works from the inside out. In my view, this is what constitutes a 'Renewal' standpoint.

The nature of such a participatory predisposition and how it functions epistemologically has been captured by Trevor Hart:

> In a sense, then, we invest confidence in a particular framework or perspective because, as we occupy it, we find ourselves laid hold of it from without, seized by a reality which manifests itself to us, and charged as a matter of conscience with the task of declaring this reality to our fellows. It is in this relationship of intellectual commitment to a truth which seizes us from beyond ourselves, this declaration of universal intent (the claim that which we know in this way is not merely 'the truth for us', but has contact with an objective reality), that we transcend our subjectivity.[26]

Renewal scholars would endorse Hart's description that universal truth is revealed and sustained in particularity, but would also understand this standpoint as a tradition of enquiry, which is resourced by the community of scholars and the churches they represent.[27]

Process of Investigation

Does Renewal methodology contain a unique procedure or approach to the theological sub-disciplines? I would say that the answer to the question is 'no', but quickly add the caveat that it can and does influence or shape how existing procedures or methods are used. I would say that there are basically three ways in which people have attended to the process of research from within the Renewal tradition.

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[26] Trevor Hart, *Faith Thinking: The Dynamics of Christian Theology* (London: SPCK, 1995), p.67.

[27] Hart, *Faith Thinking*, p.69, also argues for a position between objectivism (the view from nowhere) and perspectivism (relativism), proposing critical enquiry that takes place from the standpoint of a tradition that nevertheless accesses reality outside of it. For a discussion of his hermeneutical position in more detail, see Trevor Hart, 'Tradition, Authority and a Christian Approach to the Bible as Scripture', in Joel B. Green and Max Turner (eds.), *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies & Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 183-204.

First, there is what I have termed the retrieval stand.[28] This approach is derived from the assumption that the heart of the Pentecostal tradition is to be identified with the first ten years of the movement (1906-1916). Of course, there are all sorts of problems with this assumption in terms of historiography, but for the moment we shall ignore them. This assumption, nevertheless, has inspired a group of Pentecostal scholars to quarry the early Pentecostal sources, especially the early magazines and tracts in order to understand just how these people experienced the Holy Spirit, worshipped in community and were propelled out into missionary activity. Having understood the early tradition on a particular matter, the process turns to the biblical texts that were cited in these sources. These texts are then read afresh in the light of the retrieved reading tradition and new insights from the texts are appreciated and subsequently brought into dialogue with contemporary Pentecostal praxis. So, the procedure moves from tradition to text to today in a kind of dialectical and dialogical conversation. Allied to the approach is a more literary and narrative approach to the reading of the biblical texts. This approach resonates with the worldview of early Pentecostals shaped by the narratives of life in the Spirit.

Second, there are theologians who, though they are rooted in the identity of Pentecostalism, have nevertheless engaged in all seriousness with other theological sources. They may read early Pentecostal literature, but this does form the focus of their approach. Rather, they have engaged particular theological traditions outside of the Pentecostal academic world and they have been so shaped by them so that they straddle different theological worlds.[29] This straddling posture is used to open up a conversation with broader theological sources, such that discussions of theological themes are always part of a conversation from outside of Pentecostalism. I have called this the ecumenical approach. Of course, how people use these sources varies enormously, but that sources outside of Pentecostalism are used is the main point. Indeed, these sources are not just from contemporary scholarship but also from historical periods as well. There are some scholars in this group who also engage beyond theological sources and use philosophy, social sciences and the natural sciences as dialogue partners. In this sense they have moved beyond a theological ecumenism towards a disciplinary ecumenism in the process of pushing the boundaries of academic discourse. In this approach there is both a reworking of broader theological tradition in conversation with Renewal and a move towards inter-disciplinary enquiry.

Third, there is a group of Renewal scholars who take seriously the contemporary church in its concrete expression. These scholars attend to the empirical investigation of congregations and contemporary movements because there is the belief that in order to understand the contemporary expression, it has to be investigated in its own right. This is something that I have brought to

[28] I developed this typology of retrieval, ecumenical and empirical in relation to ecclesiology, but I believe that it transcends ecclesiology as can function more widely, see my 'Renewal Ecclesiology in Empirical Perspective', *Pneuma: the Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 36 (1) (2014), pp. 5-24.

[29] For examples see: Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as a Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006); Andy Lord, *Transforming Renewal: Charismatic Renewal meets Thomas Merton* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015).

the methodological conversation, but I have not been on my own.[30] There has been an empirical turn in practical theology but also in ecclesiology because of the realization that whatever we say about the nature of the church, ideal categories do not capture the full reality of church life today.[31] What is required is a study of concrete expression in order to better equip and transform the church for its mission in the world today. So, this development is driven partly by academic trends but also by a mission imperative.

In my own work, I have in the past developed a dialectical approach to the process of conducting empirical research.[32] In this approach, I differentiated between theoretical "system" and concrete "lifeworld" and developed a model of oscillation between the two domains in a hermeneutical process of investigation and interpretation. I linked it to standpoint epistemology, in terms of a charismatic critical realism, that was framed by means of charismatic spirituality or what I would call a standpoint in this paper. This particular model was developed from earlier work based on the empirical-theological cycle of van der Ven, with some modification of his hermeneutical framework because of my standpoint.[33] But I have also used versions of the pastoral cycle to integrate multi-disciplinary discussions of speaking in tongues and demonology and deliverance.[34] My latest book did not use any of these processes. Instead, it was a theoretical piece that surveyed the literature on the subject of Scripture, pneumatology and religious experience among the practical-theological academy and offered a critique and proposal based on a theological reading of the Acts of the Apostles informed by Pentecostal theology of experience and the wider Protestant theology of mediation.[35] My current research project in megachurch studies is an inter-disciplinary team-based approach framed within the discourse of public theology that includes case studies of five megachurches in London.[36]

So, what does all this mean? It means that there is some variety in terms of the processes of research. Some researchers stay with an approach or procedure because it is what they know and feel comfortable using. Others test methodological approaches as part of the nature of research and then reflect on the methodology afterwards. I would say that I am one of these second types of people. I respect my colleagues who are methodologically rooted, but I am

[30] Also see: William K. Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain* (Carlisle, Paternoster, 2000); Grace Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion: A Practical-Theological Study* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); and Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Discernment* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).
[31] See Pete Ward (ed.), *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).
[32] See my *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), pp. 24-30.
[33] See my *Charismatic Glossolalia: An Empirical-Theological Study* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 13-32.
[34] See my 'The Practice of Tongues-Speech as a Case Study: A Practical-Theological Perspective' in Mark J. Cartledge (ed.), *Speaking in Tongues: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), pp. 206-234; and 'Demonology and Deliverance: A Practical-Theological Case Study' in William K. Kay and Robin Parry (eds.), *Exorcism & Deliverance: Multi-Disciplinary Studies* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2011), pp. 243-263.
[35] *Mediation of the Spirit.*
[36] The book from this study is tentatively entitled *Transforming the City: Megachurches and Social Engagement in London* (Leiden: Brill).

personally interested in exploring new processes and procedures, while resting on my knowledge of tried and tested ones. Why am I so flexible? I am not flexible in the sense that I believe a due process of investigation should be designed for the outset. But, in essence, it is because the process of the investigation simply has to make sense in its own terms and has currency within the academy. Fundamentally, it is heuristic not absolute, although it should fit with the Renewal standpoint and not be antithetical to it. The process should also take you where you need to go in terms of the nature of the investigation using the resources that are available.

Methods

So what about the specific methods or tools that we use? We all use certain tools, but perhaps we do not fully understand them as well as we should. They do have a relationship with the standpoint and they can be used inappropriately. But, depending on the discipline and the overall research design, there is a variety that can be used and combined together. This is because the hermeneutical nature of theology means that we can never discard the need to interpret the sources or data that we have before us, whether those sources are Scripture and historical material, dogmatic statements, contemporary narratives or corporate ecclesial practices observed and recorded.[37] There are choices to be made, once again depending on the aim and design of the research, but the tools should be appropriate to the task. In other words they should be 'fit for purpose'. You would not use a saw to hammer in a nail or a razor blade to tighten a screw!

The standpoint also influences the types of tools that would be deemed most appropriate to the detailed work of research. So, one of the big debates in the reading of New Testament texts by Pentecostal and Charismatic theologians has been whether historical-critical methods should be elevated to a higher position in the hierarchy of methods compared to a 'final form' reading of the text using narrative and literary methods. At one level, these methods are not mutually exclusive, but from a particular standpoint, one could be said to be enshrined within a modernist reading of the text and the other a more postmodern reading.[38] Certainly, the emphasis on narrative resonates more strongly with Pentecostal spirituality and intuitions, compared to an historical and analytic appropriation of sources. Nevertheless, it may not be an 'either/or' scenario but a 'both/and' one, where one is given priority over the other but neither is discounted completely because the New Testament theologian also needs to write in a way that the academic guild regards as responsible academic practice.[39] Therefore the important point here is to say that while methods can

[37] For a discussion of hermeneutical theory in practical theology, see Sally A. Brown, 'Hermeneutical Theory', in Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (eds.), 2012, pp. 112-122.
[38] See John Christopher Thomas, 'Max Turner's *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996): An Appreciation and Critique', *JPT* 12 (1998), pp. 3-22; and Max Turner, 'Readings and Paradigms: A Response to John Christopher Thomas', *JPT* 6 (12) (1998), pp. 23-38.
[39] John Christopher Thomas, 'Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century", *Pneuma: the Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 20.1 (1998), pp. 3-19 (pp. 14-16), where he places attention to the original context (historical critical enquiry) in third place of the procedure, behind the attention to the content, structure and theological emphases of the text and the canonical context, and in front of the context of the church (i.e. reception history) and the Pentecostal context.

be used heuristically they cannot be used inappropriately because there are academic practices that regulate their usage and one's work would not get published if the conventions were obviously flouted.

Practical Theology in Renewal Methodology

In practical theology as a discipline, there is a considerable diversity of approaches. It appears as though any approach is valid and can be celebrated as adding to the diversity of the discipline. This may not exactly be the case because there are strong voices to be heard from certain quarters. From my experience of the international societies, I would say that the strongest voices are feminist and empiricist ones and they can sometimes be in conflict, but not necessarily so. Amid these voices, I have attempted to place a Renewal perspective and to some extent I have had some success in adding a voice to the conversation.[40]

Building on the work of Renewal theologians (mainly Pentecostal), I located the standpoint in the spirituality of the movement and I took seriously the integration of spirituality and practical theology.[41] From a Renewal perspective, spirituality permeates the whole of life and means that each and every event in one's life can be an opportunity to encounter the person and work of the Spirit in a dramatic or ordinary manner. And this means that even in the academic research process there can be moments of insight that are prompted by the person of the Spirit as we carry out our regular tasks. Prayer is at the centre of the work of academic life because it is through prayer that we connect to the person of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit draws us to Christ, who in turn draws us to the Father, so the moment we give attention to the work of the Spirit, we are immediately placed within a broader Trinitarian framework of thought. This spirituality is framed by the doctrine of Trinity and this means that the theological grammar that we used is shaped by a Trinitarian structure. This Trinitarian way of thinking inevitably prompts us towards its locus in salvation, namely the person and work of Christ, who has called a body together to be his people in the world, namely the church, instituted by him and constituted by the Spirit. So, Renewal theology is church theology, not simply academic theology and it is directed towards the mission of the church in the world for the sake of the kingdom of God and the glory of the one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This standpoint or way of being and thinking is part of who we are as people and as Christians. It is holistic and cannot be separated from all spheres of life. It cannot be compartmentalized and put in a corner, bracketed out here and placed there. It is the ground on which we stand, the terrain around which we move, the air that we breathe, and it provides the lenses through which we view the task of practical theology. This does not mean that it cannot be challenged. It does not mean that it cannot be corrected, by Scripture, by the Spirit himself, and by the community of the church or indeed the community of the academy, especially others who share the standpoint critically. But what this standpoint provides is a set of motivations to research certain kinds of things for the mission of the church and the wellbeing of society. Why did I research prophecy and then

[40] See my 'Pentecostalism' in Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 587-595.
[41] *Practical Theology*, pp. 17-20.

glossolalia among Pentecostals and Charismatics in my early years as a researcher? Because I was puzzled by their usage in the communities that I belonged to and I was introduced to academic thinking that raised a whole host of questions about these phenomena. Similarly, today, why I am interested in the subject of anti-human trafficking? Partly because I have been introduced to Christian organizations that approach the subject from a Renewal standpoint (e.g. Exodus Cry), and I am intrigued to understand how these organizations go about their work and how the person and work of the Holy Spirit influences how they do what they do. So, I am motivated in my research because of my standpoint.

The standpoint also influences the procedure and methods of research. In my doctoral research I used the empirical-theological cycle of Hans van der Ven as my procedure for research. It contains five phases and I used all of them in the process of investigation. However, he had placed this process within a particular hermeneutical framework shaped by Jürgen Habermas called communicative action theory. I did not find this materialist theory conducive to my own standpoint, and so I substituted it for a Renewalist hermeneutic based on the Paraclete sayings in John's Gospel.[42] I did this deliberately because I wanted to shape my framework of thought in terms of Scripture and the work of the Spirit. So, one of the things that a Renewal standpoint will do is to take an existing procedure of investigation, that has been well established in the discipline of practical theology and it will give it a Renewalist overhaul or a particular twist. The process was very similar to van der Ven's, but the sensibilities were different because I was not forced to process my findings via a Habemasian framework of thought that I felt did not resonate with my standpoint intuitions.

Standpoint also influences how one uses tools or even develops tools. Early in my work I was forced to develop questionnaire measures that tested beliefs and attitudes concerning glossolalia because they did not previously exist.[43] I could not simply take a measure off the shelf, but had to work hard conceptually and operationally to develop these questions that would test my theologically-informed understanding. But it was an understanding that was informed by my experience of research and my own personal experience of practice. I was alert to and sensitive to certain features of glossolalia because of my experience. Of course, I followed due process in the development of the instruments and I had to explain and justify the inclusion of certain items to my supervisors,[44] but the standpoint enabled me to understand and indeed to 'see' certain things that the literature had, up to that point, missed or ignored.

Similarly, when I conducted a congregational study and I wished to investigate the ordinary theology of the congregational members, I had to decide on the most fitting way to approach the subject. After some careful thought as well as knowledge of the Renewal theological literature, I realized that Pentecostal Christians best articulate their theology via story or testimony. Whenever I visited this congregation I heard narratives of blessing or of healing or of struggle and winning through. So, I decided to listen to their stories by

[42] *Charismatic Glossolalia*, pp. 7-24.
[43] *Charismatic Glossolalia*, 141-45; *Practical Theology*, pp. 239-44.
[44] See A.N. Oppenheim, *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement*, (London: Pinter Publishers, 2nd ed., 1992).

means of testimonies.[45] I also realized that these stories can be different and in a community there can be tensions between the different stories. Some narratives are dominant and others are marginal, but how might one detect that easily? So, I decided to use focus groups and began each one with a time of testimony followed by a discussion based on questions. The different testimonies allowed different beliefs to be expressed in narrative form and the conversation that followed invited the congregants to negotiate the meaning of these narratives. Thus the method of testimony, embedded in focus group research was informed by the standpoint of Renewal spirituality and fitted appropriately as well as being extremely useful. It was very 'practical'!

Given the standpoint commitment to the wider church and the kingdom of God, there will always be an interest in the outcome of research and how it can be used for the benefit of the mission of the church not just for academic interest.[46] This does not mean that the standpoint does not allow criticism, although it could be construed that way. If that is the case then it is not truly academic because findings should be open to evaluation, likewise the use of the findings. But how the church and the academy use the findings of research for the benefit of wider society is also an important aspect of research. For example, in a recent project that we (Andrew Davies and I) designed to look at megachurches in London and their social engagement, as part of the impact of the academic research, we have planned to write an accompanying handbook for church leaders to enable them to learn lessons from these churches and implement these lessons in their own context.[47] The benefit of the research not only provides resources for church leaders and church communities, but it also impacts the wider communities in which these churches and leaders are situated. In this way, the benefits of research can be seen in relation to all three publics of church, academy and society.

Finally, I would translate the question 'can theology be practical?' into the question: 'so, what?' What difference does this research make in the world today? What difference does this research make to the ministry? What difference does this research make to the mission of church? As noted previously in Part I, many of my Doctor of Ministry students wish to jump to a place of intervention before they have taken the time and energy to engage in the process of investigation. In this regard, there is impatience with the hard work of research and a presumption that because they are pastors working in a particular context that they know not only what the problem is but also the solution. Time and again I have to remind them that if they are engaged in practice-based research it is still the case that they need to define the boundaries of theory, conduct a process of investigation leading to insights that can be communicated before they can design and implement a strategy of intervention. Otherwise they are not really using research to inform their practice.

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[45] See *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 21-26.
[46] See *Testimony in the Spirit*, pp. 179-83.
[47] This project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK, see: http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/research/projects/megachurches/people.aspx (accessed June 17, 2016).

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me summarize my basic thesis. In this presentation, I have argued that Renewal as a concept when used in connection with the concept of methodology means a 'standpoint' in relation to a particular tradition. This standpoint is a participatory predisposition of alignment with the scholarship emerging from the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements of the twentieth century. This standpoint is neither uncritical nor lacking in self-reflection but constitutes a broad tradition of enquiry. It is situated epistemologically as part of a community of scholars committed to the theologizing of the experience of the Spirit in relation to the authority of Scripture and the life of the church today. Given this basic orientation and commitment, Renewal theologians will display a variety of procedures in their disciplinary methodologies, provided that none of them fundamentally conflict with the standpoint of Renewal. Finally, as part of this work, specific methods or tools will be adopted and used as appropriate to the subject of enquiry and the nature of the source material. Once again, I would expect a fair degree of diversity as appropriate to the contemporary state of scholarship in the different theological sub-disciplines, and this includes practical theology. In practical theology, research serves the ministry of the church in the world and intersects with all three publics of church, academy and society for the benefit of all three.

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Abstract

There has been considerable debate about how theology should engage with the social sciences, particularly since the 1970s. While some theologians have been suspicious of the sciences, practical theologians have acknowledged the importance of engagement. Van Der Ven for example, has proposed an 'empirical-theological' cycle, which includes phases of empirical research, and theological reflection within the discipline of practical theology. This article examines how theology and the social sciences contributed to a specific project in practical ministry on the youth ministry in Australian churches. In reflecting on the project, it was noted that the project arose out of the theological imperative to pass the Christian faith from one generation to the next, and to reach out to people with no Christian background. The imperative was sharpened by the research, which showed how the theological objectives were not being achieved. The nature of young people's faith, as examined in the project, was grounded in theology, but research contributed to the understanding of what was important to young people in their faith as expressed in the Australian context. The methodology of the research had its roots in the social sciences. The recommendations from the project were primarily theological, but reflected factors identified by the empirical research. It is concluded, in this example, theology primarily, but not exclusively, described what OUGHT to be the case, while the social sciences primarily provided descriptions about what WAS the case. Theological descriptions about what WAS the case, about God's activity in the lives of people, were derived from the

descriptions of sociological analysis, evaluating them from the perspectives of the traditions and sources of faith. In this study, the social sciences, and theology had distinct and different roles in making recommendations for ministry praxis.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to show how theological reflection on Christian traditions, Biblical sources, and empirical research using social science methodologies may contribute to practical theology and to the development of pastoral practices. Through the examination of a particular case study in empirical research and theological reflection, this article explores how empirical research and theological reflection may intertwine, but make distinctive contributions. Before examining the case study, a brief account will be given of the recent literature on the comparative contributions of empirical research using social science methods, and theological reflection to practical theology.

The Debate about Social and Human Sciences and Theology

The theological issue of how the Christian faith should relate to culture has been discussed from the very earliest days of Christian theology, as has been shown well by Niebuhr's (1951) famous book, *Christ and Culture*. Niebuhr noted that, over the centuries, some theologians have seen Christ 'above' culture in which history is seen as a period of preparation for union with Christ, or Christ 'of' culture in the sense of pointing to the best in human culture as exemplifying Christian life. Other theologians have been suspicious of culture and those attempts to understand the world that were not based in theology, and have taken positions which Niebuhr describes as 'Christ against culture' in which Christ is seen as offering an alternative to human culture, or 'Christ in paradox with culture' in which history is seen as a period in which there is a struggle between faith and unbelief. Others have taken moderate positions, seeing human cultures as containing some good elements but needing 'transformation', as is represented in Niebuhr's category of 'Christ the transformer of culture'. The notion of 'culture' varies somewhat from one theologian to another. It can refer to the intellectual and artistic achievement of a group of people or society. It has also been used to refer to what human beings may achieve, particularly in intellectual or artistic forms, for example, in the phrase the 'cultured person'. However, when social sciences speak of culture, they usually use the concept developed in anthropological literature of culture as the patterns of belief and action that make up a 'total way of life' of a group of people, distinguishing these from individual differences and idiosyncrasies, or patterns common to small specialised sub-groups in society or universal patterns of behaviour or patterns which are of biological origin. Thus the activity of eating is not part of culture, but what one eats, where, when and with what implements is part of culture (Geertz 1975, pp. 4-5).

'Empirical theology', as an explicit discourse involving the study of cultures, began in the early 20th century (Heimbrock 2010, p. 155). Heimbrock suggested that it had two distinct branches, one in the United States, and the other in

Europe, both focussing in different ways on religious experiences. Van Der Ven, one of the seminal thinkers on the relationship between empirical research and theology, saw the clinical pastoral education movement in the 'Chicago School' as playing a key role in the development of what came to be called 'empirical theology' (Van Der Ven 1998, p. 5-6). In itself, empirical theology did not take an explicit stance in relation to 'Christ and culture'. The process of theological reflection in the methods of empirical theology involved neither an affirmation nor rejection of culture as compatible or incompatible with the Christian traditions of faith. However, while empirical theology was ready to critique culture where it saw that was appropriate, it took culture seriously as the context in which theological praxis should be developed (Van Der Ven 1998, part 2). Empirical theology, which developed into what is widely described today as practical theology, used empirical social science methods[1] and findings to explore culture and to critique from a theological perspective.

Despite these incipient movements, the theologian and sociologist, Robin Gill, argued that only in the 1970s did many theologians began to engage seriously with the social sciences (Gill 1996, p. 1). Social scientists had often been dismissive of theology, reducing belief in God to illusions created by the individual mind or by society, following the theories of people such as Marx and Freud, and this had provided little basis for discussion with theologians. Even sociologists who were sympathetic to theology were viewed with suspicion by many theologians as they sought to explain from a sociological basis how theology was formed and how it operated in the real world, as Weber did in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Some philosophers, such as A. J. Ayer (1970), provided an epistemological basis for science, arguing that only knowledge that could be verified empirically should be accepted as valid knowledge. Such epistemological views provided a basis for the claims of scientists, including social scientists, but implied that theology's claims of knowledge must be regarded as invalid. Some theologians, such Karl Barth, responded by claiming that 'revelation' was an entirely separate source of knowledge, which could only be examined and evaluated on its own terms. The result was that there was no basis for conversation.

However, in the 1970s, more theologians began to read, and grapple with the social sciences. For example, in Britain, a group of sociologists and theologians began regular gatherings in 1978 for the 'Blackfriars Symposia on Theology and Sociology'. This group, which included prominent theologians who worked in the sociological domain such as Robin Gill and David Martin (Gill 1996, p. 2), met regularly for a decade. Another example was establishing a chair for pastoral theology in 1964 in the Faculty of Theology in Nijmegen, in the Netherlands. As the nature of its work was refined, the department was renamed the Department of Empirical Theology (Van Der Ven 1998, pp. 2-3).

In the British context, a debate erupted over the work of John Milbank's book, *Theology and Social Theory* (1990). At the heart of his dense argumentation was the following claim, as summarised by Fergus Kerr.

> There is no need to bring theology and social theory together,

[1] Social sciences is being used here in the broad sense to include what are sometimes referred to as 'human sciences' such as psychology and anthropology, as well as sociology.

> theology is *already* social theory, and social theory is *already* theology. The task is to lay bare the theology, and anti-theology, at work in supposedly non-theological disciplines like sociology, and, analogously, to uncover the social theory inscribed in theology – not just the methodological humanism mistakenly respected by modern theologians but the theory of society which Christian theology, properly practised, always already is (1996, p. 431).

At the heart of Milbank's thesis was the idea that the 'secular' disciplines of political theory, economics and sociology emerged from 'an effectively non-Trinitarian theism' and contained their own values and views of what society should be. Thus, Milbank argued that 'theology encounters in sociology only a theology in disguise' (Kerr 1996, p. 432). However, as commentators such as Flanagan have noted, there is an 'epistemological imperialism' in Milbank's thesis which does not deal adequately with the variety of social sciences, their methodologies and their views of what society should be. Most social science research is not trying to create a particular view of the world. While there may be value-laden assumptions embedded in particular sociological research projects, it cannot all be characterised as 'disguised theology' or 'anti-theology' (Flanagan 1996, pp. 454-6). At the same time, Milbank has been criticised for his approach to the Christian faith, treating it in terms of its ideals and failing to recognise faith and the church as historical and social realities (Williams 1996, p. 435).

Milbank took an extreme position. However, some other writers in practical theology have been wary of the positivism of some sociological approaches to knowledge, particularly to sociological research based on survey research. Swinton and Mowat (2006), for example, argued that theology is logically prior to the social sciences, and that qualitative research is much more appropriate for use in practical theology than quantitative research because they saw quantitative research as 'positivistic' in its use of statistical forms of analysis. Most sociologists today do not see the rigid distinction that Swinton and Mowat drew between quantitative and qualitative methods (see, for example, Van Der Ven 1998, p. 154).

Quantitative research is not as 'hard' as once thought; for example, in drawing conclusions from the responses to surveys and Censuses there are many issues of interpretation of categories. The 'soft' nature of survey data can be explored through examining the patterns of responses across a range of questions, and few sociologists treat survey data in the positivistic manner that Swinton and Mowat assumed they do. At the same time, qualitative research has its limitations; for example, it is usually inappropriate to generalise from a small sample of interviews in specific contexts to large and diverse populations. By collecting data from an appropriately developed sample of many participants, as surveys allow social researchers to do, such generalisations can be made. Many social scientists have argued that a combination of both methods of gathering and analysing data within the one research project provides stronger research results contributing to a better understanding of the world in which we live, giving us both the richness of in-depth qualitative work, and the breadth of many sources of information provided by quantitative research (Bouma 2000, p. 182). The claim that social scientific approaches are 'positivistic' is rarely valid today,

even for the quantitative work of sociologists. Hence the earlier suspicions of social science on the part of theologians are no longer plausible.

One of the significant contributors to the formation of the discipline of practical theology as it has emerged in contemporary thinking is Johannes Van Der Ven. In his book, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach*, he outlined three possible approaches to a relationship between the social sciences and practical theology (1998, pp. 93-95).

1. Multidisciplinary approach. In this approach, all empirical work would be done by the social sciences and practical theology would reflect on the findings. Van Der Ven conceived this as being a two-stage process. However, he saw it as unsatisfactory as it made practical theology highly dependent on the approach that social scientists took, on their assumptions and the questions they asked.
2. Interdisciplinary approach. Van Der Ven envisaged this approach as one of a mutual dialogue in which each discipline retained its own perspectives, research methods and focal questions which they brought to the dialogue. However, Van Der Ven recognised that, in reality, there was often little opportunity for practical theologians to engage with social scientists largely because few social scientists were interested in theology or saw it as helpful in developing their own perspectives. .
3. Intradisciplinary approach. In this approach, Van Der Ven suggested that the practical theologian learned the skills and methods of the social sciences, and used them for their own practical theological aims and objectives. This means that the practical theologian has to become skilled in the social sciences, but it also means that the practical theologian is not dependent on those skilled only in the social sciences who may not be interested in participating in dialogue.

Van Der Ven opted for the third approach. In this approach, the practical theologian uses the methods of empirical research within the context of the theological exercise. Thus, Van Der Ven referred to the phases of research in hyphenated terms: the empirical-theological research design and data analysis, treating the empirical and theological processes as inseparably part of practical theology. Nevertheless, on several occasions in his description of the methods of practical theology, Van Der Ven hinted at the epistemological and methodological gap between the theological and empirical components. For example, he noted that the concept of 'church' may be developed differently in the theological and empirical contexts, (1998, p. 93). He argued that the development of the research design would be a theological exercise (1998, pp. 119-121), but that the theological concepts obtained from the theological theory formation would need to be operationalised in that they would need to re-expressed into terms that could be included in the 'operations' of empirical research, whether these be surveys or interviews (1998, p. 134). This would involve translating the theological concepts into variables in which the means of measurement were empirically valid and reliable (1998, pp. 138-9). His comments on the final phase of the research project as involving theological interpretation and reflection hint again at the distinction.

To avoid the danger of empiricism, the results need to be placed

> within a broader theological framework, namely one of hermeneutic-theological evaluation. ... Empirical facts are meaningful only when they are placed within a hermeneutic context of theological concepts and theories and evaluated from within this context (Van Der Ven 1998, p. 153).

Mark Cartledge, took up the 'empirical-theological cycle' of Van Der Ven in his book *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*. He presented this cycle as 'a research tool which is used to pursue practical theology at an academic level' (Cartledge 2003, p. 21). The cycle included five phases:

1. The problem of the subject under investigation is chosen.
2. The subject is investigated inductively by empirical research, leading to the formulation of the research question and the design of the research project.
3. The detailed empirical research is undertaken. This may mean conducting a survey or doing qualitative research.
4. The new set of information about the area of study is analysed.
5. The resultant material is interpreted and reflected upon theologically before recommendations are made (Cartledge 2003, p. 21).

This cycle was not presented as a normative model, but one potential model of research. However, underlying such a cycle, Cartledge saw a more fundamental dialectic in which he suggested 'the dialogue between polar opposites is to be held together in the response of faith' (Cartledge 2003, p. 22). This dialectic occurred as practical theologians engage with the lifeworld or concrete reality as one pole, and the theoretical systems, including both theological sources and social science theory as the other pole (Cartledge 2003, p. 27; Cartledge 2015, p. 23.). Research, said Cartledge, is a movement between the concrete realities and theoretical systems, in order to lead to insights, new ideas and new practices (Cartledge 2015, p. 23). It may be noted that Cartledge also identified a second dialectic between practical theology and spirituality, so that the 'research process is correlated with the spirituality process' in which the theologian asks 'what is the Holy Spirit doing in this context?' (Cartledge 2015, p. 24). For Cartledge, as for Van Der Ven, the whole task of practical theology is theological, although descriptive, critical and constructive empirically-based research is used to contribute to the ultimate task of both understanding and transforming the world. For Cartledge, the social sciences become limited tools, used within the practice of theology. 'In practical theology,' Cartledge wrote, 'there should be no doubt as to which is the dominant discourse, however sympathetically and critically other discourses are used' (Cartledge 2003, p. 16).

This intradisciplinary approach, in which the social sciences are used within the processes of practical theology, minimises potential conflicts of different value orientations in the social sciences and theology. It allows the values and assumptions of theology to dominate and for the social sciences to be used to the extent that they are helpful in contributing to the aims of the theological project. In other words, the intradisciplinary approach allows the social sciences to be developed within a Christian framework, as suggested in the approach to the sciences of some Reformed theologians and philosophers such as Dooryeweerd (Basden 2003).

However, there are a number of problems with the intradisciplinary approach of Van Der Ven and Cartledge. Firstly, that approach does not clearly identify when different conceptual frameworks are used and thus cannot provide clear instructions for the appropriate use of concepts developed within a particular context. When, for example, within practical theology can one speak of God? Van Der Ven recognised that empirically, God is not accessible, and goes so far as to say that practical theology is about faith rather than about God (Van Der Ven 1998, p. 103). However, a theology which does not refer to God appears to be a very strange theology, particularly when it comes to the process of reflecting on the normative implications of empirical findings. The alternative is to separate the disciplines of theology and the social sciences, and to recognise the different conceptual frameworks they employ which would mean abandoning the intradisciplinary approach.

The intradisciplinary approach also appears to build a barrier between practical theology and sociology. It has the potential for each discipline to be impervious to the findings and perspectives of the other. It means that practical theologians may be ignorant of the developments in concepts, methods and findings of sociology, and encourages sociology to ignore the relevance of religious faith and the work of practical theologians to their own studies.

Rather than develop a specific unified methodology for practical theology, some more recent publications have argued for recognition of the diversity of perspectives both within and across the theological and social science disciplines. While the term is not used, these approaches are closer to Van Der Ven's interdisciplinary approach, but arguing that there may be a number of voices or sources of ideas and data involved in the conversation. Van Der Ven's supposition that one would need to find specific social scientific partners with whom to dialogue does not make much sense in a world in which there is a continuous flow of ideas continually crossing disciplinary boundaries.

In a recent book, the Australian theologian, Brian Macallan, attempted to develop 'a framework for the discipline of practical theology' in a 'postfoundationalist' context in which the '*universal rationality* of foundationalism' is rejected (Macallan 2014, p. 4 (author's italics)). Rejecting also the '*multiversal rationality* of antifoundationalism', Macallan argued for a 'critical correlational approach' (Macallan 2014, p. 5) within which both the social sciences and the Christian tradition should be held in tension and in dialogue.

In a similar vein, Dreyer (2012), in an article entitled 'Practical Theology and Intradisciplinary Diversity', pointed out that, in psychology, sociology, anthropology and other social and human sciences as well as in practical theology, there are a great variety of methodologies and perspectives. For example, he referred to the 2004 American Sociological Association address by Burawoy, which noted intellectual fragmentation and interdisciplinary conflict in sociology. Burawoy identified four types of sociological discourses: professional, critical, policy and public (Dreyer 2012, p. 40), each of which had different audiences and involved different value-orientations. Acknowledging this, Dreyer advocated the need for a critical 'dialogic pluralist response' of 'listening to and learning from' the many voices within and across the disciplinary boundaries

(Dreyer 2012, p. 53). Practical theologians cannot treat sociology as a single and united discipline, but must recognise there are many views, approaches and methodologies among sociologists.

Yet, bringing the voices into dialogue is not easy, even within disciplinary areas, apart from across disciplines. They speak different languages. They bring different perspectives. Neither Dreyer nor Macallan demonstrate how the languages may communicate with each other, or how their perspectives may be held in tension. The following case study provides an illustration, perhaps not so much of 'dialogue', but an interweaving of materials in the process of developing practical theology.

Reflections on Research in Youth Ministry

The following sections of this paper examine the interweaving of empirical research using social science methods and theological reflection in a study of youth ministry in local churches in Australia that was undertaken by the Christian Research Association between 2014 and 2016. While a single case-study will not provide a normative picture of research methods in practical theology, it may suggest some ways in which social sciences may relate to theology.

The issue which gave rise to the research was, at heart, a practical theological issue: how best to pass on faith to young people. From earliest times, there has been an injunction of parents to raise their children in the faith.

> *"Teach [these words of mine] to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up"* (Deut. 11:19).

Some social scientists, such as Peter Berger, have described this as a process of socialisation, in which a particular understanding of the world is built. It is not just a role for parents, but also for communities (Berger 1973, p. 25). Part of the process of socialisation is what Berger described as developing a 'plausibility structure', that is, a social structure in which the reality of faith 'is taken for granted' (Berger 1973, p. 55). Such social structures may include youth groups and local churches.

However, several recent research projects have demonstrated that passing on the faith in recent generations in Australia has not been highly successful. Analysis of the 2009 Survey of Australian Attitudes showed that of all people who went to church monthly or more often when aged 11 years, only 30 per cent were continuing to attend a church monthly or more often as adults at the time of the survey (Hughes 2011, p. 19). It also discovered that three-quarters of those who ceased to attend a church no longer identified themselves as Christian. Not only had they given up on church attendance, but had given up on faith itself. Analysis of the Australian government Census data, comparing Census results in 2001 and 2011, showed approximately 500,000 young Australians moved from identifying with a Christian denomination to identifying themselves as having 'no religion' during those ten years (Hughes 2013a).

Youth ministry also arises from the theological imperative to take the Gospel to those who have not heard it and to call people to be followers of Jesus, baptising and teaching them (Mtt. 28:19-20). Again, empirical research has

highlighted the gap between the theological imperative and the results on the ground. Social surveys have indicated that perhaps ten per cent of young people in Australia have regular engagement with a church (Hughes 2013b, pp. 7-8). Ninety per cent of Australians of secondary school age have little or no engagement. Thus, the issue arises as to how youth ministry can be most effective in engaging young people who have had no previous church involvement?

The 2014-2016 research project examining youth ministry in local churches used case study methods. The research team visited 23 congregations. The sample of congregations was dependent on the denominations willing to take part in the research and contribute to its costs. Within each denomination, cases were chosen in order to cover a variety of geographical and socio-economic contexts. The sampling method reflected methodological principles commonly used in the social sciences. The cases included congregations located at the centre of major cities, suburban areas, rural cities, and in smaller rural towns. In each case, interviews were conducted with young people, youth leaders, parents and pastors of churches. The researchers were aware that the sampling of those who were interviewed was not ideal. They had hoped to speak with young people who had left youth ministries as well as those who had stayed in them. However, because of the practical and ethical difficulties of contacting these young people, the research focussed on those currently involved in youth ministries.

Theological principles helped to define what the research team was examining: young people's faith in God. A variety of dimensions of faith were recognised. Some of the concepts of faith arose directly from theological conceptions, such as the devotional dimension, which was expressed in trust in God, in prayer and in public worship. The researchers were looking for evidence that young people had a commitment to their faith, which they expected to be a lifetime commitment.

However, the ways in which faith was examined was also influenced by previous social science research. Earlier studies, conducted by the Christian Research Association with school students, had shown that taking personal ownership of faith was important to many young people. In interviews in previous research, many students of Anglo-Australian background were insistent that they had to make their own decisions as to what they would believe and what they would reject. Many who had grown up in Christian families said that they wanted to work out whether they could own the faith for themselves (Hughes 2007, pp. 126-7). The researchers saw this sense of the ownership of faith as arising out of an individualistic culture in which every person is encouraged to think for themselves and take ownership of their own opinions and life-style decisions. It reflected what the sociologist, Anthony Giddens, described as the individualist reflexive formation of the self that occurs in 'high modernity' (Giddens 1991, p. 5). The researchers had noted that personal ownership of faith was not an issue for some young people who had come from non-Anglo cultures. Many immigrant young people had expressed the view that what one believed was dictated by the community of which they were a part, and should be accepted without question as part of one's heritage. Thus, this research had identified that faith takes on different forms in different cultural

contexts, and therefore the passing on of faith takes different forms depending on the cultural context. Developing a faith that is personally owned means that young people seek opportunities to critically examine ideas and beliefs for themselves, to ask questions, to work through doubts and challenges, and to come to their own personal conclusions. The development of faith that is part of a heritage involves learning about the content and implications of that faith, rather than critically questioning it.

The youth ministry research project also wanted to identify factors in youth ministry which would contribute to growth in faith. A major research project conducted in the USA suggested that the most significant factor in youth adopting faith was the ways in which the whole church was supportive of the youth in the church and the extent to which relationships were formed between the older and younger members of the church (Martinson, Black & Roberto, 2010).

Previous research in schools undertaken by the Christian Research Association had noted that parents have, by far, the greatest impact on the lives of their children in relation to faith (Hughes 2016, p. 2). Thus, the research team hypothesised that youth ministry would be more effective if parents supported the youth ministry and saw it as complementing their own efforts at passing on the faith. On the other hand, the team recognised that most Australian young people do not have parents who have a strong commitment to Christian faith, and they wondered how youth ministry catered for those young people.

The research team also felt that it was important to look at the nature of the youth ministry team and the activities that took place in youth groups. It asked about the relationships with leaders and about experiences which young people felt had contributed to their growth in faith. The research team developed a set of questions based on these issues which were asked of the young people and their leaders.

Social research, using surveys and interviews, is a peculiar socially constructed pattern of behaviour which has been developed in the social sciences (Burr 2003, p. 176). In many instances, it allows people from outside the immediate context of the situation being examined to be involved in observation and listening. Thus, it brings fresh eyes to the situation. Researchers conduct systematic observations which enable them to look for similarities and differences in various contexts. In relation to youth ministry, this is something that someone within youth ministry rarely has the opportunity to do.

The researcher, by the very way that research is framed as an activity in the Western world, can ask questions that they would not usually ask in everyday conversation. People have learned to expect that the researcher will often dig a little deeper into people's activities, motivations and thinking than people would in everyday conversation. In return, the researcher is not expected to make judgements or provide advice or direction. In most instances, the researcher leaves the context of the research and has no further contact with the person who has been interviewed. In return for openness and honesty, the researcher promises to keep the information provided confidential.

It is possible that the researcher will miss some things that are evident to the local person. The pastor of the church who has had a long involvement with a

young person will know much more about that young person than the researcher will ever discover in a short interview. Nevertheless, the pastor may not know the specific things the research is designed to uncover and will not have the comparative understanding of groups of people across different contexts

The Analysis of the Data

Various social science methods were used to examine the data that was gathered in the study of youth ministry. The researchers looked first at the categories of young people involved in the youth ministries they had observed. An initial observation was that about 80 per cent of the young people were from church families. In just one of the 23 case studies, youth ministry had effectively engaged many young people from beyond the families who attended the churches, although this was an explicit intention of youth leaders in all the case studies (Hughes et al., 2016, p. 8).

When youth leaders were asked about how they planned to engage young people beyond church families, most of them said they were relying on the youth to bring their friends along. But when the team spoke to the youth, some of them were happy to bring some close friends, but many of them said that they did not want to invite their friends from school. They wanted the youth ministry to be a safe place where they could openly be Christian and not be criticised for their commitment. It is hardly surprising, then, that the main method of increasing the involvement of youth beyond the church was largely ineffective (Hughes et al., 2016, p. 8).

The research team also noted that, in most places, some of the youth in church families were not involved in the youth ministry activities. In many places, youth ministry was providing activities that were attractive for some youth, but not for others, and the youth who attended were selective in their participation. This can be placed into a larger framework by describing it as an example of the general commodification of culture and the ways these cultural trends have extended to religion (Miller 2004). The youth group was seen by the youth as a set of services provided for them rather than as a community of which they were part and in which they had a duty to participate. In many areas of life, young people are selective about what activities they attend, just as they are selective about what products they buy. They weigh up participation in particular activities in terms of costs and benefits, rather than being involved because they feel a sense of duty to do so or because they identify with the community.

The research team looked for evidence of committed devotional faith and whether there was a relationship between involvement in youth ministry activities and the strength of that faith. Certainly, most young people in the survey indicated they prayed frequently and were involved in other devotional activities. However, it should be noted that, although the research can listen to what people say about their relationship with God and can examine people's behaviour, it is not possible for the researcher to measure or truly determine if a person ***has*** a relationship with God. Nevertheless, in order to draw conclusions for ministry, general decisions must be made as to whether God is working in the lives of young people. In making such decisions, the practical theologian must

look at young people's attitudes and behaviour in the light of the traditions of faith, the teaching of the Church and of the Bible.

Some questions were asked about the application of faith to decisions of life. For example, the team asked young people what sort of career they hoped to enter when they completed their education. Then the young people were asked if their thinking about their career had been influenced in any way by their faith. Some youth were aware of moral issues that might affect how they developed their career. One person, for example, wanted to go into a career in popular music, but was wary, as a Christian, of the sex and drugs in the music scene. Some were clear that, as Christians, they wanted a career in which they could do something to benefit others. For some, that meant working in the medical or educational world, for example. Other young people had not thought that their faith might influence their choice of career, but saw their career as a fulfilment of what they were good at or passionate about (Hughes et al., 2016, p.10).

Young people were also asked what had been most important in the development of their faith. Many young people referred to specific camps or special experiences. At such times, young people said they had benefitted from a focus on their faith for an extended period of time without distractions. During such times, they were surrounded by others for whom faith was highly important. Those special experiences had become markers in their growth in faith (Hughes, et al., 2016, pp. 39-45).

The young people who were interviewed were also asked about their relationships with older people in the church and the likelihood that they would stay involved with the church. In most cases, young people said that the relationships with members of the church existed because of family interactions. However, most young people indicated that they felt the older members of the church were supportive of them and of the youth ministry. Some young people told of their appreciation of older people who looked out for them, with whom they played in a music band. Another small group of young people had been on a work party to Africa with some of the older people in the church and the relationships they built in that activity were enduring. Certainly, those who had such relationships were positive about their sense of belonging to the church and their future church involvement.

In each of these areas, the application of faith, accounts of their experiences of faith, and relationships with other Christians, the descriptive data must be evaluated in the light of the traditions and bases of Christian faith. This evaluation of the data makes possible the development of recommendations for practical ministry. To determine what faith communities should do in order to most effectively build faith among young people depends on the theological evaluation of what is truly contributing to faith. While the case studies did not provide proof of the relative impact of particular factors, they suggested a range of factors that could be influential.

Firstly, the interviews suggested that, apart from the attractiveness of the youth ministry program, the relationships they formed with the youth leaders were of great importance. The fact that they could communicate well with them, that they trusted them, and felt they were important to the leaders was of great significance to their level of enthusiasm and involvement in the youth ministry.

Secondly, there was some evidence that relationships with other adults in the church had an impact. The fact that young people felt they were regarded positively by the older members of the local faith community contributed to their positive attitudes towards the church as a whole.

Thirdly, it was evident that special experiences through camps and retreats had played a significant role in their growth in faith, as the young people experienced it. Contemporary sociological studies have demonstrated that personal experiences have become much more important in recent decades? than in previous social contexts in the formation of identity and in orientation to life (see, for example, Giddens 1991). From the perspective of practical theology, it has been argued that the movement from rational and traditional forms of authority to experiential authority is one of the major challenges for churches in Australia today (Rose et. al., 2014).

The provision of opportunities in which young people might have deep personal experiences of faith, free from the distractions of everyday life, social media, work and study, is important. On the other hand, so also is the building of on-going relationships in which young people are mentored in faith and encouraged to apply it to the various aspects of their lives. Part of this is developing relationships across the generations within the faith community.

The qualitative research conducted so far was based on 23 congregations. The sample was sufficiently broad to identify some of the factors that operate in youth ministry contexts, but it was not sufficient to generalise across Australia as to the strength of various factors in effective youth ministry. Consequently, a second stage of the research has now been developed using surveys, which will gather a much broader range of information.

What Does This Project Show about the Relationship between the Social Sciences and Theology?

What does this all say about the relationship of sociological research and theology for the practical theologian? In most stages of the research project, both theology and the social sciences contributed, as shown in Figure 1, the impetus for the study was the theological imperative for parents and communities to pass on their faith to their children in the light of the social reality that this was often not occurring successfully. Christian concern for the development of faith in young people made this study important, and the social research which showed many young Australians rejecting faith provided evidence of the dimensions of the problem. The research question, then, was a product both of the imperative of faith and observations about what was occurring in contemporary Australian society.

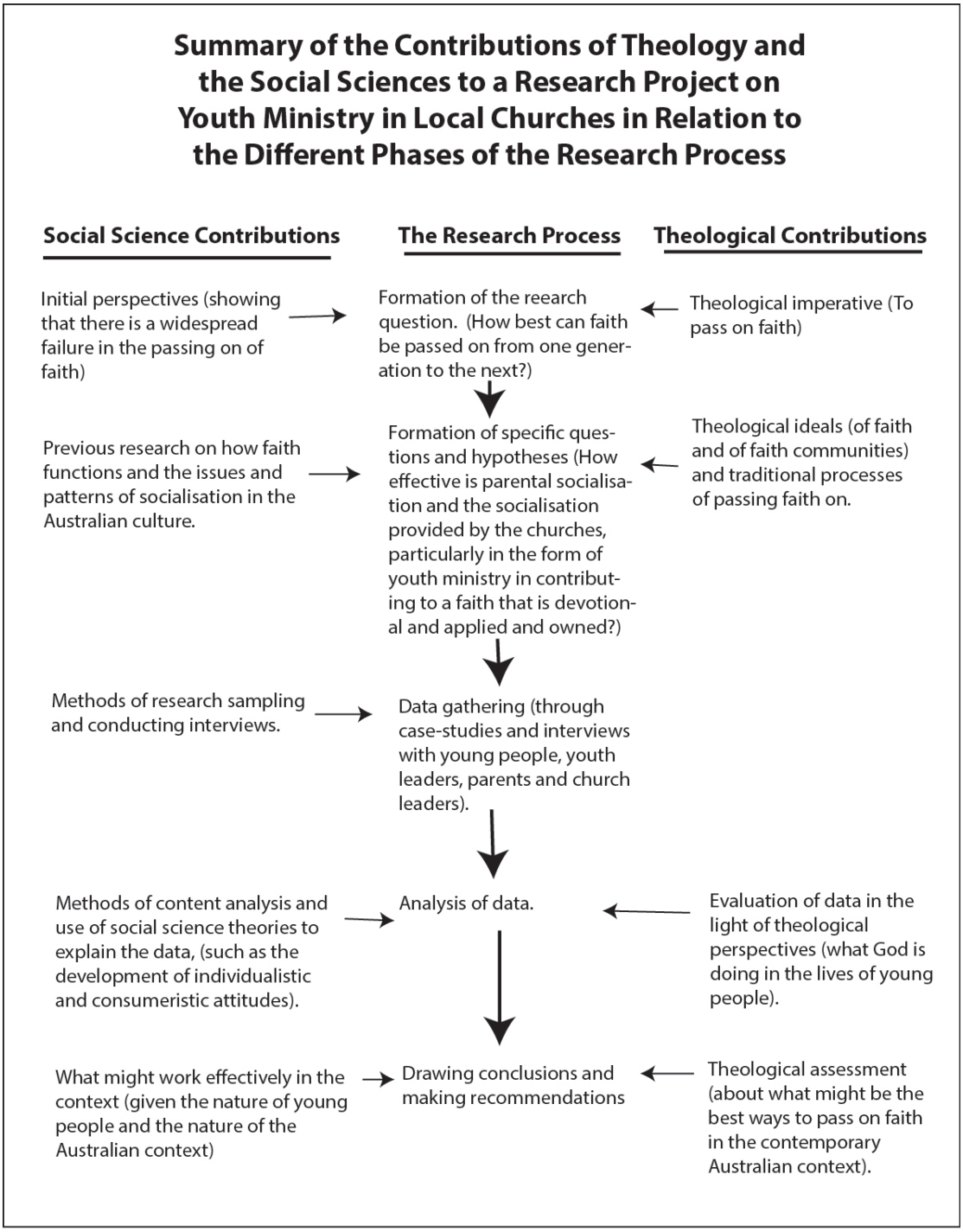

Figure 1: Summary of the Contributions of Theology and the Social Sciences to a Research Project on Youth Ministry in Local Churches in Relation to the Different Phases of the Research process

While the origins of many issues in practical theology will be theological, social sciences can play a significant role in identifying and describing what Macallan calls 'the pastoral concern' (Macallan 2014, p. 104). The social sciences bring new perspectives on the problems and illuminate some of the dynamics which may be significant in resolving problems. For example, quantitative research, using appropriate surveys and other means, can measure the extent to which specific pastoral issues exist and among which groups of people they are found.

The formulation of the research hypotheses regarding the faith of young people drew both on the traditions of faith and on research, which suggested that among certain groups of young people in contemporary Australia the personal ownership of one's perspectives on life in general, and on faith in particular, was highly significant. Thus, both sociological theory and prior research, as well as the traditions of faith, added to the development of the hypotheses.

The methods of conducting the case studies were derived primarily from the social sciences. Sampling methods were informed by the social sciences which encouraged the examination of a diversity of contexts, rural and urban, small and larger churches and churches of different denominational traditions. The research methods of systematic interviewing have been developed within the social sciences. Similarly, the patterns of identifying the demographic characteristics of those involved in youth ministry and the patterns of analysing the content of the interviews, looking for common themes and differences in perspectives, were also methods developed within the social sciences.

The social sciences provide methods of systematically observing and listening carefully to what is going on. That is the heart of the strength of the sciences. Scientific methods are not antithetical to Christian perspectives. Rather, they provide disciplined and systematic ways of listening to and observing the world, society and human life. Along with the process of listening and observing, they provide ways of analysing and categorising what is observed. They provide ways of analysing what factors influence situations. At the same time, it is appropriate to be aware of and to approach critically the value orientations that may be involved in the way that a particular set of social research has been conducted and the particular frameworks that have been used in the development of the research.

Frequently, social sciences provide descriptions of particular situations by identifying them as examples of more general patterns. For example, in this study of youth ministry, examples of consumeristic and individualistic approaches were identified. Sometimes social sciences provide explanations that are contrary to Christian expectations or the patterns that churches have adopted in the past, and it is appropriate to question those explanations. On the other hand, as Van Der Ven (1998, pp. 47-49) has noted, and as Macallan has reiterated (2014, p. 152), the traditions of faith have always been interpreted and applied in multiple ways, and must also be subjected to continual critique. There are times when the results of social research indicate that if particular outcomes are to be achieved, different patterns from those used in the past or which have become traditional must be used to achieve them. One example that arose in this study was the fact that 'friendship evangelism' among young people, the dependence on young people bringing their friends to youth group, was generally not working. Youth ministry needed to explore other methods of connecting with young people without a church background.

The assessment of what was discovered in the research and how the research might be applied was primarily a theological activity in as far as the purpose of the project was to recommend how faith might best be passed on to young Australians. In making this assessment, one must look at what appears to

be contributing to a true growth in faith as distinct from what attracts young people simply by entertaining them. Nevertheless, that theological evaluation must be informed by informed by the results of the research and its analysis of the factors operating.

Conclusion

In some ways, the youth ministry research reflected the dialectic described by Cartledge and Macallan between the concrete reality, social theory and theology. While the research arose from theological imperatives and concluded with recommendations about ministry, which were framed in theological terms, social science methods dominated the gathering of the information and describing the situation. What is evident, upon reflection, is that the social science methods of listening and analysing responses were primarily about describing what IS the case and putting it into some theoretical frameworks. The input from theology was primarily about what OUGHT to be the case: the imperative of passing on the faith, the desired nature of faith, and the role of the community of faith. These imperatives formed the basis of the research question and the hypotheses, the evaluation of the results of the research and formation of recommendations for the communities of faith.

The social sciences provided methods for examining what IS the case in the particular social contexts of this research project. Input from the social sciences was interwoven into the research project, providing clarification of the research question and contributing to the hypotheses as well as translating them into terms, which can be used in surveys and interviews. While sociologists may have values and assumptions, which they use in interpretation, the general aim of sociology, as of other sciences, is to develop descriptions, which have a validity and a reliability which would be echoed in the findings of other sociologists and in a repetition of this study if it occurred in similar contexts. There was no particular agenda in describing the consumeristic, individualistic and experiential approaches to life noted in the young people, for example. However, for policy implications, in the context of practical theology, it is necessary to return to theology for the framework for evaluating the findings and developing the recommendations for praxis.

As the philosopher, David Hume, pointed out in the 18th century, there is a significant logical gap between what is and what ought to be (Hume 1966, pp. 177-8). There are some intrusions across the gap as OUGHT statements require descriptions of what IS the case in order to be meaningful. IS statements often use terms which have implicit value content when, for example, one describes a relationship as involving trust, appreciation and care. The insight of practical theology is that the praxis of theology should be developed in the light of an understanding of what is the case, appropriately informed by the social sciences. For example, when one knows what ***is*** happening in youth ministries and how they are influencing young people, one can better make evaluations as to what ***should*** be happening in youth ministries in order to build faith.

It is not appropriate, then, to describe the use of social sciences simply as a partner in a conversation with or, as Van Der Ven and Cartledge suggest, within practical theology. Nor does the fact that theology and social sciences make different contributions mean that one is logically prior, as Swinton and Mowat

have argued. Rather, they bring different voices to the topic, each contributing in different ways to the task of determining the recommendations.

What this means, in this example, is that practical theology spoke primarily with an imperative voice. This voice assumed a metaphysic about God and God's design, and it is this metaphysic that is reflected in the creeds and other sources of faith. The OUGHT of theology is derived from a description of God's grace and salvific activity, although variously expressed and interpreted in different contexts. [2]

This means that, at times, theology also offers descriptions of what IS the case. When God is described as working in the lives of young people through special experiences and through the influences of family and church communities, theology takes the descriptions of what is happening and interprets them within its own context of how God operates in the lives of people. It interprets what is happening by reference to the traditions and sources of faith. The validity of these statements about what IS the case is tested in relation to the traditions and sources of faith, rather than in relation to the concrete reality using scientific methods. Thus, the logical nature of the IS statements of theology and the IS statements of the social sciences is different, and they cannot be directly compared.

The relationship between theological and social scientific descriptions of what IS the case can be compared to the different descriptions that can be given of human actions by different disciplines. The functioning of the body can be described in terms of chemical reactions or in terms of movements occurring according to the laws of physics. It can also be described in terms of intention and purpose. The validity of each description is determined in its own way and according to its own criteria. The validity of one description in no way annuls the validity of another description.

In the process of research, there are occasions when the social sciences and theology provide different explanations of the same phenomena. For example, the study of youth ministry noted that young people were influenced by special experiences and by building cross-generational relationships. The social sciences might speak of the significance of the 'aha' experience and the importance of plausibility structures, to use Peter Berger's term (Berger 1973). But does that mean that God is not at work here? Not at all. Sociology provides one description. Theology provides others. They are not incompatible. To describe God as being at work through special experiences and through communities of faith is to make a judgement rather than provide a description of what is happening. Sociology looks for regularities and patterns. Through the sciences, we gain insights into how the universe and social and personal world of human beings works. To say that God is at work in these regularities is to make a particular sort of judgement about them which is rooted in theological discourse.

Social sciences are often used within political, educational or health-related contexts in which the OUGHT has been previously determined and it is assumed that social sciences in themselves are about the transformation of society. Many

[2] This does not necessarily mean that the epistemology of revelation is entirely independent of empirical considerations, as Barth has argued. This major issue is beyond the scope of this article.

theologians stress the value-laden nature of empirical research, the values that are involved in the choices of theory and in the nature of the concepts that are used in the research (Macallan 2014, p. 122). Van Der Ven argues from this basis that practical theology must be normative because of the value-laden nature of empirical studies (Van Der Ven 2005).

However, this is a misunderstanding of the nature of science in general, and of the social sciences in particular. The object of science is to develop descriptions of the world, which are both accurate in content and as simple and general as possible. One may identify assumptions and values in any particular research project, in the topics chosen, the theories tested, and the ways the hypotheses are framed. However, there are many voices in the social sciences as there are in theology. It is important to the social sciences themselves to identify these assumptions and values and to be critical of them. Internal debates continue within the social sciences about its methods and findings in developing general descriptions of the regularities of the universe, as the philosopher of science, Karl Popper has noted (Van Der Ven 2005, p. 108).

The fact that any piece of social research involves assumptions does not mean that the social sciences produce opinions of equal value to the hunches and suppositions of any observer. Built into social science methods are procedures for maximising the validity and reliability of their observations, through the careful processes of sampling, the careful repetitive processes of interviewing and surveying, the distancing of the researcher from the internal dynamics of the situation being observed, and in the continuing academic debate in scientific forums about the methods and the interpretation of the results. Social science methods also provide ways of identifying the limitations in the extent to which findings can be generalised, for example, by pointing to the limitations of particular sampling methods or sample sizes. As social scientists review their work and the assumptions and values involved in a particular approach, they also examine the validity of alternative approaches and methods.

The example of the study of youth ministry showed that the interactions between theology and the social sciences were complex. Both were influential, in their different ways, in identifying what the project should be about: in the development of the conception of faith among young people in the contemporary Australian context and the understanding of the various factors that might influence the growth of faith. Both contributed to the recommendations for practices in youth ministry that arose from the project (see Hughes et al., 2016).

The concern about sociology and other social sciences exhibited by some theologians arose largely out of all-encompassing theories of the some of the classical thinkers of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Here, indeed, was some evidence of social theory as 'disguised anti-theology' with strong value-laden assumptions, as identified by Milbank. But such theories have been well critiqued within the social sciences and it has been well shown that, although they may contain some truth, they do not explain the complexity of the world. Most sociologists recognise, for example, that religious faith cannot be reduced to a product of social deprivation or an example of pre-scientific thinking as some of the early sociologists thought. The critique of these general 19th century theories does not apply to the contemporary use of social scientific methods in

examining specific situations and identifying the variety of factors that are significant in them.

There is a step beyond description, which involves ethical or theological evaluation or evaluation in terms of a particular policy. Within the framework of this study of youth ministry, identifying what influences should be maximised and what minimised is primarily a task for practical theology, although it may also be influenced by the findings of social research. It is inappropriate to take the description of what IS the case uncritically as showing what SHOULD be the case. A famous case in the inappropriate adoption of sociological findings was the 'homogeneity principle' in the development of church life (McGavran 1980, pp. 223-244). It was found that churches grew more rapidly if they were homogeneous socio-economically. However, this conflicted with the theological aim of developing faith communities that cross socio-economic boundaries (Jam. 2: 5-7).

The use of the social sciences in relation to practical theology should not determine the particular theological approach one might take in relation to culture. It does not determine whether one sees 'Christ' as against, within, above, in paradox with, or seeking the transformation of culture. One may well respond to the cultural reality one discovers through the use of the social science by seeing it as evil and needing total redemption, or as inherently good, or as needing transformation. That evaluation is the on-going task of the theologian. Without the careful examination of the culture, however, the way theological pronouncements are framed may well be irrelevant.

The practices of youth ministry, the cross-generational relationships that characterise youth ministry and even the provision of opportunities for special experiences can be used for much good. There is always the potential that such practices, relationships and experiences can be used for evil, for manipulation and even the abuse of young people. Within the contexts of faith, the social sciences have an important role in describing what is happening, and theology has an important responsibility in evaluating what experiences and what relationships lead to spiritual growth, to living in God's ways and in relationship with God.

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Journal of Contemporary Ministry

Spiritual Knowing: A Case Study in Entitlement

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Abstract

Not everything known can be said. This paper will explore one aspect of this voiceless realm: what we believe we know spiritually, but lack words to express. Hidden knowing in this article refers to a felt sense of what is true, but to some degree it remains hidden from the knower. It may or may not be true but it is something about which the person feels certain.

This *hidden* knowing can be contrasted with *aware* knowing. Aware knowing, happens when this sense of what is true becomes a belief, whether true or not, and can be articulated. One aspect of hidden knowing is spiritual knowing, which will be applied to a common problem in pastoral ministry – that of unhealthy entitlement.

Introduction

Pastoral ministry is complicated by unseen psychological and spiritual dynamics. One example is the observation that people have an attachment style, usually first to parents and later to God. This paper explores the idea of unconscious spiritual knowing[2], which is illustrated by a case study in entitlement which explores ways in which narcissism can be a disruptive dynamic in the church. There are also some tentative suggestions of a way forward.

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[2] This hidden and spiritual knowing is a non-epistemological account of knowing, with the focus more on the feeling of knowing which leads to certainty, than any question of it being true. This is important to explore because many religious people have questionable beliefs.

The Concept of Hidden and Spiritual Knowing

Developmentally, thought comes first, and only later is thought expressed in language. This has implications for how something is learnt. Our first learning is implicit, what I have called hidden learning. This can be compared with Sigmund Freud's understanding of the unconscious. He asserted that "unconsciousness is a regular and inevitable phase in the processes constituting our psychical activity; every psychical act begins as an unconscious one, and it may either remain so or go on developing into consciousness, according to whether it meets with resistance or not." (Freud 1912, p. 264). He conceived a wide range of mental processes, occurring automatically and not available to mental reflection. This is more inclusive than hidden knowing and includes memories, motivations, repressed feelings, desires, instincts, automatic skills, subliminal perceptions, habits and automatic reactions (Westen 1999). In this article, I am discussing an implicit learning model, how we learn things before or without words, and not a 'grab bag' of unconscious processes.

Our earliest learning has been described in various ways. The term in academic psychology is 'implicit learning'. Reber (1996) explains that "implicit learning is the acquisition of knowledge that takes place largely independently of conscious attempts to learn and largely in the absence of explicit knowledge about what was acquired" (p. 5). There have been other attempts to describe this non-verbal learning including tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1958), emotional or limbic learning (in the coherence therapy of Ecker et al., 2013), and *habitus* in the writings of Bourdieu (1977, etc.). These writers offer different perspectives of the same experience. I am proposing that hidden and spiritual knowing also describes this same reality but introduces a spiritual dimension to the analysis. This may be helpful because previous research has not been applied to Christian ministry. The only exception is James Lewis (2015) who applied *habitus* to the spiritual formation in a PhD thesis.

The Importance of Hidden and Spiritual Knowing

Hidden knowing usually occurs before we can use words. This is illustrated in the following example:

> Ben[3] was neglected as a child. His mother was dependent on heroin. Eventually Family Services removed him and placed him in foster care at age three. He was raised in a loving family but his early learning was along the lines of, "There is nothing important about my needs. I will not be protected. Eventually anyone I love will leave me." It is easy to see the emotional logic of such early lessons in life. But Ben lacks words for what he has learnt; he simply assumes it to be true.

All this has consequences. What we 'know' in this way always feels true. Such non-conscious knowing is powerful, because it is mostly beneath awareness and can determine both attitudes and behaviour, functioning somewhat like a puppet master who pulls the strings. Ben, for example, would have low self-esteem and be insecure in his romantic relationships. Additionally, a conviction of this kind may be so deeply held that Ben might sabotage himself to maintain that 'truth'.

[3] I am drawing on my practice as a clinical psychologist, using cases to illustrate concepts, but not with specific de-identified examples in mind. Hence the cases are typical and realistic, reflecting what is familiar to anyone experienced in pastoral or counselling ministry.

This also has implications for an individual's spiritual beliefs, as shown in the following example:

> Sally-Anne was exposed to violence from her single mother's changing partners. In her late teens Sally-Anne became a Christian but could only believe in a punitive God, "I know I fall short, I feel so guilty. I am only worthy of punishment by God."

Both Ben and Sally-Anne show hidden knowing[4], through neglect and violence at an early age. But Sally-Anne also has a legacy of spiritual knowing - what she feels is true about God. She has no appreciation of the emotional steps leading to her beliefs. But these assumptions will continue to operate regardless of any teaching to the contrary about a loving God.

Attachment theory is a good example of hidden knowing. Initially the attachment model described the relationship between an infant and carer (usually the mother). A distinction was made between healthy attachments and different kinds of anxious attachments. The model suggested four patterns of attachment: avoidant, secure, ambivalent and disorganized (Cohen 1996). The implications of such early learning have been explored in relation to later relationships in childhood and adolescence (Crittendon 2000). This model has also been applied to a believer's relationship to God. This has been helpful to understand difficulties in developing a trusting spiritual relationship (Granqvist et al., 2010; Miner 2009). The following example shows how an attachment pattern can apply to God:

> Sandy was raised in a series of foster homes. She had an anxious attachment style and when she became a Christian this also became evident in her relationship with God, "I find it hard to believe I am saved. I keep thinking I will sin and God will reject me."

Attachment theory is fundamentally about dyadic relationships. The realm of hidden and spiritual knowing is broader. The problem of entitlement in ministry can illustrate aspects of such knowing.

Unbalanced Expectations

Ministry is surrounded by expectations. How can this be a problem? It depends, naturally, on the expectation. High expectations can lead to difficult relationship problems – in ministry, pastoral care or in general.

Expectations bring two potential difficulties. First, expectations can be exaggerated. Much more is expected than received in a pastoral relationship. Second, it is possible to expect something that is spiritually or psychologically impossible. We can identify some familiar patterns in pastoral relationships:

a) *A lack of 'give and take'.* We commonly see one-sided unrealistic expectations in pastoral ministry.

> Rodney was called to pastor a small rural congregation. He came with the expectation that he would work to support himself, since the stipend offered was well below a living income. However, the workload was in excess of 60 hours a week. Rodney tried to do this but soon 'burnt out' in ministry, resigned and returned to working as an electrician. The excessive expectations were a major factor to what he considered to be his failure in ministry.

[4] 'Hidden knowing' is used in the sense of 'hidden beliefs,' which can be wrong. I am trying to convey the sense that such a belief, mostly unexpressed, actually feels true.

b) *What is impossible.* 'Mind reading' is a common problem in relationships. And this difficulty replicates in pastoral ministry.

> Mary was on the pastoral team in a large Pentecostal church. The wife of one of the key lay leaders went to hospital with appendicitis, but no one told Mary. She was expected to know, visit her and to offer prayer. The senior pastor called Mary into his office to hold her accountable. This expectation of a 'hot line' to the Almighty is unrealistic. However, it is conceivable, that on the particular day when Mary was praying she did get an intuition to enquire about Mrs Jones. But this 'one off' success does not solve the communication difficulty in the church; it just increases everyone's expectations of divine intervention!

There is nothing wrong with realistic expectations in ministry. The problems begin when an expectation becomes divorced from what is humanly possible. And there may be some hidden dynamics, which can make the pastoral situation even more complex.

Entitlement in Ministry

The dynamic that often underlies both a lack of give and take and unrealistic expectations is *entitlement*. This can be understood as assuming a right to some benefit from a relationship. While it is possible to expect too little, as a result of lacking a healthy sense of self-worth or reciprocity in relationships (Craigie & Tan 1989), extravagant expectations are a bigger problem. Exaggerated expectations are commonly seen in situations of ministry. These have the potential to be destructive of pastoral relationships.

Entitlement as a symptom is commonly coupled with personality disorder (for the criteria see American Psychiatric Association 2013). The narcissistic personality is highly self-centred, hyper-sensitive, and grandiose. This kind of person commonly has unrealistic expectations that 'What is mine is mine; what is yours is mine as well!' The emotionally unstable borderline personality has a tendency to believe in magic, expecting the impossible. There is an immature dimension to both personalities, especially with lower functioning individuals, and entitlement is a key indicator of such disturbance. This dynamic can be seen attitudes to ministry:

> Stanley was the senior pastor of a mega-church. He believed in a 'Gospel of Prosperity,' which in his mind meant that he was entitled to use church finances for any personal need. This included driving a new luxury car. Such extravagance led to conflict with his lay leadership. Stanley was contemptuous of their 'interference,' and 'any distraction' from the call of God.

Solomon identified 'assertive entitlement' as a reversion to the infantile fantasy of 'I am the centre of the world'. It follows that others are expected to be perfectly responsive to any needs (Solomon 1989, p. 50). The psychoanalyst Kohut (1971) explored rage and shame in the narcissistic personality. Recently there has been considerable media attention to Donald Trump's 'thin skin' in which he reacts in an angry manner to any perceived slight. Indeed, Trump has been frequently described as narcissistic. In Kohut's understanding, Trump would illustrate both rage and contempt for other in response to any threat to a vulnerable self. Hargrave (2000) thought that children from dysfunctional families may become adults exhibiting both rage and a sense of entitlement. This legacy plays out in destructive ways in dependent relationships.

Perhaps the best description of this psychological reality is by Jeff Young (with Klosko 1993), who developed "schema therapy." He distinguished between spoilt and dependent entitlement. In spoilt entitlement people take what they want with no regard for others or even guilt. Such a person has no history of mutuality or taking responsibility - only of being indulged by a parent. The child ends up in control! This kind of entitlement leads to unresolved conflict (Stevens 2001).

Dependent entitlement, on the other hand, can arise from both unbalanced and unrealistic expectations. This individual believes their needs *should* be met. This is natural for a child who depends on parents for the normal meeting of needs; however, most children grow up and become adults assuming responsibility for others. But childlike expectations remain in those with dependent entitlement. Indeed, a possible explanation of this is that the child was indulged in order for them *to depend* on a parent. This dependent entitlement is typical of borderline personality disorder and contributes to highly unstable emotional swings.

Irrational rage is a key indicator. Unrealistic expectations can be the drivers for this anger. It may be experienced as a passive aggressive cycle, but inevitably, there is disappointment at the outset. Then rage ensues. No one can meet all the needs of another individual, in either ministry or a committed relationship. The knee-jerk angry reaction is completely predictable: both because exaggerated needs remain unmet and responding with anger feels empowering. The following case illustrates a familiar pastoral problem that lead to disruption in church life:

> Nancy was counselling Kylie, a young single mother, who had problems with alcohol and recreational drug use. Family services were threatening to remove her two young children. Kylie had recently become a Christian and was making progress with the support of her Bible study group. Nancy had twice weekly counselling sessions with Kylie who became 'clingy' and was soon requesting daily contact by phone. Her mood was very unstable and she would resort to cutting herself and threatening suicide. Naturally, all this added to the concerns of the child protection worker. While Nancy did what she could, it was not enough, and Kylie would have what Nancy called 'adult tantrums,' which were becoming frightening to reception and administration staff at the church.

There is no easy way out of this. Once a person is convinced of the 'sacredness' of their needs the consequence is entitled dependency. A dependent person needs others, but without entitlement feels grateful for what is given. There is no extreme anger, though perhaps disappointment, if needs are not met. But someone with entitled dependency does not have this capacity for a reciprocal relationship. What is expected is a 'one-way street' to the meeting 'of my needs'.

Perhaps even more worrying is when this psychological dynamic is spiritualized. Christian versions of entitlement are rife in the life of the church. This can be justified by idiosyncratic interpretations of the Bible and even ministry precedents. It is a toxic mix. This spiritualizing is illustrated in the following example:

> There was a vocal group in Stanley's church who advocated 'name and claim healing'. While there were occasional dramatic healings, it was by no means predictable. The pastor of the young adults group blamed the senior pastor for a lack of faith. In this young pastor's mind, this was the reason why some people in the church were not healed. The result was conflict and some disillusionment in the

church. The young leader felt he was entitled to lead a break-away group of young people to begin his own church.

There is no simple way forward to dealing with the problem of entitlement. We can reduce confusion, however, by naming the problem and identifying typical dynamics. It helps to realize that dependent entitlement reflects unconscious hidden knowing, and in some cases dysfunctional spiritual knowing.

Hidden and Spiritual Knowing

Let's go back to Kylie, the young single mother. I will explore Kylie's history to see what shaped her 'neediness'. Kylie's mother was dependent on alcohol, and was emotionally unstable. Parenting was unreliable. Sometimes her mother would 'over-indulge' Kylie with rich food, give attention that was too stimulating, and overwhelming, saying things like "You are my little baby. Let mummy love you." But when her mother was intoxicated or 'sleeping it off', Kylie's basic needs went unmet. All this is a toxic mix, and Kylie's hidden knowing was dysfunctional. This included the following core beliefs:

a) Love is *unreliable*.
b) My needs are *all* important. Nothing else matters (including anyone else's needs).
c) Needs must be *completely* met, it is 'all or nothing'.
d) No one will pay any attention to me unless I am *dramatic* in conveying my needs.
e) Anyone who claims to love me is *responsible to meet all* my needs.
f) I must *attach* strongly to any person offering care.
g) If my expectations are not met, my *rage* is justified and I must *punish* anyone whom I expect to love me.

These are a series of half-truths. None can be defended on rational grounds. But because all have been learned, in effect now 'known,' they have become true-for-Kylie, therefore dominating the way she relates to others.

This is not the end of the story. Kylie became a Christian. It was a genuine conversion. Now what happens to her hidden knowing? She simply transferred her highest expectations to God. Immature people become immature Christians. Low functioning people become low functioning Christians. There is nothing surprising here, as every Christian leader knows from experience.

In her new faith, Kylie expected a lot from God. This soon became a 'battle ground' for a volatile spiritual relationship. There were frequent explosions sparked by the belief "God did not come through for me".

Hidden knowing is known to be hard to change. But there is hope from a new advance in the neurosciences, which I will mention briefly.

A Way Forward?

Research in the neurosciences is expanding and becoming more influential in areas never previously considered relevant. I will briefly touch on two findings. First, neuroscientific research shows that the brain is capable of learning without words. Information is non-cognitively processed in many areas of the brain. What might be called 'primitive' parts of the brain such as brain stem, mid-brain, and limbic system, can all be sites of learning, generally without a strong connection to the language center in the frontal cortex (Grossberg 2009). Second, there has also been an exciting advance called 'memory reconsolidation' (for a review see Nader & Einarsson 2010). Essentially,

this refers to a process of re-learning. The new replaces the old through a process that involves juxtaposition - a clash between what is expected, and something new that is experienced. This appears to loosen the associated learning, and allows for learning something different from the original unconscious expectation.

Hidden knowing does not easily change. It does not respond well even to a new truth, even when endlessly reinforced, but it does respond to contradictory truths brought to awareness and held simultaneously.

Most religious leaders have seen the truth of this through testimonies of dramatic conversion experiences. The traditional 'sinner saved by grace' is a good example of a juxtaposition of two contradictory truths: sinner condemned by God, and grace to be saved by God. But a conversion may be to any cause such as Green Peace, Marxism, or ISIS. I suspect that memory reconsolidation is a neutral mechanism. It can be a path to good or evil. Here is an example that illustrates this:

> Eli was taken into care at six years of age when her single mother could not care for her. Her mother was an alcoholic with underlying schizophrenia. So her early care was chaotic and undermined any sense of her self-worth. Eli was then fostered into the family of a pastor, and raised in church circles. She was automatically part of youth groups, as the pastor's family tends to be involved in church activities. Eli's faith became real through a Cursillo retreat when she was 17. She found her realization of faith helped her previous low self-esteem, "I felt the love of God. Suddenly I had value as a person."

Eli's story in one form or another is common. Eli's prior hidden knowing was negative. This was the consequence of a lack of consistent care by a distracted mother in her earliest years. Then there was counter learning from being raised in a healthy family. But it was not enough to erase her earliest knowing. The second chance of new spiritual knowing came through the retreat with memory reconsolidation, and a vivid awareness of God's love. This provided the juxtaposition between feeling worthless, and God valuing her enough for Christ to sacrifice himself for her. The important connection is that a transforming truth must first of all be experiential – a truth for me!

There must be other pathways to profound change. Some resources may be found in the spiritual disciplines, and the contemplative traditions, for example, the Ignatian approach in which there is an attempt to visualize and participate in gospel scenes. Perhaps we can become more alert for signs of dramatic change that can be understood in terms of memory reconsolidation. While it is possible that such a potential for relearning has been adaptive in terms of evolution, it also seems likely that God uses this for spiritual growth. But there is a lot more research to be done here before coming to any firm conclusions.

Conclusion

There is a whole realm that remains unspoken. In this article this has been labeled hidden knowing, which is contrasted with aware knowing. An area of this is spiritual knowing. The dynamics of this implicit learning based theory have been illustrated by examining a sense of unhealthy entitlement related to Christian ministry.

Is spiritual knowing a revolutionary concept? This seems a rash claim. In the spirit of 'fools rush in' I will suggest or propose that potentially this knowing provides a different way of approaching fundamental Christian disciplines: liturgy and sacraments, spiritual direction, Christian counselling, Christian education, preaching and Christian

leadership[5]. It is a learning based theory of why we assume things in a range of spiritually relevant areas. It also offers some techniques to discover and hopefully change such beliefs – often restrictive and sometimes destructive. Hopefully, this understanding of spiritual knowing will be of interest to anyone in ministry or working in these disciplines.

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[5] I am currently writing a book on hidden and spiritual knowing that explores the implications for a range of Christian ministries.

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Appreciative Inquiry - A Strategy for Being a Healthy Church

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Abstract

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a tool, which has been used in business as an alternative change-management strategy since the late 1990s. Its approach is based on a process of inquiring into that, which works in an organisation. It focuses on what is working, rather than what is broken. Since self-image is a major determinant in the actions and culture of an organisation, AI has potential to change self-image through the cultural change involved in asking generative questions. This paper applies the principles of AI to local churches, using its paradigm to explore ways of being church, rather than continuing with the struggle, many churches face of trying new programs and fixing problems doing church. Instead of asking what will we do, churches learn to ask the question, "Who has God called us to be?" AI helps the church recognise what God has already been doing among them and in the community around them. A key component of this strategy is the telling of life-giving stories. This strategy has also been successfully used as a means of church renewal.

Introduction

Perception is reality. How people view their strengths, limitations, purpose and relationships determines how they respond in the varied situations of life. Reality is constructed out of perceptions of events since everything is filtered not just through the

senses, but through people's mental furniture, their perceptions. The very existence of image consultants, media managers and "spin doctors" demonstrates that what people think is real is not necessarily the same as what is real. This phenomenon has been recorded in many areas, such as parents' perception of their children's obesity (Akerman, Williams & Meunier, 2007) through to foreign policy (Barhoum 1991).[1]

The Importance of our Self-Image

How does this relate to the Church? A range of writers have observed the dualisms inherent in the thinking of Christians across centuries. These writers represent a range of Church traditions and nationalities (Buxton 2007; Haight 1976; Jantzen 1990; McGrath 2017; Ware 1995; Wright 2007). The Plato-inspired spiritual-physical divide, in particular, has had a range of impacts on the church's image of its place in and relationship with the world around it. This view can be traced back to some of the thinking of the early Church Fathers such as Augustine (Cary 2000, p. 118) and Reformers like Calvin (Cooper 2000, pp. 13–14), which developed into an essentially negative spirituality, where one was saved from evil, rather than saved for relationship with God;. In such a view the spiritual is "good" and the "physical" is bad, one is saved from the world, rather than saved to engage with it. This can be observed in songs, where one longs to escape from this world to the perfection of heaven; in the dichotomy between the struggle between one's "flesh" and "spirit"; between doing something "in the natural" and "by the Spirit". One common outcome of this dualism is that salvation is viewed as a "rescue" from an evil world. Rather than the created world being something to enjoy, to care for and to transform by incarnating the Kingdom, it becomes something to avoid. (For an extended discussion of this topic see Buxton (2007)).

An unfortunate consequence of this type of thinking is that the world surrounding the church, including those we wish to be in ministry to and with, are seen as problems to solve, difficulties to overcome, even sins/sinners to be avoided. Rather than celebrating life (to use Buxton's phrase), Christians frequently retreat from the world around them. Evangelism becomes "calling them out" of the world, to be separate and holy. In such a world view, social action becomes irrelevant, since the world will be destroyed in fire anyway, to be replaced by spiritual perfection. In addition, people's difficulties can be dismissed as the consequences of their own sinfulness, the righteous judgment of God, so one doesn't need to help the refugee, the unemployed, or the battlers.

Both for its own sake and for the sake of the creation and people God loves, the Church needs to reshape its thinking into a more positive approach. Christians need to embrace a deeper understanding of the goodness of God. We need to value the essential goodness of the Church. We need to value and enjoy the goodness of Creation and the goodness of other people - including the goodness we can find in those who are not yet part of the community of faith.

One of the valuable messages coming from post-modern and emergent voices is the picture of the God who loves and accepts. For those who have reservations about some emergent theology, one doesn't need to look far in the Bible to find messages of God's grace and favour. The call here is a change of emphasis, to recapture the truth that the

[1] A simple search on Google Scholar for "perception is reality" or "perception versus reality" will turn up thousands of references. A helpful introduction can be found in Cooperrider, et al. (2001, Chapter 2)

message brought by Jesus is truly "Good News". Christians need to understand that the Church today is an incarnation, a foretaste of the eternal Church; and in understanding that, learn again what it means to be a people who live in the light and presence of God's extravagant love and grace. Rather than waiting for the blessings of a perfect heaven, we should be seeking to experience the shalom which comes now from relationship with God. For then we will be a people who will engage with each other and the community out of a wealth of spirit and being, rather than tending toward an existence as emotional and spiritual paupers. This then raises the question; how might one alter mindsets so that Christians and the Church can more easily see and pursue the good around them? One possibility is to use a process called Appreciative Inquiry.

Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a tool which has been used in the corporate world for some years. (See, for example, Johnson & Leavitt, 2001.) Rather than being fear-based, AI tends to be value-based (Sutherland & Stavros, n.d.). It is based on the assumption that "organizations change in the direction in which they inquire" (Ramanathan 2009). That is, the questions asked shape the answers received and, therefore, they shape the future into which one moves (Boyd & Bright, 2007).

The core difference between AI and many other change and transition management tools is that it adopts an approach which focuses on building upon that which is working and that which is good in the organization (Norum 2001). This is in direct contrast to most other change and planning models, which focus on fixing those things which are not working or are problematic.

David Cooperrider originally developed this model for use in corporate environments (Cooperrider, Sorensen & Whitney, 1999).[2] Since then, AI has been adopted in many commercial and not-for-profit organizations as a tool for change, including churches and denominations across the world. A simple Google search or browse in a good library will demonstrate its wide adoption.

Principles and Assumptions of AI

To some people AI can appear simplistic or as little more than wishful thinking. Because of this, it is important to understand that there are sound principles behind Appreciative Inquiry.[3]

- The constructionist principle - words create worlds.
- The principle of simultaneity - inquiry creates change.
- The poetic principle - we can choose what we study.
- The anticipatory principle - image inspires action.
- The positive principle - positive questions lead to positive change.
- The wholeness principle - wholeness brings out the best.
- The enactment principle - acting "as if" is self-fulfilling.
- The free choice principle - free choice liberates power.

From these principles, a number of assumptions underlie the AI process:

[2] Later updated and expanded, See Cooperrider et al. (2001).
[3] Summarised from Cooperrider and Whitney (n.d) and Sutherland and Stavros (n.d). There is some difference among writers concerning the number of principles involved. For example, the Australian Appreciative Inquiry Network lists only five ('5 Principles of Appreciative Inquiry', n.d). These are not different from the eight contained here, simply a subset.

Assumption 1. In every system, be it society, an organisation, family, or another group, something works. Instead of looking for what is broken, look rather for what works (that which creates good) and grow it.

Assumption 2. What one focuses on becomes reality. Negative questions and statements produce a negative reality.

Assumption 3. Reality becomes created in the moment. Humans are capable of holding multiple realities at the same time. The most important reality is the socially constructed reality, that is, the reality that grows and is nurtured by personal relationships.

Assumption 4. The art of asking questions of an organisation or group influences that group in some way.

Assumption 5. People have more confidence and comfort about journeying to the future (the unknown) when they can carry forward parts of the past (the known).

Assumption 6. It is important to value differences of opinion. Differences of interpretation, and differences that arise from many kinds of diversity are important (Loveless 2009).

AI Process

The basic idea behind AI, while deep, is not convoluted. In essence, one focuses on what's good and builds on that. Of course, like any simplification, there are cautions to be heard and pitfalls to avoid. However, even while acknowledging that caution, its power is still in its relative simplicity.

Rather than try and teach a new way of thinking, or introduce new programs, the AI approach can be used to highlight where the new way, the desired future, is already present and build on that. Based on the principles mentioned above, simply focussing on and doing those things which a church may already do which embodies Kingdom life will in and of itself cause that type of Kingdom living to increase. Mindsets will change and eyes will become more open to see the possibilities of where they can join in what the Spirit of God is already doing around them.[4] Finding out what the Spirit is doing among and around the Church can be as simple as "ordinary" people telling the stories of times when they have found hope and life, where they have seen God at work.

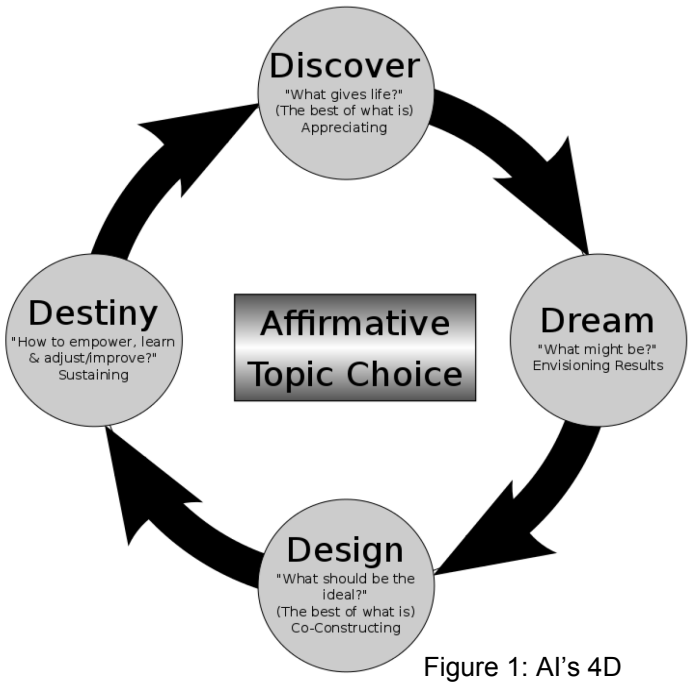

Figure 1: AI's 4D

The AI process is commonly described as the 4D cycle[5], as in the diagram. The "4D" rubric

[4] If a practitioner attempts to change what people *do* using AI, the likely outcome is that it will fail. The goal is changing mindsets. See Bushe and Kassam (2005).

5 Some use an alternate 4I model: Initiation, Inquiry, Imagination, Innovation (Seel 2008; Serrat 2008, p. 2).

comes from the four stages of the process:

1. Discover

   People share their stories of when their organisation is at its best. This is usually done through a structured interview. The storytelling is to be as rich as possible, to allow the imaginative power of the stories to begin to change the participants. People begin to appreciate themselves, each other and their organisation.[6]

2. Dream

   People are asked to dream what could be. What they are trying to do is imagine what their organisation would be like if the high points of the "Discover" stage became the norm all the time. This is done on a large scale, though small groups may be used to make it more manageable.

3. Design

   There is difference here, concerning how this phase should be approached. Some have this phase delegated to a team (Serrat 2008, p. 2), while others have the whole group of participants involved (English, Fenwick & Parsons 2003). The greatest benefit is to be found through involving as many people as possible (Seel 2008). Not only does ownership increase, and therefore commitment, but thinking theologically, if the Spirit of God is among the People of God, then including a multiplicity of voices actually increases the ways in which God is able to speak to the Church.

4. Destiny[7]

   As the original rubric "Deliver" indicates, this is the phase where the dreams are implemented. A key part of this phase is experimentation and improvisation. Often small teams are tasked with implementation of one or more ideas which have arisen from the previous stages. For this stage to work, it is important that there has been a shift in values, to a point where people are not just permitted, but encouraged to experiment.

Appreciative Inquiry and the Church

Appreciative Inquiry resonates well with a range of Christian thought. It has been seen to be an application of Paul's injunction to focus our thoughts on what is good (Phil. 4:8, so Paddock 2003, p. 2). The concept of appreciation also has strong links with the concept of gratitude. Intentionally focussing an individual, a church or even a denomination's thoughts on what is good, on what is working, can easily lead to giving thanks to God for those things. This then echoes the intent of many of the Psalms (e.g. Psa. 9:1; 107:8-9, or the Hallel Psalms). It also echoes injunctions in Scripture to give praise and thanks, even in difficult times (1Chr. 16:34; Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 3:16-17; 1Thess.

[6] Serrat provides a helpful list of generic interview questions:
- Think of a peak experience or high point in your work or experience in your organization.
- In that experience, think about the things you valued most about yourself, the nature of your work, and your organization itself.
- Think about the core factors that give life to your organization, viz., the really positive values it can build upon.
- What three wishes would you like to have that would heighten the vitality and health of your organization? (Serrat 2008, p. 2).

[7] Seel notes that this stage originally was termed "Deliver". However this was replaced with "Destiny" in order to reduce the mechanical feel of the original and to maintain a future focus (Seel 2008).

5:18; 1Tim. 4:4-5). While exegetically a little questionable, one could even look at Jesus' response to the Disciples in the account of the feeding of the multitude (Mtt. 14:13-21, 15:32-39 and parallels[8]). The Disciples focussed on the problem, Jesus redirected them to what they had and then performed the miracle. This parallels AI's focus on what is working, rather placing one's attention on what is not. In addition, the emphasis on story providing meaning as part of the AI process parallels the Scripture's own methods. People are invited learn about themselves and about God by entering into the story of God's interactions with his people over the millennia. This is particularly clear in the Hebrew Scriptures, which introduces God through the way he has interacted with his people, as well as through his laws and requirements. Story is also used to raise questions, to cause one to reflect, rather than provide answers, not only causing one to come to one's own conclusions, but also serving to draw one into the narrative, to identify as part of the wider narrative of God and his people. Appreciative Inquiry also fits well with ecclesiology. The act of listening to the stories of others gives those individuals respect, signifying that they matter. It also can seek to find the presence and actions of God among the whole people in a congregation, rather than focussing on the thoughts and experiences of a few. This reflects well on Paul's image of the Body of Christ in 1Corinthians 12, which indicates all are significant as part of God's work. This can lead to, and indeed depends on, a humility, which recognises and values the knowledge and experiences of others. Indeed, this process has been seen to affirm and even deepen the faith of participants (Paddock 2003, p. 14).[9]

It is unsurprising; therefore, that AI has been used in a range churches, denominations and Christian organisations. English et al. (2003, p. 83ff) provide a helpful, step-by-step example of the technique applied to the development of spirituality in a Christian School context. The process has even been implemented at denominational level. The Canadian Mennonites have used and promoted the use of AI among their congregations. (See, for example, Benner 2010; Rogalsky 2009a, 2009b.) Similarly, Paddock (2003) records the use of AI across a range of Catholic organisations and local faith communities. She observes that they include some early adopters among their number, with work being done as far back as 1996 (Paddock 2003, p. 12). The United Methodist Church commends the process in their leadership documentation (General Board of Discipleship & Heavner 2016; General Board of Discipleship, Jackson & Cataldo 2016).[10]

Not only has AI been used by a range of faith communities, the process has been applied for a variety of purposes. It has been used for missional engagement and strategic planning, for spiritual renewal, ecumenical engagement and staff transitions (Branson 2016, pt. 2; Paddock 2003 passim).

However, not all have applied AI appropriately. Some have tended to denote anything, which focuses on the "positive" as being Appreciative Inquiry. While such may indeed apply some of the principles behind AI, it does not necessarily apply the *process*. So, one may use an appreciative methodology or principle even while not engaging in an

[8] While I am aware that some scholars interpret the two accounts a repetitions of the one incident, I am assuming these represent two different events.

[9] Branson (2016, Chapter 3) has an excellent discussion concerning AI's compatibility with Biblical theology.

[10] A very helpful set of examples can be found in Mark Lau Branson's recently updated Memories, Hopes, and Conversations (Branson 2016).

appreciative inquiry process.[11] Others have seemed to implement the process more fully, moving from the inquiry to the design and even delivery stages. There have also been a number of careful implementations, including a range of research theses (Brown 2010; Kohler 2011; McClellan 2011; Peavy 2010; Williams 2011). It is unclear, however, whether the process is then continued iteratively. Hays (2010), for example, fully implements the process initially, but there is no mention of any further iterations. Similarly, Kinnison (2016, pp. 125–128) commends the full AI process, but fails to highlight its iterative nature. Even though he doesn't note the iterative nature of the process, Nordenbrock (2011, p. 52) does emphasise that the Destiny phase is ongoing, involving continual review and development. Similarly, van Helden (2014) emphasises the need to reflect after the Destiny phase.

The risks of an unwise or uncritical use of the process was raised by Rogalsky (2013), when he addresses the issue of being "too positive", not asking questions about, or addressing that which doesn't work (on which see further below). Another risk, and criticism, is that AI is and has been implemented as an event, rather than as a process. Benner (2010), for example, critiques the Canadian Mennonite hierarchy for failing to "follow-up" on the initial process. The risk here is that it becomes an expensive event which leads to little long-term change and at the same time raises a level of cynicism either about the leadership, about AI, or about both.

Whether or not churches and Christians will value and be able to implement the insights of AI will depend on the mindsets they bring, since these determine the starting point for the journey. People do not deal with reality on a daily basis; rather they experience their perception of reality in light of their intellectual and emotional framework, which has been formed from past experiences (Pegram & Tan, 2010, sec. 5.1; Voyle 2010, pp. 39–43). By focussing on what is working, AI allows the refashioning of the mental landscape, by choosing what is inquired about, by choosing the stories told.

More than simply asking, how can AI help to construct a positive mental landscape, another important question is, how can it help congregations to "be the Church" better. How can they be the sort of church envisaged above, churches which celebrate life? Part of the answer comes from research in the areas of social and emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman addresses the question of "What Really Matters" in the chapter by that name in *Social Intelligence* (Goleman 2006b, p. 311ff). He notices the creep of expectations and how, in the pursuit of some things (in his discussion money and pleasure), the treadmill never ends. Goleman refers to research by Kahneman, which indicates what actually does provide happiness or satisfaction for people—a life rich with rewarding relationships (Kahneman 2004). The answer to the question above concerning how AI can help Christians to be church better, is that since the AI process is inherently relational it will by its nature bring greater and longer-lasting satisfaction than trying to do more and better effort, programs and events.

Once people begin to tell meaning-making stories, relationships start to be built (Boyd & Bright 2007, p. 1026). The more heartfelt a story is told, the greater the

[11] Nell (2014, p. 7), highlights this misuse of the term by referring to "so-called 'appreciative inquiry'". A number seem to miss this important point. (See, for example, Dantis 2015, p. 188; Greenwood 2013, 2016; Perez 2011).

emotional and relational connection between the teller and the listeners.[12] Further, if stories of hope are told, if people share others' positive journey with God, they themselves will become more hopeful, more relationally connected and more satisfied with their experience of Christian community. This has been the author's experience in a church where this strategy was implemented.

It is important to note that for anything to be a part of true cultural change, it has to be a process, rather than a single event. This is no challenge to AI, since it is itself an iterative process. There are often mini-iterations in the Destiny phase. However, more than that, there is the need to make this process a part of the ongoing culture, rather than something which is completed and then moved on from. Rather than proceeding through an AI process, churches need to engage in the AI cycle in an ongoing way: asking generative questions, continuing to tell the stories, continuing to determine what the common threads are, continuing to hear God's voice and see his actions as he moves in and around the Church, in and through the surrounding community; then continuing to experiment, to try new ways of being Church in the community.

Bushe (2007) cautions about a too-superficial appreciation of the model. The key issue he raises is that of the work needing to be generative - being positive is not enough. What his story highlights is that the "right" questions need to be asked, not just positive ones about the goal. For example, the author was asked by a leadership team to assist in planning the transition from a long-established minister. The normal process involves description of needs and roles, creation of a position description (PD), advertising and interviewing based on the PD, culminating in a final appointment. Using AI, the initial question to the team was, "What aspects of ministry, both with the current and other ministers, have given your life and hope, have helped you to encounter God?" What arose was essentially a list of personal attributes which the team used to interview and find the right person. Roles were part of the discussion, but they were subservient to finding the person who would help the church build on the positive culture they were developing.

Bushe's (2007) discussion concerning raising "negative issues" is also useful. Rather than avoiding the negative, telling people that we can't discuss "what we don't like", he wisely suggests that the discussion be had, but that the leader move the discussion from purely negative territory into addressing the positive by asking questions like: "What's missing?" "How could this be done better?" "How should things be, then?" (See also, Grant 2006, p. 269). As is so often the case, a tool used unwisely or inappropriately can cause more damage than good. This highlights the need to have the process led wisely.

It is important to recognise that the dreams developed during the process are not pie-in-the-sky. Appreciative Inquiry is an iterative process, rather than a linear one. Through a wise process dreams become reality, but in the process the dream is itself moulded to fit goals and circumstances. Frequently when introducing the process to teams, "practical" concerns are raised. A helpful strategy is to "fill in the gaps" for people with concerns, letting them know that the process does eventually get to wise evaluation, but it may not be at that stage yet.

This also serves to highlight the need to know the audience. Are they flexible enough to adapt to a new process, a new way of thinking, a way which may be quite

[12] See Pegram and Tan (2010, Chapter 3). Similar conclusions can be drawn from other works on emotional intelligence which shows that emotional connection can result in matching physical responses, and therefore shared effect (Decety & Jackson 2006, p. 55; Goleman 2006a, Chapter 7).

foreign to their usual patterns? This is one of the points made by Mantegna. She also notes the need to ensure participants have the time to devote to the process (Mantegna 2011, p. 77). In our time-poor society, this is an issue which is easily dismissed. Practitioners need to make room for this process to occur, for it to inhabit people's minds and hearts. If it is rushed through as a quick fix, it will fail. In the case of the church, the goal is for AI to become a way of life, not simply a change process. It indeed may begin as a process, but the goal should be to see it as a new way of being - a way of living Gospel values.

Generative effects don't just happen, the key is the mindset of the participants. If the participants are still in a negative frame of mind, still assigning blame, still hurting or self-censoring, then generative effects will likely not occur. However generative effects will occur when the process is followed with wisdom and insight, that is, with skilled leadership. This echoes Grant's observation concerning the need to remain flexible in the application of the 4D AI model, where rigid adherence can actually stifle communication and relationships (Grant 2006, p. 279f).

In summary, AI is a process which is widely recommended as being useful, but it needs to be applied with wisdom and flexibility in the application of process.

Lessons from AI—Strategies and Application

So what might the application of AI to the life of a church look like, what might it entail? Some remarks have already been made in the previous section, however, here some examples of how this might look and how the principles/mindset reaches into people's thinking and acting as Christians will now be presented.

A very simple, but powerful strategy is to simply begin the inquiry process—to start asking people what they have found in their Christian life and in the congregation, that has been energising and life-giving, where they have encountered God. The whole process, its principles, assumptions and rationale, doesn't even need to be explained up front, this can be done along the way. Essentially the goal is to change habits/mindsets, to have people get into the habit of telling their "God stories".

This storytelling strategy has a number of positive outcomes. In and of itself, telling the "good" stories are encouraging - to use Buxton's phrase, we "celebrate life" (2007) and, in addition, we celebrate God's participation in it. In doing this, it is important that "ordinary" stories are encouraged. By their everyday nature, they break down the sacred-secular divide so common in western thinking. They remind us that God is found in all sorts of places. Because of that, people begin to hope, to look for the everyday acts and presence of God around them.

Having encouraged a minister to make his "strategic plan" a process of telling and hearing this type of story, the author had a conversation with one of the congregation members after a Sunday service once the strategy had begun. The member commented that it was a most encouraging and uplifting service. When asked why, she said it was because people had told their stories. Not the extreme "saved from the gates of hell" tales, but tales of simple, real-life encounters with God. This was at a time that congregation was recovering from a damaging and hurtful time in its history.

Another beneficiary of this strategy was the minister, himself a people person.[13] He was finding it extremely challenging to formulate a classic strategic plan, especially since he wasn't "wired" to think that way. He was feeling overwhelmed and wanted help. To be given the goal of building the congregation's telling and hearing of these life-giving God stories was life-giving to him. Not only could he do that, not only was it playing to his strengths, but it was exciting for him to contemplate. To make it a more intentional process, closer in line with AI practice, he and the leadership were also given responsibility to listen to what themes were common among the stories. Through this, with wisdom, they could discover who the church was and where God was at work in and around them. This then could lead into areas for experimentation for future practice. His "strategic plan" for the next twelve months was the application of these initial parts of the AI process.

The deceptively simple theological underpinning to this is that if the Spirit of God is among his people, then God can and will speak through their voices. Too often churches have quelled the voices of those through whom God might speak, limiting his speaking to the educated, the professional, the orthodox. It is understandable in some ways why this has happened, yet the fear of the unorthodox, strange, unexpected or even heretical seems a poor reason to stifle the very voices God may speak through. I believe we need to hear the witness of Scripture in this. Often it is the unexpected one, the insignificant, the marginalised whom God has used to achieve his ends: the youngest (David, Joseph), the insecure and afraid (Moses), the sinners (Rahab, Matthew), the everyday "fishermen", the persecutor (Paul).

The scriptures are filled with imperfect people who so often seem to misunderstand God. Perhaps we need a little more imperfection in churches. Letting the unlikely voices be heard is one place to start. It would mean a church which was "messy", simply because it allowed people to be themselves, with fewer constricting rules, because people are "messy"! Such a church may indeed put some people off, but such a church could also be very attractive. People could be drawn to a place where their story mattered, to a place where they could be themselves without having to wear the mask of "having it all together," a church where people could be "real".

Of course, it doesn't begin and end with telling the stories, more is needed. If there are to be more "messy" churches, we need to become better at dealing with the consequences of the unexpected, the surprising, the confronting. Messy people often have disagreements. The health of a church is not defined by whether they have disagreements and conflict or not, but by how they resolve them. For a people who have the message of reconciliation, forgiveness and hope, it seems we often struggle to define these and provide concrete methods to achieve these in our individual and corporate lives. In the author's experience, more often than not, Christians avoid conflict and discomforting situations, brushing things under the carpet until they or the situation explodes, or until people leave (the congregation and sometimes the faith).

Voyle (2010) has developed AI, NLP and contemplative spirituality into strategies for helping individuals and groups deal with conflict and grief. He provides strategies (with accompanying experiential learning exercises) for resolving painful memories, grief and resentment. A strength of Voyle's work is that it is heavily focussed on providing tools to use, rather than simply outlining the problem. Voyle recounts his

[13] His style is an IS, according to the DISC profiling tool (Institute for Motivational Living, n.d.; Pegram & Tan, 2010, Chapter 6).

frustration with an unhelpful seminar he attended where for five of the six hours they were informed about the negative effects of lack of forgiveness, with the final hour admonishing them about the need to forgive. Yet, nowhere was forgiveness or resentment defined, nor were any strategies to forgive provided (Voyle 2010, p. 21).

There are two levels of benefit if Voyle's AI tools are used - the individual and the corporate. If individuals in the Church live in a place of hope and life, rather than tied to past pain, it automatically creates a more positive, life-giving atmosphere in the Church. However, there are also situations where congregations as a whole have experienced pain and loss and hold onto resentments. In such situations, time by itself does not heal, but the use of strategies which enable the restoration of life and hope do bring healing and wholeness (Voyle 2010, p. 12). A key part of Voyle's methodology is the coach-client relationship. He acknowledges that it is possible to learn from the information in the book, but that it is in the relationship and journey undertaken by the coach and client that real change is effected. The benefits will be greater for the long-term if the coach can be someone who is part of the congregation or someone who has or can maintain a relationship with the congregation, even though an "outsider". Not only will this person be a resource for similar situations, but the shared journey itself strengthens ties immeasurably. Therefore, if they are part of the congregation the relational "capital" of the congregation will be built. This is nothing new. It is similar to the effects of any good pastoral care. The difference here is the strategies used to effect healing.

A key to effectively implementing AI is fostering a culture of experimentation, one that by its nature is permission-giving. If we truly believe that God speaks through the multitude of voices in our churches, then we need to take what they say seriously. Therefore, as people tell the stories and dream of ways in which the future may be better, there needs to be experiments, which attempt to make that future real. The role of leadership is to guide wise reflection on process and implementation. Rather than being gatekeepers, leaders become wise guides. Of course, it is expected that some experiments will not achieve the desired results, but that is okay! What then happens is the process begins again, looking at what works and building on that. If an experiment does work, then again, the process is applied, seeking to build on the success, learning from, but not dwelling on, the "failures".

There are many resources available which will assist with bringing AI into the local church. Sutherland and Stavros (n. d., p. 8ff), for example, explain what AI strategy might look like, as well as suggesting a series of "appreciative questions". For those involved in pastoral care or working with conflicted situations, Voyle's material is very helpful. There are also many AI resources on the Web, including some specifically addressing its use among churches and denominations. There is even a page of links entitled "AI in the Religious Sector" at The Appreciative Inquiry Commons ('AI in the Religious Sector - The Appreciative Inquiry Commons', n. d.).

Conclusion

Often the church operates out of a scarcity and judgement mindset, rather than one of grace and abundance. Frequently, this is coupled with a dualistic world view which is negative in its outlook to this world and its life in favour of "heaven". These attitudes are reflected in relationships among congregation members and with the wider community, and even in Christians' own self-image.

Appreciative Inquiry is quite simple in concept and relatively uncomplicated in practice, yet it is a method to implement and sustain successful congregational change. A key to maintaining that change is to recognise that AI is a process, actually a recursive process, not a program or a quick fix.

A joy in beginning AI journey is that the more people reflect on life, ministry and the church from an AI perspective, the more they see that is hopeful and life giving. When applied thoughtfully, this process allows a different mindset to be developed in a church—a mindset where the focus is on what the good God and others are doing in and around the people of God, a mindset where God is good and seeks to do more good, where we incarnate the Kingdom and celebrate the good life into which we have been born again, and a process which allows us to become and remain people who have and continue to experience Good News.

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Gender and Leadership Issues in the Australian Church: Leadership Effectiveness – Men versus Women

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Abstract

Do men or women make better church leaders? This is the key question explored in this study. Much of the debate about female church leadership is based on anecdotal views on the relative effectiveness of males and females in church leadership, as well as on differences in the interpretation of scripture regarding gender roles in church leadership. This study draws on one of the most comprehensive surveys of church leaders in the world, the Australian National Church Life Survey of church leaders in 2006. Information in this survey was gathered directly from over 9000 church leaders across 22 denominations. This

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data was interrogated using appropriate statistical analysis leading to surprising conclusions.

Introduction

The gender divisions in the Australian society influence the attitudes to women's leadership in churches. In this respect, Australia is similar to many other Western societies. Women in Australia have sought greater equality in the society ever since the colonial period, for example, Edith Dornwell (Burdon 2014) was the first female science graduate from Adelaide University (1885) and women's suffrage groups appeared on the political landscape in 1880s.[3]Since that time Australian society has morphed to become more egalitarian where women's participation has been increasingly accepted across broad sections of the Australian society, culminating in the appointment of the first female Governor General[4] in 2008 and the first female Prime Minister[5] in Australia in 2010.

In the Australian Christian church the first record of the ordination of women in an evangelical denomination was in 1926 (Henderson 1990), although in the Anglican church there are records (Porter 2014) of women being appointed to the position of Church Warden (1895) and of the appointment of the Deaconesses in 1884. In some Australian denominations, the ordination of women to ministry has been a relatively recent development (e.g. Baptist Union of Victoria, 1978)[6] and in others there remains strong resistance to women's ordination at a policy level.[7]

According to the Role Congruity Theory (RCT) of Eagly and Karau (2002), prejudice against female leaders is associated with perceived incompatibility between the characteristics of women and the demands of leadership roles. In the case of the church, this incongruity seems to have been reduced to questions of legitimacy (a theological issue relating to the hermeneutic/interpretation of Christian scripture) and competence. It has been suggested that women do not have the ability to lead as effectively as men in those roles. However, historical records of the establishment of Australian Pentecostal churches, for example, contradict the latter assertion since Grey, Torn Stockings and Enculturation: Women Pastors in the Australian Assemblies of God.[8] Jacqui Grey from Southern Cross College reports that by 1925, 11 of the 18 Pentecostal churches planted in Australia were founded by women, and by 1930 twenty of the 37 churches (for which information is available) were initiated by women. Chant (1973, pp. 34-56) in his comprehensive history of Australian Pentecostalism also records the significant influence of women in the early Pentecostal Church in Australia, citing for example, the key leadership roles played by Mrs Janet Lancaster, the leader of

[3] http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/women_and_politics/sa1.htm (accessed 31 May 2017)
[4] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Quentin-Bryce (accessed 31 May 2017)
[5] http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/primeministers/gillard/in-office.aspx. (accessed 31 May 2017)
[6] http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bq/28-4_159.pdf (accessed 31 May 2017)
[7] http://pastoralmeanderings.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/ (accessed 31 May 2017)
[8] http://aps-journal.com/aps/index.php/APS/article/view/51 (accessed 31 May 2017)

the Good News Hall in North Melbourne (1906), and Canadian-American evangelist Aimee Semple MacPherson who came to Australia in 1922 (pp. 70-79).

But what is the empirical evidence with regard to gender differences in leadership ability at the individual level on the basis of psychometrics and leadership assessment? Putting aside the stereotypes of men and women, there is growing evidence from research discovered in the context of the theory of transformational leadership, that women as a group have more transformational qualities than men (e.g., Eagly & Carli 2003; Riggio 2013) and have therefore greater leadership potential where such qualities are required. Zenger and Folkman (2012) and Sherwin (2012) concur on the basis of the data from a study assessing 45,000 leaders across a wide range of industries. Sherwin reports that the effectiveness of women as leaders appears to change over time so that differences between genders vary according to the leader's age. Bailey (2014) made the astute observation that "…there is no universal rule: different individuals are typically suited to different situations and context is, as ever, king".

Apart from different operational contexts in which leadership may be assessed and the different theoretical perspective employed, the methodologies associated with leadership assessment are continuing to develop (e.g., Assunta & Agostino 2007; Hazy 2006; Kets et al., 2004). At the moment, there does not appear to be any clear consensus about what are the best assessment instruments or what leadership competencies should be included in an evaluation of gender differences in leadership.

Thus, this whole issue requires a clear understanding of what effective leadership actually means and how to measure it. Moreover, Barker (1997) makes the valid point that we need first to establish consensus on what we mean by the term "leadership" before proceeding to discuss leadership training and its assessment. Impacting on the nature of effective leadership in church is also the way religious faith is viewed. For example, Davey (2004) argues that if relationships together with narrative are perceived to be central to religious faith, as claimed by feminist theology, it will then be viewed as a *lived* religion rather than simply a religious belief. This perspective is thought to lead to a better understanding of gender and sexuality as well as religion itself when viewed from a feminist perspective. According to Chaturvedi et al. (2012) relationships, and particularly the ability to build effective relationships, are at the core of the concept of leadership. In contrast Avioli, Walumbwa and Weber (2009) offer a range of leadership styles and classifications[9] which presume a common understanding regarding a definition of the term "leadership".

Our perception is that while the term leadership is used freely in church life there is often a lack of clarity as to what that term means. Clinton (1988, p. 245) provides a helpful working definition of leader and leadership for the church context as follows:

> Leader - In the biblical context, a person with a God-given capacity and the God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God's people for God's purposes for the group…

[9] *Authentic Leadership, New Genre Leadership, Complexity Leadership, Shared/Collected or Distributed Leadership*.

The key themes of articulation and influence for particular purposes, are also supported by Weems (2010), who defines leadership in church as:

> Leadership is the development and articulation of a shared vision, motivation of those key people without whom that vision cannot become reality, and gaining the cooperation of most of the people involved.

In leadership theory, leadership is technically defined as a dynamic process over an extended period of time in which a leader (utilising leadership resources and by specific leadership behaviours), influences the thoughts and activities of followers, to accomplish mutually agreed goals for the benefit of the group (Clinton 1988, p. 245). House et al. (2004, p. 15) report on a conference held in 1994 in which 54 researchers from 38 countries developed a working definition of leadership, which seems to concur with Clinton's and Weems' approaches:

> … leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members.

It follows from this that assessment of leadership effectiveness at the individual level relates to the ability of that individual ("the Leader") to influence others to help achieve the goals of the group (Assunta & Agostin 2007). Many branches of the Christian church have viewed leadership in terms of the Heroic Leadership model (Fletcher 2004), linking it with positional power and authority (e.g. the priest/pastor/senior minister) typically associated with a hierarchically structured organisation, where particular leadership attributes are required of the people at the top. In contrasting the heroic and more recently proposed "postheroic" leadership styles, Fletcher (2004 p. 650) makes the following observation:

> Many have noted that the traits associated with traditional, heroic leadership are masculine. Men or women can display them, but the traits themselves-such as individualism, control, assertiveness, and skills in advocacy and domination - are socially ascribed to men in our culture and generally understood as masculine… In contrast, skills associated with new, postheroic leadership are feminine... Again, men or women can display them, but the traits themselves, such as empathy, community, vulnerability, and skills of enquiry and collaboration - are socially ascribed to women in our culture and generally understood as feminine.

While the heroic leadership model seems to have prevailed historically and publicly, more recently postheroic leadership has been conceptualised as a set of shared practices that can and should be enacted by people of all levels. Implicit in this perspective is a recognition of the relationship between personal and positional leadership. Fletcher (2004, p. 648) argues the new models of leadership recognise that these visible positional heroes are supported by a network of personal leadership practices distributed throughout the organisation.

> Positional leaders have been described as mere tips of icebergs (McIntosh 1989) or whitecaps in the deep blue sea (Draft 2001), visible and important but sustained by larger forces and the numerous,

> countless acts of enabling, supporting, and facilitating that make up the collaborative subtext of what is often mistakenly labelled individual achievement.
>
> Frameworks and images such as these acknowledge the interdependencies inherent in leadership. They signal a shift from a single-minded focus on individual achievement and meritocracy to an emphasis on collective achievement, social networks, and the importance of teamwork and shared accountability. Significant in this shift is a blurring of the distinction between the skills of leadership and what some have called "followership".

In this context leadership outcomes can be influenced by a range of factors including the leadership style and the general environment in which the leadership task is exercised.

It is also helpful to distinguish issues of leadership effectiveness from that of leadership style. A plethora of leadership styles have been identified (e.g. see Assunta & Agostino 2007; Van Eeden, Cilliers & Van Deventer 2004; Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber 2009; Hazy 2006, Kets de Vries 2004) which help identify qualities and factors regarded as being important to the function of leadership. Working on the basis of this perspective there is a need for a holistic approach to the assessment of leadership. Investigation of leadership styles has also led to some interesting findings in relation to differences between genders (Eagly & Carli 2003) and it seems even a person's morphology, i.e. shape (Senior 2012), has been linked to a leadership style. Overall it appears that leadership outcomes can be achieved through employing a variety of different leadership styles and equally some styles may be more appropriate to achieve outcomes (i.e. more effective) in particular contexts.

As noted above, the contextual settings of the leadership functions may also affect leadership outcomes (Stumbo & McWalters 2010), especially as they relate to the gender of the leader. Eklund (2006), noted that congregations have distinct cultures and not all value and accept women's leadership and Wayne et al., (2010), identified the importance of women being given permission (empowered) to express their leadership functions in small group settings. Factors such as church denominational culture may also be important to women's effective leadership in terms of the denomination providing adequate mentoring support to help develop women to become effective leaders/ministers (Newkirk & Cooper 2013). In their meta-analysis of gender and perceptions of leadership effectiveness, Paustian-Underdahl, Walker and Woehr (2014, p. 3) propose:

> … based on RCT (Role Congruity Theory), that key aspects of the leadership context will affect the extent to which leadership roles are seen as congruent or incongruent with both male and female gender roles, which may help to explain whether men or women are seen as more effective leaders in different situations.

Some of the contextual moderators they cite include time of study, type of organisation, hierarchical level, study setting, percentage of men involved in assessing the leader's performance, and source of rating. Interestingly the

Paustian-Underdahl, et al., (2014) study showed that men tended to rate themselves as significantly more effective than women, while when others undertook the ratings, women were rated as significantly more effective than men, but on the basis of the combined ratings there was no significant gender difference.

It is fair to say that leadership depends on the cultural context, in that its importance and value varies across cultures. There is growing awareness that culture influences leadership and organizational processes. A definition of culture (House et al., 2004, p. 15) employed across cultural studies is

> …shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretation or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations.

Phillips (2010, p. 71) notes that while culture is ubiquitous and an attribute of all societies, we need to be aware of the "trap" of cultural essentialism, in which certain characteristics are attributed to everyone within a particular category (for example, all women are caring and empathetic). Attributing those characteristics to all members of the category, such as by saying all women are caring, may be a way of superimposing on that group false socially created or constructed features, instead of apprehending the real variety in the group because there is an assumption of a homogenised and unified group. In their macro, statistical study of gender equality and cultural change, Inglehart and Norris (2003), found that the type of religious belief (such as Islam) about gender equality was more important than the strength of religiosity in determining attitudes. They found also that secularisation and social modernisation, together with the weakening strength of religious values among young generations, had led to an increase in gender equality. Their analysis demonstrated that the type of religion (for example, Islam versus Christian versus Buddhist) was more important in terms of belief about gender equality, than the strength of religiosity. Research by Ridgeway (2001) established that, more than being just a trait of individuals, gender is an institutionalized system of social practices. The gender system is deeply entwined with social hierarchy and concepts of leadership, because many gender stereotypes contain status beliefs that associate greater status worthiness and competence with men than with women.

> Widely shared gender stereotypes are in effect the "genetic code" of the gender system, since they constitute the cultural rules or schemas by which people perceive and enact gender difference and inequality. Expectation States Theory argues that gender is deeply entwined with social hierarchy and leadership because the rules for the gender system that are encoded in gender stereotypes contain status beliefs at their core. Status beliefs are shared cultural schemas about the status position in society of groups such as those based on gender, race, ethnicity, education, or occupation. (Ridgeway 2001, p. 637)

Leadership Effectiveness

Goktepe and Schneider (1988) assessed leadership effectiveness by asking 120 emergent leaders in a United States university to rank their effectiveness on a Likert-type scale (1= *extremely ineffective* –.> 7= *extremely effective*). They found

there were no significant differences in effectiveness evaluations between male and female leaders in small mixed groups, nor among ratings received by leaders with masculine, feminine or androgynous gender role orientations. Certainly, *leadership styles/behaviour* are known to be different between genders, but this does not imply a difference in *effectiveness* since different leadership strategies can produce the same result for the group in achieving agreed goals/outcomes. Assuming that men and women can, in principle, be equally effective in the leadership function, and putting aside for the moment the debate about the theological legitimacy of such a role, the question arises as to what inhibits more women from coming into leadership functions within the church? Hastings and Lindsay (2013) found that elite women (those in senior leadership positions with major institutions of US society) are less likely than men to report religion as being important in their lives. Rating religion as of low importance was especially true for successful women with graduate degrees displaying a high commitment to their work. Hastings and Lindsay suggest aspiring women leaders may not benefit from religion in the same way as men do and that religious systems fail to provide equitable levels of support across genders. Given the difficulty women have in achieving leadership in religious environments, a negative environment ('glass ceiling effect') may inhibit women from being fulfilled in their leadership functions in religious contexts, diverting their efforts to find such fulfilment elsewhere (i.e. why bother?).

The whole logic surrounding the issue of leadership effectiveness and its assessment, especially in the context of religious communities, is one that might benefit from further enquiry. For example, if it is agreed that leadership is influencing others to achieve the goals of a group, then *defining the goals* is an important first step to discovering whether a leader (or group) has been effective. In a commercial context, a fairly hard-nosed approach might be taken to assessing the leader (Avioli & Quisenberry 2010) in terms of return on the leadership investment against the salary costs of leadership, where training and development are concerned. It follows that if the goals vary with the operational context of a group, then both criteria and relevant methodology for assessing effective leadership should change also.

In the Australian church, contextual settings for leadership functions vary widely in terms of the denominational position or policy where women-in-ministry is concerned and sadly historical prejudice against women still persists, with some men contending that they lack the skills/traits to successfully function as leaders (e.g. Henning & Jardin 1977; Yarkum 2008).

While numerous methodologies have been proposed to assess leadership effectiveness (e.g., Aviolio, Avey & Quisenberry 2010; Kets de Vries 2004), the 2006 Australian National Church Life Survey (NCLS) leadership questionnaire database provides empirical evidence to evaluate self-rated leadership effectiveness between genders across a range of some 20 denominations (Protestant, Catholic, Pentecostal, Independent, etc.). Various leadership categories within churches were distinguished in the NCLS questionnaire. This allowed the researchers to investigate the self-rated leadership effectiveness of the female and male leaders in churches based on this substantial body of empirical data.

Methodology

Collectively around 400,000 attenders in 7000 Australian churches in 22 Christian denominations have participated in 5-yearly National Church Life Surveys, inaugurated in 1991[10]Co-operating denominations included Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants, who collectively embrace a large network of churches for sharing practical resources to help churches. In 2006 two separate self-assessment questions invited church leaders to assess their effectiveness in leadership. The questions were:

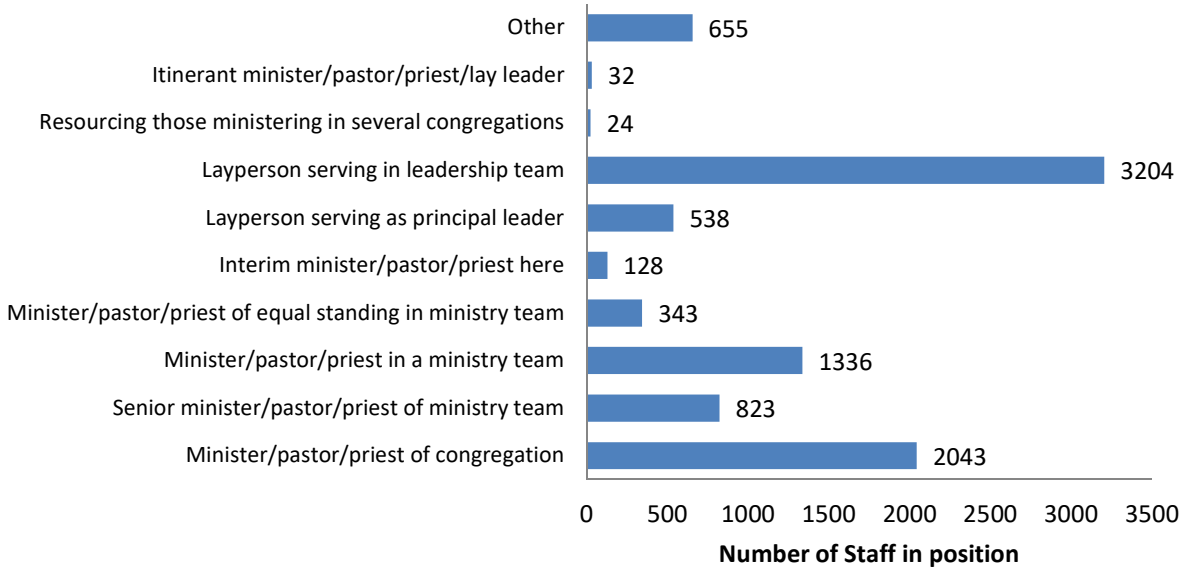
1. How would you rate your overall effectiveness in your present role here in the last few months?
2. How would you rate your overall effectiveness in ministry?

The responding church leaders were able to rate their effectiveness on a ten-point scale from Very Low (1) to Very High (10). Those answering the questions were separated into different categories by *age*, *gender*, *denomination* and the *nature of the leadership function* performed by them (classified as one of: *"All Respondents"/"Not Ordained" /"Ordained"/"Senior Leader"*). NCLS was commissioned to undertake analysis of leadership effectiveness between genders, drawing upon the 2006 voluntary self-reporting survey of these church leaders. This study is possibly the first Australian broad scale empirical evaluation of the perceived leadership effectiveness of Australian church leaders across the genders using the NCLS data.

Description of People Who Participated in the Survey

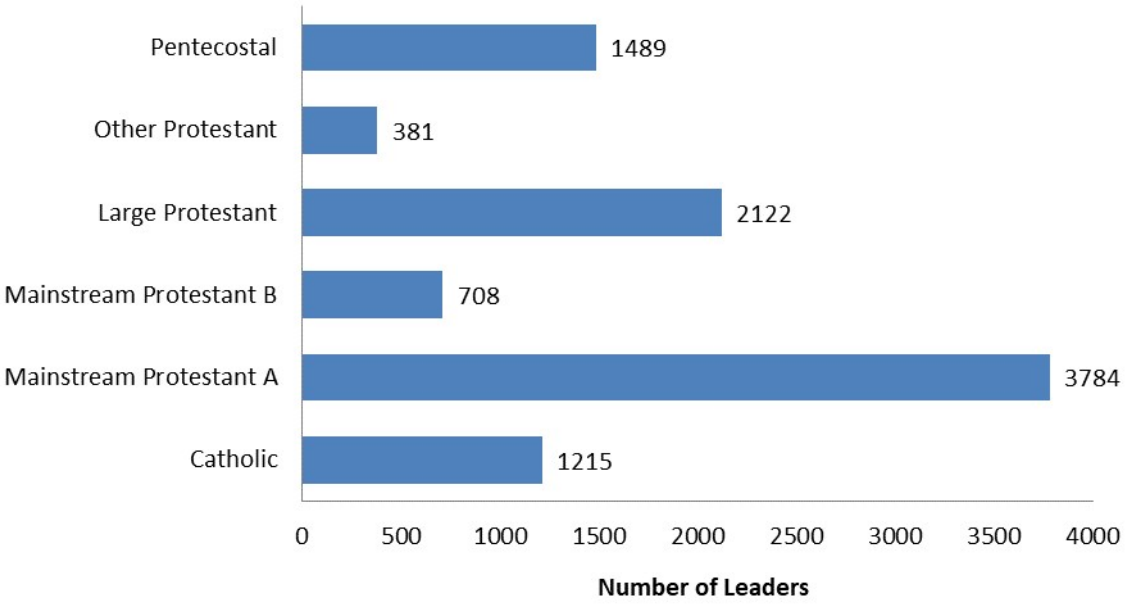
The profile of those who responded to the NCLS survey is shown in the Figures 1-3, and Table 2.

Figure 1: Leadership Profile for 2006 in Survey According to Leadership Category (N=9126) diversity of NCLS leadership categories is seen in Figure 1, with the predominance of lay leaders indicating their importance to the effective function of congregational and Church life nationally.



[10] http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=4539 (accessed 31 May 2017)

Figure 2: Denomination Profile of the 2006 NCLS Leadership Sample (N=9422)



The 22 denominations included in the national NCLS sample were organised into seven categories as indicated in Figure 2, in order to respect the confidentiality requirements of the survey participants. The composition of the denominational clusters is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Denominational categories used for statistical analyses of 2006 NCLS data

Denominational category	Member Denominations
Non-Protestant	Catholic
Mainstream Protestant A	Anglican, Uniting Church of Australia
Mainstream Protestant B	Lutheran, Presbyterian
Large Protestant	Baptist, Churches of Christ, Salvation Army
Other Protestant	Reformed, Congregational, Vineyard Fellowship, Missionary Alliance, Nazarene, Brethren, Adventist, Wesleyan Methodist, Westminster Presbyterian, House Churches/Communities, Independent, Methodist
Pentecostal A	Christian City Church, Apostolic, Assemblies of God, Christian Revival Crusade, Christian Outreach Centres
Pentecostal B	Christian Life Churches, Foursquare Gospel, Other Pentecostal, Bethesda

Figure 3: Gender Profile of Ordained and Not-ordained 2011 NCLS Leadership Sample

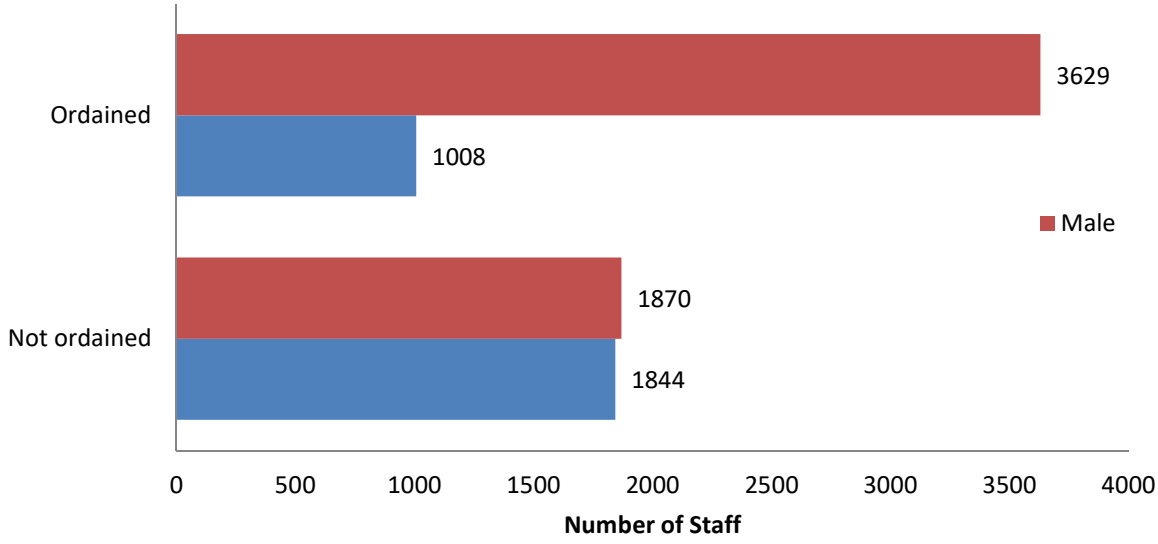


Figure 3 shows that while there was a good gender balance among the non-ordained portion of the survey sample, there was a marked imbalance (about 3.6:1 ratio of male to female) in the ordained gender sample with a predominance of men over women. The lack of gender balance in the ordained leadership sample is possibly indicative of historical gender barriers to the ordination of women in the Australian church.

Results

A summary of the survey findings for leadership effectiveness ratings between various leadership and gender categories are summarised in Table 2.

Effectiveness category	Gender	Leadership category							
		All Respondents		Not Ordained		Ordained		Senior Leader	
		Sample Size (N)	Sample Mean	Sample Size(N)	Sample Mean	Sample Size(N)	Sample Mean	Sample Size(N)	Sample Mean
Overall effectiveness in ministry	Female	823	4.96 ***	426	4.84	251	5.27	162	5.18
	Male	1445	5.11	447	4.78	886	5.30	683	5.24
Effectiveness in present role last few months	Female	3277	4.99 ***	1763	4.93 *	987	5.12	652	5.11
	Male	5806	5.07	1790	4.86	3550	5.18	2766	5.17
2-tailed t-Test significant between Gender Sample Mean Values (* P < 0.05; *** P < 0.001)									

Table 2: Summary of Leadership Effectiveness Values According to Gender, Leadership and Effectiveness Categories

If the results are marked by either of the two asterisk designations, "*" or by "***" the differences are significant at either the 5% or 0.1% level according to the t-tests. (The t-test assesses whether the means of two groups are *statistically* different from each other, e.g. see Research Methods Knowledge Base 2006). Thus men rated themselves slightly higher in overall effectiveness and effectiveness in their present roles than women for the leadership category "*all respondents*" (P<0.001). On the other hand women rated themselves slightly higher than men in effectiveness in their present role for the *non-ordained leadership* category (P<0.05). The data was analysed to see whether different leadership encodings/categories also showed significant differences. In the table 2 "Senior Leader" means senior minister/pastor/priest/layperson serving as principal leader of a congregation. Although there are small, significant differences in leadership effectiveness detected between the genders in terms of the t-tests with some leadership gender category comparisons, the differences are quite small compared to the standard deviation.

When the size of the gender leadership effectiveness in the different categories of leadership was assessed by calculation of the partial eta (η_p^2) statistic from analysis of Chi-squared variance (which is considered to be a more suitable test for large sized samples than t-tests), there were no significant differences in perceived leadership effectiveness between genders. The t-test results were not considered suitable for distinguishing the differences between men and women for leadership effectiveness, because they are statistically unsuitable for dealing with the large numbers of respondents in these surveys, even though they are a common test of significant differences due to the risk of a type I or type II statistical error[11].

It is therefore concluded that while the differences may be statistically significant if t-tests are used, they are probably not of any practical significance, as the effect sizes obtained by the calculation of the partial eta (η_p^2) statistic are too small, i.e. below 1%. As noted earlier, this apparent anomaly is a consequence of the large sample sizes which, using t-tests, can lead to even small differences in mean effectiveness ratings between genders registering as statistically significant (Walker 2007; Richardson 2011). As a result, the key findings and conclusions are summarised in Table 3.

[11] For testing the statistical significance of differences between small samples the t-tests are a common, robust test. But when the sample sizes get large, even insignificant and spurious differences appear to be important if t-tests are used, i.e. the t-test gives statistically significant results, when in reality there is no substantial difference. In that case it is important to use a better test, a test that suits large samples, in particular the partial eta (η_p^2) statistic from analysis of Chi-squared variance.

Table 3: Summary of leadership effectiveness analyses and conclusions on the basis of Partial Eta squared (η_p^2) results

	All respondents	**Not ordained**	**Ordained**	**Senior leader**
Overall perceived effectiveness	No gender difference (η_p^2) = 0.002	No gender difference (η_p^2) = 0.001	No gender difference (η_p^2) = 0.000	No gender difference (η_p^2) = 0.001
Perceived Effectiveness in present role last few months	No gender difference (η_p^2) = 0.006	No gender difference (η_p^2) = 0.001	No gender difference (η_p^2) = 0.001	No gender difference (η_p^2) = 0.001
Note: Differences are only noted in the table as significant if the effect size exceeds a minimum threshold of partial eta squared (η_p^2) = 0.01. That is, if the amount of variance explained in the dependent variable (leadership effectiveness) is at least 1%.				

The differences in perceived leadership effectiveness in different denominations was also investigated on the basis of the responses from leaders in their different denominational groups. We found that there were no interaction effects between denomination and gender, which is to say that denominational affiliation made no difference to the finding that there was no difference between men's and women's perceived effectiveness in church leadership.

Similarly, we investigated whether age made a difference to genders in perceived leadership effectiveness. We found that overall, age was not related to leadership effectiveness, therefore age was not included in the remaining analysis. However, a weak negative correlation (Pearson Correlation (ρ) = 0.105, 2-tailed P < 0.01) was detected between Overall Leadership Effectiveness and age amongst non-ordained respondents. This means, amongst non-ordained survey respondents, the overall perceived leadership effectiveness tends to be higher in younger people compared to older people.

A report by Sherwin (2014) of a study undertaken by Folkman[12] indicated that differences between the gender leadership effectiveness ratings changed with age, women being perceived as more effective with age than men as they got older. For this reason, the leadership effectiveness data for the non-ordained NCLS participants was segregated into three age categories (less than 40 years age/40 to 60 years age/greater than 60 years) and mean effectiveness values for those categories calculated and compared via two-tailed t-test (assuming unequal variances). The results are shown in table 4 and show that the mean effectiveness rating of leaders under 40 years of age was significantly greater than that of leaders over 60 years of age (t [380] = 2.75, P < 0.01). There was no significant difference between other mean leader effectiveness rating comparisons between these age groups (P> 0.05).

[12] http://zengerfolkman.com/media/articles/ZFCo.WP.WomenBetterThanMen.033012.pdf (accessed 31 May 2017)

Table 4: Summary of leadership effectiveness ratings according to leader age category

Variable	Leader Age Category (Years)		
	x < 40	**40 <= x < 60**	**x >= 60**
Count (N)	161	438	277
Mean Effectiveness	4.957	4.829	4.675

This finding is consistent with the negative correlation detected between self-rated leadership effectiveness and leader age and indicates that here is a phenomenon worth further investigation. On this basis, the data was further interrogated for gender-age linkages and the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Leadership Effectiveness rating according to Gender and Age Categories for Non-ordained Church Leaders

	Female		**Male**		
Age Category (Years)	***Mean***	***Sample size***	***Mean***	***Sample size***	***P (T= t)***
< 40	5.04	78	4.90	78	0.37
40-6	4.91	220	4.75	216	0.12
> 60	4.60	126	4.75	149	0.26
t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances					

The analyses shows that while there was no significant difference in self-rated leadership effectiveness ratings between gender for each of the age categories (P> 0.05), the perceived leadership effectiveness was significantly greater for women in the < 40 age category compared to women in the > 60 age category (t[178] = 1.05, P < 0.01). By contrast there was no significant difference between the male age categories (< 40 vs, >60) for the same comparison (P(T<=t) two-tail > 0.05). Further research is needed to better understand this finding but possibly cultural/generational change for women may be contributing to this difference across the age categories.

Given the breadth of sample across the Australian church, the results provide support for the proposition that there is no overall difference in self-rated leadership effectiveness between men and women, both genders assessing their leadership effectiveness with equal confidence.

Discussion

It seems that there are wider issues to consider if leadership effectiveness is to be addressed in a fashion more closely approximating the present-day reality of worshipping congregations embedded in their local communities. The different leadership classifications explored in the NCLS surveys indicate that the effective function of a church congregation in its local community is very much a community process, embracing a team of leaders (of various categories) and does not in reality devolve to the activity or function of just one person, typically the ordained minister. It can be argued that some of the long-established denominations have historically been inclined toward a transactional leadership

style which involves a social exchange process, the leader clarifying what followers need to do on their part of the transaction in order to receive or avoid punishment as contingent on the transaction (Bass 1990). By contrast contemporary society seems to be more responsive to a transformational style of leadership which is interpersonal and more visionary; lifestyles, work and social ethics are emphasised, with transformational leaders setting a challenging expectation and enabling others to achieve high levels of performance (Lievens, van Geit & Coester 1997, p. 417). Transformational styles are more inclusive and embracing of the congregational members and stakeholders.

On this basis, the *Post–Heroic Leadership* model discussed by Fletcher (2004) needs to be considered along with the Multilevel Complexity Theory approach of Hogue and Lord (2012), where the concern is to take a holistic approach embracing shared leadership (transformational processes at work) across a learning community working together to achieve agreed goals and outcomes over time. In this situation leadership is shared among a team and congregation, and assessment processes ideally should reflect that. Clearly the assessment of this process in achieving outcomes is complex indeed. It seems however that Clinton's definition of a leader still applies in principle here, except that the "leader/leadership" (influencing others to achieve agreed goals) now becomes more a shared responsibility of the congregational community, however it is structured to function. Wang, Waldman and Zheng (2013) reviewed the complexities of shared leadership and found that there is a moderately strong, positive relationship between shared leadership and team effectiveness, confirming the importance of examining shared leadership and teams. Given the voluntary nature of community church attendance and involvement, and the general social trend demanding transparency and accountability for the management of community resources, it seems that in many Australian church congregations there is a degree of sharing of the leadership function amongst congregational "stakeholders", which implies the need for a new methodology to evaluate leadership effectiveness.

A constraint imposed upon this study by the historical structure of the database is that factors such as leadership context and expectations of leaders cannot be considered due to their exclusion from the survey questionnaire. Similarly, complementary data gathering methods were also excluded, for example, the use of validated scales of leadership assessment, and surveys of peers and followers to assess leadership effectiveness in order to help build a more accurate picture.

One important limitation of this research to note is that while leadership effectiveness has been self-assessed in the NCLS process and, although this is not without precedent (Chaturvedi 2012; Goktepe & Schneider 1988), it raises the question as to whether the respondents all have the same concept in terms of what constitutes effectiveness (as opposed to self-confidence, for example), and the risk of a divergence between their views and the perceptions by members of the congregations and other governing authorities and stakeholders. While an independent assessment may avoid such conflict of interest issues, given the scope and depth of the sample across a credible cross-section of denominations in Australia, the analyses support the conclusion that there is no practical difference in leadership effectiveness between genders in the Australian churches that were

sampled. Given the gender imbalance in favour of men in the 2006 NCLS survey respondents, and the fact that men tend to rate themselves more highly than the women for leadership effectiveness (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker & Woehr 2014), the finding of no practical difference between men and women in perceived leadership effectiveness in this study may indicate that women are somewhat more confident of their leadership ability in the Australian church settings. Since in this age of accountability, many leaders undergo a degree of peer evaluation for their continuing function, it is likely they would be aware of any dissatisfaction with their services, given the generally assertive culture of Australian society and the church in general.

Another aspect of the merits or otherwise of self-assessment methodology is the finding that the gender of the person evaluating leadership effectiveness may introduce biases as a consequence of their gender paradigms (Hoyt & Burnett 2013; Bosak & Sczesny 2011). They found traditional attitudes towards women in authority significantly predicted a pro-male gender bias in leader evaluations, while progressive attitudes predicted a pro-female gender bias, with the evaluator's theory of leadership also exerting strong effect on evaluation outcomes. Gender bias in leadership assessment processes and organisations (including in recruitment, performance evaluation and appraisal) has been identified as a reason for lack of women in top management positions (Alimo-Metcalfe 2010). What the literature is suggesting is that any panel assessing leadership effectiveness should be balanced in gender composition and also with regard to the views of the panel members regarding their theories of leadership formation and gender roles. Regrettably there is a general lack of empirical studies of this nature conducted in the Australian churches to provide comparisons.

The weak negative age correlation with overall effectiveness ratings amongst non-ordained respondents, along with the difference in self-rated leadership effectiveness detected with age are something worthy of further enquiry, given the seniority of leadership age (averaging 52.3 years) in this sample. Added to this are the cultural differences across the generational mix embraced in the survey, with younger people (generations X, Y etc.) likely to have a different outlook and skill-sets to the "baby boomer" generation comprising the majority of the older church leaders.

A profitable area for further investigation would be to examine shared leadership and team effectiveness in the church, since the nature of church culture and the core issue of leadership function are highly relational, group-orientated, and ideally consultative and community-focussed in implementation. In the words of Wang, Waldmann and Zang (2013), who meta-analytically cumulated 42 independent samples of shared leadership and examined its relationship to team effectiveness:

> Future research might also address the interplay of vertical and shared leadership. For example, shared leadership may partially mediate the relationship between vertical leadership and outcomes. Through the transcendence of self-interest and articulation of compelling vision, transformational leaders may foster a collective sense of identity in teams, as well is a motivation among team members to exercise collective influence (p. 192).

Ethical/theological Implications of Findings

While the argument for the legitimacy (ordination) of women being appointed to senior church ministry and leadership positions in the church tends to centre around theological issues, particularly the hermeneutics of scriptural interpretation where gender roles in the church are concerned, the finding of no practical difference in church leadership perceived effectiveness between men and women from this study raises an additional consideration. Given that God is the giver of every good and perfect gift (Jam. 1:7) and that we will be held individually accountable for the use of our gifts to ensure that they are profitably employed in God's service (as in the Parable of the Talents - Mtt. 25:14-30), the question arises as to whether church institutions which by their structure and governance inhibit women from contributing to their full potential or applying their gifts fully in God's service, will be held accountable for judgement? Are such institutions at risk of quenching the life and vibrancy of the Holy Spirit in church life?

Equally, why would God gift women with leadership ability for church ministry and service but frustrate that expression and gifts via scriptural injunction (contextually embedded in early church history) being extrapolated to create institutional structures and cultures which restrain that expression in contemporary society today? Is it possible that some theological constructs of gender roles in the church are misinterpretations of the scripture as well as incompatible with empirical research findings such as the ones unearthed in this study?

Conclusion

It is concluded that from a practical viewpoint, there is no difference in self-rated leadership effectiveness between men and women evidenced in the Australian National Church Life Survey of 2006. Analyses also indicate that a change is taking place with younger women where self-rated leadership effectiveness is concerned, and further investigation of cultural and generational issues could make a helpful contribution to the discussion of gender equality in the church and community leadership generally. The findings of this study also suggest it would be useful to further interrogate the 2006 and 2011 NCLS databases to probe the influence of denominational and other contexts upon leadership effectiveness as perceived by the respondents.

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Journal of Contemporary Ministry

Reflecting on 40 years of Christian Ministry

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Richard Warner and Pauline have been married for 48 years. They herald from the UK having immigrated to Australia at the call of God in 1969. From the outset they have unstintingly served God and the Church of Jesus Christ. Their journey includes Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania and for the last 36 years, Victoria. The blessing of God has certainly been on their ministry having seen growth and fruitfulness in every situation they have found themselves. Their story is breathtaking, and yet surprisingly, they are not showing signs of slowing down. Richard here gives us a few snapshots of their journey revealing some precious jewels of leadership and spiritual growth to boot. These reflections are like Richard himself, dynamic, focused, exciting and inspirational. Read on and be blessed!

I have three immediate reflections as I look back over the last 40 years. First, that the grace of God has been super-abundant upon me; second, that I am most unworthy, unlikely and undeserving; and finally, that I have failed Jesus so much, yet despite this, He has used me. You may not want to read any further as these preludes, may preclude any incentive to discover anything worthwhile. But maybe I'll add a couple more things of interest

At the age of 4-5 years, I was a beggar-boy in the slums of Birmingham UK, then dumped into an orphanage for eleven years wondering who I was, and what life was about. A brief relationship at the end of WW 2 between a cognitively impaired woman and a whimsical man (who worked little), produced me! There began a journey not unlike Saroo in the "Lion" movie, but my plight was sadder in many respects.

The feeling of mental (and general) inferiority plagued me throughout my school years and beyond. But God used this to put a 'vulnerability' to Him in my heart, when at age 18-19 years in a little Gospel Mission in Birmingham led by the late Pastor Jo Griffiths, I surrendered my life to Christ, and became a brand new creation (2Cor. 5:17). Such was my transformation, I found a true Father, Friend, and family in God, Jesus and His Church, I discovered my true identity, no longer an orphan, lost, hopeless and without purpose. I picked up a guitar and taught myself to play as I worshipped, composing many songs in those first few months. I devoured the scriptures, began to witness, preach, serve, and do whatever I could as a young firebrand for Jesus.

I never dreamed, or had any ambition to be a 'pastor'. I was so happy serving in any capacity I could amongst children, youth, platform, music, and eventually on the church board of elders. I had masses of 'unredeemed residual' in me that involuntarily manifested in many embarrassing moments; temper, discouragement, foolish talk, prideful motives, lust, inferiority, and even rebellion. But God was gracious and merciful, leading me out of these strongholds by His love and power. I never asked for a ministry or position (and I've never since), but God gave me an abundance of opportunities to serve Him, and I learned quickly that '*Promotion comes from the Lord*' (Ps. 75:6).

God miraculously led me to my wonderful wife Pauline, and called us to serve in Australia, at first helping to pioneer the Armadale Assembly of God in Western Australia, then leading the WA State Youth Alive. Then, after an invasion of His Spirit in my life, He led me to train formally for ministry at Commonwealth Bible College in Katoomba, New South Wales. All of these episodes were filled with miracles of His grace!

We were invited to Townsville Queensland, to assist the late David Cartledge (what a man!), then a brief period of itinerant ministry followed before taking on the struggling work at Devonport, Tasmania. In all of these ventures we saw the gracious hand of God in blessing and increase. I was privileged to consider three invitations to pastorates around the country before accepting the unrelenting one from Pastor Ken Magrath at Springvale, Victoria. Again, we witnessed phenomenal growth and blessing in those 'heady eighties'; planting churches, sending out missionaries, buying a ten-acre site for our new church building and school, Lighthouse Christian College.

Today, 36 years later, our 10 acres of land is full of school and ministry buildings. We have planted seven churches (some of which have their own daughter churches), sent out over 100 full-time workers for the Gospel, three more schools with three more underway, reaching thousands of young people with 30+ hours per week of continuous discipling for Jesus. It's been quite a ride! God has seen fit to use a 'Mr. Nobody' and make him a 'somebody' for Him. But I've picked up some things on the way. Here are a few things I've learned since I thought I knew it all!

1. *Don't Overwork - overflow!*

I don't like working for God. I only want to work WITH Him! He came as a babe – *Immanuel*, meaning *God with us*. He said "*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"*

(Mtt. 11:29). Recent statistics for Pastoral Ministry 'burn-out' and the like are horrendous and regretful. The following is a sampling of those provided by Expastors.com:

- 90% of pastors are overworked;
- 70% of pastors feel underpaid;
- 90% feel unprepared;
- 70% struggle with depression and discouragement;
- 80% believe pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families;
- 70% do not have someone they consider a close friend;
- 50% of the ministers starting out will not last 5 years; and
- Only 10% of ministers will actually retire as a minister in some form.

These staggering figures suggest that Pastors are an endangered species. They certainly contradict the Gospel we are supposedly espousing. *The yoke is heavy and there ain't no rest for my soul?*

I have learned that unless God empowers us: we are not going anywhere (Ex. 33:15); our labour is in vain (Ps. 127:1); we can do nothing (Jon. 15:5); and we are heading for a breakdown! I am besotted with Paul's consoling words:

> *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us"* (2Cor. 4:7); and
>
> *"I worked harder than all of them… yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me"* (1Cor. 15:10).

In other words, *don't overwork – overflow!*

2. *Give God Something to work with*

If it wasn't for God supernaturally intersecting my life (and probably yours), then I wouldn't be here today, certainly not on the Lord's side. As the young Christian matures and ascends into leadership, a strange deceptive declension unfolds:

- We preach against backsliding, yet we drift away from our moorings (Heb.2:1);
- We begin in the Spirit, but end up in the flesh (Gal. 3:3);
- We begin with 'foolish' and sometimes reckless abandonment, then end up with caution and prudence, under the guise of wisdom (1Cor. 1:21);
- We begin with the adventure of vision, and end up with the skills of administration and legal compliance (Prov. 29:11); and
- We begin with supernatural practice, and 'drift' into theological theory (Heb. 2:1).
- Etc. etc. etc.…

Why and how does this 'drift' take place? I have learned just this one thing:

Religion Replaces Relationship

- Religion knows *about* God, relationship knows God;
- Religion works *for* God, relationship works *with* God;
- Religion produces *performance* – relationship produces *works of love;*
- Religion overworks, relationship overflows;
- Religion is *self-driven*, relationship is *God-driven;*

- Religion *dries you up* on the inside, relationship *fires you up* on the inside; *and*
- Religion leaves you *condemned*, relationship leaves you *restored;*
- Etc. etc. etc.…

As a Pentecostal pastor, I have a special responsibility to stay 'alive in the Spirit'. To do this I must live the sort of life that the Spirit can indwell. The Spirit life is unpredictable, supernatural, holy, vision-filled, creative, bringing order to chaos, seeing as God sees, prayerful, and often contradictory to natural *modus operandi*. If one lives a life that is only filled with good business practice, well-proven strategic planning, comprehensive risk-management policies, best proven leadership principles, the most lucrative marketing policies, and the latest sales techniques that will guarantee your targets for the month, you will die a slow death by disappointment and burn-out! The checkpoint to avoid such a tragedy is **'Giving God something to work with**'.

What are you doing that, if God wasn't with you, you are sure to fail? Pastors especially need to come back to the life of faith. God wants to work WITH you, but can't if you've got it all tied up tuned up and wrapped up. You're simply doing God's work with worldly methods and as good as they are, they are no match for the mighty strategies that God provides, to pull down strongholds, invade hearts, change nations, and prepare us for eternal glory.

The life of faith (spelt R.I.S.K.), is the only life that pleases God, attracts God and guarantees the results of God. Supernatural signs are God's natural pleasure. Such a lifestyle enthuses, empowers, and encourages. Great deterrents to burn out!

3. *Keep Short Accounts*

Yes, I know what it's like to be offended and discouraged. I keep up with the national average; I have an offensive encounter about once every month and occasionally have a 'mini-depression' attack. I have to admit that I have had two occasions when I was thinking of giving it away. However, such hardships produced two things; firstly, they drew me closer to God – humility, surrender, purification etc... and secondly, they forced me to draw on great mentor relationships that I had already developed.

These two actions were used by God to pull me through. He's always vindicated me and lifted me out of the miry clay. I note that Jesus was insulted, misrepresented, let down, despised, etc. and he is '*touched with feeling of my infirmities'* (Heb. 4:15). How consoling!

There are four things that I cannot do if I hold malice and bitterness:

1) I cannot partake of the Lord's supper (1Cor. 11:28-32);
2) I cannot be forgiven (Mk. 11:25);
3) I cannot pray (Mtt. 5:23); and
4) I cannot sleep at night (Eph. 4:16).

Forgiveness is my God-given privilege. If I don't forgive, I'm usurping God's authority. He's the only judge. I'd prefer a good night's sleep!

Conflict contains treasures; if you are humble enough to discover them.

- It challenges your views and reveals your need to improve;
- It tests your EQ and enables it to be strengthened;
- It gives you opportunity to draw on God's incredible grace;
- It tests your faith, and hones your sense of calling and identity;
- It strengthens your resolve, to go on, endure and win; and
- It intensifies your love for God, His work, and others.

The last thing to do in conflict is to get bitter and unforgiving. Every conflict is a catalyst for either depression and darkness or growth and victory. **Keep short accounts,** and live long!

These three keys - ***Don't Overwork – Overflow, Give God Something to Work With, and Keep Short Accounts,*** are just three of so many that I have found not only keeping me in the 10% of pastors who will retire as a pastor, but more importantly, kept me fresh, relevant, and fruitful for Him. I have proved His word so true:

"*I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread*" (Ps. 37:25);

"*The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green"* (Ps. 93:12-14); and

"…to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour" (Is. 61:3).

I started life begging bread, useless, with poor longevity; I am finishing prosperous, fruitful and abounding in His grace.

To God be all the glory!

Journal of Contemporary Ministry

Four Pentecostal Views on Healing

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Introduction

This paper explores the gap between Pentecostal healing expectations gleaned from Scripture and the significant experience of non-healing in the practice of Western Pentecostalism. It analyses four scholarly Pentecostal perspectives: Chant and Thomas on the optimistic healing expectancy side and Clifton and Yong on the acceptance of non-healing experience side. This analysis is founded on the outline of L.W.J Oliverio's "hermeneutic of realism" which seeks to align theology with lived experience, is Christologically focused and engages with Scripture. This hermeneutic is developed in the light of particular Pentecostal and historical perspectives. The paper concludes that further research is needed to find a way to pursue seeking for healing from a biblical expectation without ostracising those who are not healed. It considers both the value of viewing all people as created in God's image needing honour and inclusivity, and the redemptive need of humanity to recognise they are under God's wrath and in need of repentance for salvation in Christ.

Pentecostalism and Healing

Keener notes that

> hundreds of millions of people worldwide claim to have experienced or witnessed what they believe are miracles. Eyewitness claims to dramatic recoveries appear in a wide variety of cultures, among Christians often successfully emulating models of healings found in the Gospels and Acts. Granted, such healings do not occur on every occasion and are fairly unpredictable in their occurrence; yet they seem to appear with special frequency in cultures and circles that welcome them (2011, loc. 5830).

The worldwide Pentecostal (and Charismatic) movements are experiencing dramatic growth throughout the world, constituting an estimated one-twelfth of the world's population (Keener 2011, loc. 5357) and it is the phenomena of healing that is considered the driving force behind this growth (Keener 2011, loc. 5337). This growth is seen less in the west and more in the majority world where there is a lack of medical alternative. Healing manifests as deliverance from disease, physical ailments and demonic influence but is also radically transforming communities away from social maladies like unemployment, alcoholism, domestic strife, hatred and racism. Healing is seen as a gift of love from God to then be paid forward in acts of love and consequently, the research shows, communities of religious faith have better general health overall (Brown 2011, pp. 376, 498, 511–516; Keener 2011, loc. 5262, 5338, 11235–11305).

The picture is one of diversity of healing practices across a range of cultures that defy the negative caricatures of Western media and critical scholarship. However, there are negatives. Promises of healing do not reduce the frequency of healing need and at their worst, over promising can elicit guilt and blame for those who are not healed as well as leading to a denial of social/political causes of oppression and suffering that result in poor health (Brown 2011, pp. 416, 525, 638).

The nature of current healing *testimony* is consistent with how it is delivered in the gospels and Acts and how it has been delivered and believed throughout church history and presently among the majority of Christians, i.e., through credible eyewitness testimony rather than scientific documentation. While not discounting the improvements to general health that come with religious faith, the reality of fraudulent claims, nor normal recovery often claimed as healing, Keener (2011, loc. 2155, 13369, 13398, 13457) points to the copious amount of testimony, past and current, where instant, dramatic, extra normal incidents (e.g. resurrection from death and healing from blindness) have been cited in reference to the prayer of faith.

If all of the above establishes that healing in Pentecostalism is a reality, then the pertinent concern for this paper is why it happens so irregularly. The testimony about Jesus is that he healed "all who came to him" (e.g. Mtt. 12:15; 15:30) and usually instantaneously, several times citing that a lack of faith was the only hindrance to such healing (Mtt. 17:20, 21:21; Mk. 11:24; Lk. 17:6). The book of Acts testifies (Shelton 2006), and from Mark 16:20 Pentecostals often believe (Thomas & Alexander 2003, p. 155), that Jesus is still present and working healing through the hands of his followers. However, instantaneous healing of all who come is not the current situation of experience and it would be difficult to put this down simply to a lack of faith in the believers asking. As Keener (2011, loc. 5796) notes, it is difficult to find a solid New Testament rationale for the difference between the expectation and the current situation. The 1982 US Assemlies of God statement of "what we believe" noted something of this dilemma while clearly leaning the expectation heavily in the direction of success: "We do not understand everything about healing, but the Scriptures are clear. When one is sick he may pray in expectation of healing (Jms. 5:13-16)" (Poloma, Robeck & Bundy 1985, p. 66).

This arrives then at the purpose of this paper. How Pentecostals develop their healing theologies from the narratives and passages of Scripture that build an expectation of healing in the light of sound theological and hermeneutical principles will be considered. Most specifically this paper will explore two contrasting Pentecostal gap theologies that seek to reconcile the biblical expectation with actual practice.

Pentecostal theologies are diverse and prolific so a relevant sample[1] will be selected focusing on two key perspectives, those who emphasise the need for faith in a biblical expectation and those who consider the impact of such an expectation on those who are not healed. Two views will be presented from each perspective – so four views in total. An outline of sound hermeneutics will precede the critical examination of the biblical engagement.

Hermeneutic of Realism

It is not the goal of this section to lay out a comprehensive hermeneutical primer; rather the more complex hermeneutical challenges that apply to the question of healing in a Pentecostal context will be explored. An orientation of hermeneutical realism with a Christological focus will be set out as foundational to engaging with the healing Scriptures; particular Pentecostal and historical perspectives will be taken into account.

In response to the discussion over the hermeneutical priority of *author's intent* in Scriptural meaning Oliverio (2012), proposes a hermeneutic of realism. This hermeneutic pursues a deep honesty that recognises that the readers' own context and the language work together with the (sometimes elusive) authorial intent to *find* or even, as Archer (2004), in dialogue with the Holy Spirit and the church, *create* meaning in the text. Hermeneutical realism values dialogue across multiple perspectives, and acknowledges that complexity and ambiguity are built into the text and need to be embraced (c.f. Fee 1991, p. 33; Polling 2011, p. 7). It also recognises that the nature of Scripture is not encyclopaedic or exhaustive but situational and occasional (Fee & Stuart 2014, p. 60; Maier 1994, p. 184). Therefore in wrestling with miracle gap theologies it honestly seeks to own the limitations of the situation, rather than trying to force some kind of artificial agreement between the text of Scripture and variable human experience (Malony 1998, p. 69). The expected theology that results from such a hermeneutic, being harmonious with lived experience and the nature of the revelation (thus reflecting the divine-human dialogue), will be complex and untidy, non-dogmatic and yet consistent with God's intention.[2] Such a harmony, to be truly biblical, must be focused in Jesus Christ.

Christological Focus

Scripture is not neutral information about God, it is transformative (Maier 1994, p. 25). "The Scripture does not merely *tell* about salvation. By the Spirit's grace, the Scripture *works* salvation, renewing our vision of the world by transforming us at the depths of our being" (Green 2015, p. 113). This transformation is a movement into right relationship with God and our human neighbour, mediated by Christ and effected by the Holy Spirit as part of the bringing of the kingdom of God into earth. It is essential that this Christ-centred perspective be the vital focus of hermeneutics if it is to be faithful to the revelation.

[1] This limited focus on contrasting two views does not engage with other significant and relevant perspectives, for example those of John Wimber and the Vineyard movement or Bill Johnson and the Bethel movement or the diversity of majority world perspectives and the Western theologians and sociologists and anthropologists that have interacted with them e.g. Charles Kraft, nor more fringe, movements like Kenneth Hagin and Word of Faith or C. Peter Wagner and Spiritual Warfare. Such necessary engagement will be the task of future research.

[2] See Wright (1991) for an excellent discussion on God exercising his purposeful authority instrumentally through a Holy Spirit guided dialogue between Scripture and the church's' proclamation to humanity.

Root (2006, pp. 58–75), advocates a fitting theology that, following Christ's lead, is incarnational (seeks to be with people) and identificational (seeks to join in and share their suffering). The result is social, ethical action. This sets up an agenda for "healing" that is much wider than embodied prosperity and comfort, centred on reconciliation with God and humanity. In terms of bringing reconciliation to people, the church is to be an ongoing witness of Jesus in a manner relevant to modern contexts which inform and reform our practice (Polling 2011, p. 2). From this perspective the "unhealed" can be seen as a people group with their own contexts, and the Christological goal is to be (represent) "Christ with them" sharing their suffering inside those contexts.

The "unhealed"[3] do indeed have their own sub-cultures. People who experience disability, long-term sickness, addiction, minority sexual attraction and the like, form communities with language and practices that allow them support and to achieve functionality within their own situations. Pentecostalism has been guilty of ignoring these sub-cultures and marginalising their members when they do venture into Pentecostal communities. Counter to this, Osbourne (2006, p. 430) recommends a process for delivering the gospel cross-culturally. Firstly, understand the culture and learn its language, then communicate the gospel in terms that culture can grasp and finally, let those so taught reflect on their own culture in the light of the gospel. To do this well, a move away from western ideals of prosperity and an elevation of success culture is needed. Being informed by a more global perspective, a focus on the world's marginalised and oppressed can be adopted (Green 2012, pp. 50–62). This *being with*, and *sharing in*, peoples' suffering is the true spirit of Christ that should inform engagement with the healing Scriptures.

Engagement with Healing Scriptures

As Pentecostals wrestle with issues of healing in the west (where non-healing is the *common* experience in reference to the majority of our prayerful requests),[4] there is a need to look at human situations in the light of Scripture, but also a need to look at the Scripture in the light of human situations (Veling 2005, p. 23). Restorationist mentalities that seek to establish (very inconsistently) the 1st Century NT practice as normative are not valid in terms of either the biblical authors' intentions or as acceptable hermeneutical practice (Fee & Stuart 2014, pp. 119–150). The bible is not given as a "how to" book on bringing embodied comfort and prosperity. Rather, there is a need to bring lived experience into a dialogue with the Scriptures in order to give meaning to that experience in the light of Jesus Christ (Heimbrock 2010). However, such a grace-based hermeneutic (with its emphasis on the Almighty God condescending to come alongside human need) as has been here suggested, while most relevant to our context (i.e. the experience of non-healing), still does not escape the fundamental challenge proposed by Jesus' own words.

Jesus said, "whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Mtt. 21:22 NKJV). Christians do a lot of asking where no immediate receiving is obvious. What is to be made of this? Are statements like this to be put down to hyperbole along with comments like plucking out eyes and chopping off hands where Jesus' statement cannot be taken literally (Fee & Stuart 2014, p. 136). Certainly it is difficult to see what

[3] This label is suitable shorthand for this paper to represent those who have sought for healing (or are expected to seek for it) and have not yet received it as expected. It includes situations with varying levels of human accountability, causality and responsibility.
[4] See Keener (2011, loc. 11015) for a detailed analysis of non-healing phenomena.

the real meaning would be if this statement was interpreted as hyperbole. Also, Jesus' own performance of miraculous signs and rebuke of his disciples' unbelief when they failed to heal or walk on water, would suggest he was speaking literally. Does it then come down to audience? Was Jesus only talking to his disciples? His "he who believes in me" (Jn. 14:12) does not seem to be so restricted. If it is taken that Jesus was speaking universally from these utterances till the present time, then is it simply a matter of lack of faith? The critical analysis will look at how some Pentecostals grapple with this dilemma, but first some particular Pentecostal and historical perspectives will be taken into account.

Particular Qualities of a Pentecostal Hermeneutic

Some of the particular strengths of Pentecostal Hermeneutics have also been its particular hermeneutical weaknesses. The strength of being focused on the experiential aspect of encounter with God that is affective and creative and encompassing the divine encounter with all of life (Land 1993, pp. 33–43), has carried the weakness of an action focus that has neglected sound reflection on praxis (Karkkainen 2002, p. 16). The strength of being focused on holiness and overcoming sinfulness, has carried the weakness of promoting legalistic righteousness which denies (or covers up) real experience of struggle and marginalises outsiders (Land 1993, p. 53).

Vondey (2010, pp. 11–12) explains that with Pentecostalism being a transitional movement in its very nature, its theology has been able to flexibly move across cultures and challenge social, ethical, religious and cultural thoughts and praxis in transformative ways. Is it however, able to transcend its weaknesses, become humbly reflective and turn this transitional strength inwards to an examination of its own healing culture and praxis? Martin (2013, pp. 138–144) suggests that contemporary Pentecostal hermeneutics is becoming more holistic, able to keep hold of its strengths, blending its experiential emphasis and ethical (holiness) skill with educated and scholarly reason. Hopefully this paper and the research it underpins is participating in such a transitional movement.

Historical perspectives

Hermeneutics and theology do not emerge from a vacuum but are culturally, contextually and historically informed. This paper is speaking from a minority world (Western) context, exploring limitations in Australian Pentecostalism's healing practices, which are founded in the movement's history. Cartledge (2016) identifies a Renewal (Pentecostal/Charismatic) research methodology which he labels a "Retrieval Standpoint." This practical theological methodology explores renewal praxis by going back to the early oral traditions and tracts of the Pentecostal movement, comparing them to the texts of Scripture and then seeking hermeneutical application for today. This typically Pentecostal methodology significantly parallels the Pentecostal hermeneutic of appealing to NT church history as a precedent for current practice. A brief sampling[5] of two authors (both scholars of Christian history) who employ a retrieval standpoint is helpful for observing *some* of the historical influences. Nancy Hardesty is an evangelical scholar with roots in the Holiness movement of North America. She writes about North American Pentecostal roots in the Holiness movements at the turn of the 19th Century. Kimberly Alexander also has roots in the

[5] The sample is limited to early North American influences, though other global influences e.g. from South Africa and New Zealand have also been significant (P. Hughes, private conversation, 29 August, 2016).

North American Holiness movement and in the Pentecostalism that sprung from it. She looks at the two key streams of early North American Pentecostalism that came from the Wesleyan and Finished work/Oneness traditions. Through literary and denominational associations these traditions have also been foundational in Australian Pentecostalism.

The key points of early Pentecostal healing theology/hermeneutics are likely to have a familiar resonance with anyone familiar with current theologies and will be reflected (though not directly engaged) in some of the critique below. It will suffice here to list some of these key points first from Hardesty (2003, pp. 88–97):

- Sickness and suffering are sourced in the Edenic fall of man.
- Pre-critical or non-critical. All Scripture is seen as directly applicable in the present.
- Physical healing, along with salvation, is secured in the atonement. Thus "if it be your will" prayers are viewed as unbelief.
- Jesus' and the Apostles' healing narratives were "analysed for lessons" on techniques, attitudes and faith.
- "Jesus healed *all* who came to him" is taken as a current indication of God's will to heal all now.
- Jesus' "I am with you always" (Mtt. 28:20) and designation as "the same yesterday today and forever" (Heb. 13:8) are taken together to say he is still active in healing now.
- Lack of body and soul health is indicative of a lack of faith.

Alexander's (2006, pp. 203–215) observations parallel the above and significantly add:

- Healing is seen as a sign of the coming (and now present) Kingdom of God or as pointing back to the finished work of Christ on the cross.
- The use of secular medical interventions is shunned, being seen as indicative of a lack of faith.
- Symptoms are seen as temptations to unbelief to be denied.
- God is seen as always willing to heal but either sovereign in the dispensation of healing and consecutively or alternatively, only hindered by unbelief.

It needs further to be observed that the historical context flows forwards and backwards from these early influences. These historical attitudes themselves have historical origins, and they continued to evolve and develop as time when forward. Martin (2013, p. 3) for example outlines the roots of Pentecostal Hermeneutics in the 19th century holiness, healing, restorationist, revivalist and millenarian movements. And Karkkainen (2002) traces the movement of Pentecostal hermeneutics forward from its early roots to its present situatedness in dialogue with postmodernism. It is beyond the scope of this paper to trace the influences and developments of these historical particularities. They are listed here simply to establish and acknowledge that current thinking and practice has a historical background informing it. Specifically, these influences will be seen positively reflected in the authors with optimistic healing expectations below and resisted in those with acceptance expectations.

Critical Analysis of FOUR Pentecostal healing theologies

Holding in mind the hermeneutical concerns outlined above, a small sampling of texts from four Pentecostal theorists will be analysed in this section. Chant and Thomas are selected as representing a healing normative perspective and Clifton and Yong as

representing inclusive readings for the non-healed. Chant is selected because of his broad practical experience of teaching about, and ministering healing in, Australian Pentecostal churches, and Thomas because of his engagement with the key subject of healing in the atonement. Clifton and Yong are chosen as theologians with immediate, personal experience of disability which directly informs their theology. A broad summary of their key engagement with Scripture will be given with a particular focus in the analysis of their expectation-practice gap theologies. This will be followed by a summary of the theological challenges for future research raised by the analysis.

Chant

In the two works examined Chant's (2012, 2014) exposition of Scripture dominated his discussion. This exposition can be summarised as follows: Sickness and suffering is in the world because of Satan, the human "fall" into sin, and factors of time and chance. Jesus came into the world and undid the work of Satan and human sin. Because of this he healed all who came to him and commissioned his disciples and the church following to do as he had done. While healing is almost universal in the NT, not everyone who asked Jesus for it was healed. Nevertheless, a solid promise of God was given through Jesus that any who ask in faith for healing in his name should expect to receive it. Because of this promise, God's intent to deliver from satanic oppression and the protocol for obtaining healing in James 5:13-18, God's will to heal and deliver is clearly established. Faith for healing is characterised by: a determination to believe and claim God's promise (even when there are no signs of symptoms abating), a willingness to obey the commands of James 5 and to seek God for spiritual gifts, and exercising the God given authority to command change to occur in undesirable circumstances. Gifts of healings (1Cor. 12:9) are given more as signs of God's mercy and love, and especially in places where the Christian faith is not common. Prayer for healing (as in, James 5) is more an activity for *believers* that involves faith to seek for healing, obedience, confession of sin and correct discerning of the Lord's body. Chant recognises that faith does not always produce healing and puts this down to "inscrutable mystery" with hints at God's hidden, sovereign purposes. The instruction for the unhealed is to do nothing more than keep on seeking God in faith.

Chant's position is clearly in alignment with many of the historical views observed above. His outline of the NT expectation is, for the most part, compelling and exegetically credible. Nevertheless, his position falls short in considering: (i) the reasons suffering is in the world and (ii) the implications for the non-healed. These will be addressed in turn.

First, his ascribing suffering to chance, Satan and the fall, obscures the biblical emphasis on the participation of God's hand in the present condition of the world. It was God's judgement of curse in Genesis 3:15 that specifically set Satan in enmity with humanity. When Peter talks to Cornelius of Jesus' "healing all who were oppressed of the devil" (Ac. 10:38), the context is one of Jesus as the bringer of the Gospel of peace (with God) (v.36) and as God's appointed judge of the world (v.42), who brings forgiveness of sins through believing (v.43). Satan was set against humanity in the curse and it is God's merciful kindness that sets humanity free from his power and brings us to Christ for salvation which is deliverance from God's wrath (see Eph. 2:1-10). To suggest that it is God's will *always* to heal is to set God against his own curse. If such was God's will there is no reason why he would allow sickness in the first place, and advocating its continuance against his will can lead to the implication that Satan can somehow usurp God's plans. Further, Chant's position ignores those passages where

God takes direct responsibility for the infliction of sickness and suffering for judgement's sake (e.g. 1Sam. 5:6; 1Cor. 11:27-30; Rev. 2:22). Jesus purpose was not to abolish all suffering prior to the eschaton. His primary role is that of saviour, and healing and non-healing are *both* signs that authenticate this role.

Secondly, In talking about the times when faith seems not to work, Chant (2014, p. 81) states, "there is *nothing else to do* but cling to the promise of God" (italics mine). This leaves the unhealed with total silence about their situation and, in the light of seeing unbelief and sin being blockages to healing, uncertainty about their status with God. There is in fact much that can be done for the unhealed and much that can be drawn from the Scriptures to minister to the unhealed some of which shall be brought out in the examination of Clifton and Yong below.

Thomas

Thomas' (2005) article looks to strengthen support for the doctrine of healing in the atonement by looking beyond the traditional texts of Matthew 8:16-17 and 1Peter 2:24 and expounding the strong association between healing and salvation in John's gospel. He is able, using textual examination (including narrative placement) to establish that John uses four healing signs, which he bookmarks between two references to the cross, to establish a definitive link between healing signs and belief in Jesus for eternal life. He accurately points out that John states this intentionality quite explicitly in 20:30-31.

He supports this premise with, first a textual examination of John 10:10 where a contrast between Satan's destructive power and the superabundant life offered by Christ is made - seeing in this contrast an inclusion of divine healing; and second, a retrieval standpoint exploration of the serpent lifted in the wilderness (Jn. 3:14-15) in early Pentecostal literature. His exposition states that the Mosaic bronze serpent of Numbers 21:4-9, becomes a type of Christ being lifted up to counter the curse, whereby Satan's work against humanity is countered by Christ's atonement, manifested in both salvation and healing.

The implication he draws from the above is a close connection between healing and Jesus' atoning life which he believes accurately reflects the biblical witness and aligns with the experience of the Pentecostal community. He clearly and overtly builds the expectation that physical healing is part of the abundant life Jesus brings. While his textual engagement is compelling and seemingly sound some significant hermeneutical concerns can be noted.

Firstly, he fails to make a case that John intends the connection between healing signs in Jesus' ministry and the atonement to be normative for ongoing practice within the church, which is what he is trying to show. Secondly, he makes no direct application of his theology to actual ministry and consequently offers no discussion of the alignment of his belief with actual practice. It is at this point of difference between theology and practice that Theron's (1999, pp. 52–61) concerns regarding "healing in the atonement" theology are worth noting. Theon observes that in Pentecostal practice there are significant instances of healing *and* non-healing suggesting that, if there is a bipolar tension between Pentecostal theory and practice, the biblical positions advanced by Pentecostals need to be reconsidered against what is really going on so as to test if the theology is working. He cites research to suggest that church goers with sickness often feel safer in seeking help from secular interventions than the church, where guilt and rejection can be experience by the unhealed. He raises the concern that the practice of healing ministry may not be communicating to believers and unbelievers what the

church is intending to communicate and calls for more empirical research to explore the impact of the current practice. Exploring these concerns is the very research I intend to pursue.

Clifton

In his article "*The Dark Side of Prayer for Healing*," Clifton's (2014) engagement with Scripture is almost completely indirect, focusing more on theological concepts that show an underlying, yet familiar, connection to the biblical text. Whilst not abandoning prayer for healing as a compassionate cry to God for help in the face of suffering, he does call for a complete reorientation of Pentecostal practice and theology with regard to healing. He demonstrates through appeal to the testimony of sufferers that the current theology and practice is actually exacerbating the problem of pain and marginalising the disabled as well as either indicting God's goodness or the sufferer's faith. He believes that in practice, healing is in fact rare, rather than normative, and sounds a call for honesty in Pentecostal testimony; including validating confession of weakness, distress and suffering as representative of genuine and valuable experience.

His proposed reconstruction is to see in Jesus' healing a paradigm for compassion, love and inclusion for the marginalised, with a widening of the concept of healing to well-being and flourishing in life and community, through the exercise of virtuous character, in the face of life's challenges and limitations. Those experiencing disability are seen as being well positioned to model such virtue, and the church as well positioned to provide nurturing, supporting and inclusive community. He proposes replacing the present discomfort with fragility, with a move away from normalising ableness and an embracing of diversity and limitation. *Acceptance* of limitations becomes essential to healing with the Holy Spirit's prime activity seen as transforming mind and character to live purposely and virtuously.

Clifton's view is focused on reforming expectations. He does not seek to dismantle the kinds of theologies we have observed in Chant and Thomas with challenges to exegesis or by suggesting non-prescriptive agendas in the biblical authors (as does Warrington 2006). Rather, his hermeneutical starting point is on *practice* and its engagement with the experience of non-healing. He then returns to the Scriptures (indirectly) to look for concepts and themes that can construct a theology that is empowering for those experiencing suffering. The compassionate, virtuous community which he envisages is certainly well founded on the biblical principles to which he appeals and he succeeds in recognising that a broadening of the Pentecostal perspective to embrace suffering would facilitate coping. This is commendable.

What is absent from Clifton's revisioning is any engagement with suffering as associated with God's wrath and judgement. Hope for dramatic miracles is likened by Clifton (and the testimony he cites) to a desire for "magic" or party tricks and a request for God to work against his own natural laws. No explanation is forwarded for the given "fragility of life and the permanence of suffering and disability" (p. 207). The desire for virtuous community, while both biblical and commendable, is not connected with biblical themes such as repentance from sin and Christ's work as reconciler for a humanity under God's humbling curse and oppressed by the devil.

Yong

Yong's (2011) primary concern in *The Bible, Disability, and the Church,* is that all people regardless of their embodied situations, be treated with honour and equality as

made in the image of God and that the church be at the vanguard of inclusivity and acceptance and honouring. His concern is that traditional Pentecostal readings of the biblical text have valued a normative ableness that marginalises and devalues the differently abled. Yong proposes alternative readings of common texts and the consideration of neglected texts on disability such that a more complex reading of Scripture might give a disabled-friendly perspective.

Yong draws from the narratives of Jacob, Mephibosheth, Job, Zacchaeus and the Ethiopian Eunuch to show how even in the experience of embodied impairment God's redemptive purposes are manifested. He successfully demonstrates that biblical restoration is as much about freedom from social oppression and ostracism, and the inclusion of the socially marginalised, as it is about deliverance from embodied impairment. The narrative of Jesus, from his perspective, shows that God's perfection was in his sinlessness not his able-bodiedness. Jesus became completely human such that he experienced both social ostracism and persecution as well as physical suffering. He even carried the "imprints" of his disability, markers of his identity and life experience, in his hands, feet and side, into his resurrected state. God's glory and wisdom are seen not in the *elimination* of weakness but in the *redemption* of it.

Yong further wrestles with God's role in suffering, noting (particularly from Job) that what is often ascribed to Satan actually has its ultimate cause in God. He observes the biblical relationship between sickness, disease and disability with God's holiness and his curse on human sinfulness in texts such as Deuteronomy 28. He suggests that normative readings fail to account for disability as an accidental feature of human experience thus negatively leaving the disabled in a position of having to bear the burden of reminding humanity of their need for redemption.

This is a challenging issue. In the biblical material, individuals can suffer as a result of national/ethnic/racial (whole human race) sinfulness. Salvation, viewed as curse reversal, comes to the community such that some are spared and others are not, but the overall community is said to have been shown mercy and spared (c.f. Ps. 106). Even in Job, the afflictions (and subsequent restoration) delivered in reference to a testing of one man had collateral damage on his family, property, wife, friends and neighbours. How this tension between the collective community and the individual is worked out is part of the present challenge. The Old Testament curse passages are targeted at the whole community and do not single out the afflicted individuals (compare also Jn. 9:1-3) but consequently the presence of such individuals *is* an indictment against the whole community (c.f. Lk.13:1-5). I believe Yong's call for a potential "normative" or "accidental" view of disability could be maintained on an individual level while disability is still viewed as a "curse" or act of wrath on the overall community and humanity generally.

As difficult as this burden is to bear, it may yet be legitimate. However, as Yong correctly observes, God's response is not one of despising people in their weakness but honouring them and loving them and adopting them regardless of their weaknesses, motivated by His grace and compassion and care and love. The knowledge of human sinfulness is uncomfortably confronting, but it is helpful to face it squarely. Yong's concerns about equity can be enriched, if it is admitted that the weak carry a burden of witness, by emphasising that those who are strong ought to help to care for and honour them. Again extending from Yong, that God as Christ *takes on* our suffering, our "disability," is *key* to making sense of his exposing humanity to it in the first place. God does not make humanity face something without facing it his own self (even if not to the

same apparent degree or intensity - though one could argue that his grief over those he loves is *incomparably* painful, c.f. Mtt. 23:37).

Theological Challenges from the Analysis

Each of the theological positions explored above has its own particular focus and implications which, when thrown together, give the kind of diverse perspectives that can build toward the messy but accurate-to-life hermeneutic of realism suggested above. Thomas is concerned to show that the abundant life that Christ brings can include physical healing and Chant urges that such healing is founded in the promises of God that may be availed by faith. These are truly glorious emphases. For those who have experienced divine healing and for those who have come to salvation through the incredible growth of Pentecostalism through healing, the blessings are indeed superabundant.

Conversely, for those who do not experience healing, these emphases can have the reverse effect, potentially adding guilt and condemnation and doubts about faith and the faithfulness of God. The church, which should be leading in the area of bring the marginalised into the community of God can, without a balancing emphasis, be actively ostracising them. Clifton and Yong successfully speak to this area of concern, noting the value of all persons as centred in their being creatures in God's image and their subsequent capability to be, and *be seen* as, fruitful, contributing members of the faith community. They point out the ongoing value in a disabled life that is not "healed" according to normative expectations, and show how God's strength and glory is manifested in human weakness (2Cor. 12:9; 13:4) and human character growth. They correctly emphasise Jesus' connection to the marginalised and the weak, having experienced such phenomena himself as the author of human salvation.

Neither side of these two poles in the brief literature surveyed is dialoguing successfully with the emphases of the other. How both sides can be brought into balance where healing is pursued by faith without promoting an ostracising normativity is an area to be pursued in further research. It will be the challenge for Pentecostalism to humbly face and review its own praxis in a manner aligned with its traditions, faithful to scholarship and preserving of the dynamic experiential aspects of the God encounter. Importantly the testimonies of the unhealed need to be included in this dialogue (Clifton 2014, pp. 205–209).

A Christological focus is evident in all four perspectives, Jesus is with people to save and to heal, but also to suffer alongside of, and to share in the fullness of, the human experience. He is more than a restorer of embodied health, he is interested in restoring community and society, in building a *people* of God that live out the same kind of solidarity as Jesus modelled. However, what appears lacking in all of the above perspectives is a deeper biblical engagement with the role of God's wrath in suffering in relation to Christ. What Chant dismisses as mystery, and along with Clifton and Yong put down to chance and accident, calls for a more substantial engagement beyond the scope of this present paper. Thomas and Chant come close in their engagement with Christ as reverser of the curse, but a step beyond the instrumentality of Satan in suffering can be taken to consider the redemptive plans and purposes of God in both healing and non-healing. This needs to be done while avoiding a theodicy that further marginalises those who experience enduring situations of suffering. The solidarity of Christ with humanity and also with God is essentially central to such a model. There is no righteous requirement placed by God on humanity that Christ does not meet, and there is no curse

placed by God on humanity that Christ does not himself bear. A proper outline of these themes will require further development and research.

Along with Christ's cross, sickness and suffering remind us that humanity is in desperate need - both of salvation (specifically deliverance from God's wrath in the curse) and of a restoration of peace among themselves. Caring for the sick through prayer or in practical ways is a reminder that Christians are called as God's people, as Christ was, to care for human need. However, it must be borne in mind that the need has an inseparably eschatological as well as an immediately practical focus. The need transcends humanity's present condition, as important as this is; people who are suffering are not excluded by virtue of their suffering from a need to come into a right relationship with God. Christians are seeking to work in the tension of a coming kingdom that not only promises deliverance from the curse but also calls all people, whether perceptually healthy or suffering, to repentance.

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Journal of Contemporary Ministry

Theses/Dissertation Listing

This section contains bibliographic details of selected theses relating to contemporary ministry awarded in 2016.

Please contact JCM to have your institution's theses awarded in 2017 considered for inclusion in the next issue of the Journal of Contemporary Ministry.

Australia, New Zealand & Pacific

Andrew, Patricia Agnes

Life to the full: a study of Catholic school teachers' personal spirituality. Ed.D. – Australian Catholic University, 2016

Bartlett, Stephen

A study of the effectiveness of church planter recruitment, training and support systems amongst Baptist Churches in Australia. D.Min. – Morling College, 2016

Littleton, Thomas John Harvard

Enhanced faith learning in parishes. D.Min. – Adelaide College of Divinity, 2016

Staley, Astrid

Quantitative study of Evangelical and Pentecostal theological and pastoral responses to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention training and implications for postvention care of those bereaved by suicide. D.Min. – Australian College of Theology, 2016

United Kingdom & Europe

Kwon, Hyuksang

Lifting up to Himself: John Calvin's doctrine of the trinity and its implications for the Lord's Supper and worship. D.Min. – Durham University, 2016

Shuttleworth, Abigail Delyth

On earth as it is in heaven: a study of the healing praxis of Bill Johnson. Ph.D. – University of Birmingham, 2016

Walsh, Orla

Spiritan faith friends: an evaluation of faith development in a peer-ministry program. D.Ed. – Dublin City University, 2016

North & South America

Baugh, James

An evaluation of the Insider Movement as a Christian ministry approach to evangelizing Muslim audiences. D.Min. – Phoeix Seminary, 2016

Bolden, Cynthia R.

Connecting church and community: the ministry presence as a community pastor. D.Min. – Campbell University Divinity School, 2016

Brooks, Gennifer Benjamin

Hurdling the language barrier in preaching. D.Min. – Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2016

Campbell, Paul Richard

Discovering principles of resilience in ministry. D.Min. – Asbury Theological Seminary, 2016

Chittock, Daniel P.

Proactive systematic pastoral visitation in shepherding the contemporary church. D.Min. – Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2016

Gorrell, Angela Williams

Social media, churches, and Christian formation. D.Phil. – Fuller Theological Seminary, 2016

Jones, Sharon K.

Building a transformational Christian education ministry in a small rural church. D.Min. – Wesley Theological Seminary, 2016

Kim, Chul Ki

The paradigm of the Kingdom of God: a ministry tool for immigrant churches to build an inclusive community in the times of multiculturalization/multiracialization. D.Min. – Wesley Theological Seminary, 2016

McCoy, William

Walking in sacred spaces: moving from active ministry to intentional spiritual journey. D.Min. – Wesley Theological Seminary, 2016

Rodgers, Kay

Investigating how to minister effectively in a rapidly changing and increasingly diverse community. D.Min. – Wesley Theological Seminary, 2016

Sabados, Bruce A.

The effectiveness of expository preaching: persuading a congregation to practice church discipline as an act of faith and obedience to Christ's word. D.Min. – Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2016

Trauth, Jonathan N.

An evaluation of the St. Leo Burundi Refugee Ministry Program. Ed.D. – University of Cincinnati, 2016

Truax, Todd N.

Managing ministries through a ministry by objectives process in a programmed sized church. D.Min. – Harding Graduate School of Religion, 2016

Africa

Meletiou, Crystal

Spirituality in contemporary hospitality: a practical theological approach. Ph.D. – University of Pretoria, 2016

Tfwala, Njabulo Henry

The participation of Pentecostal churches in politics: a pastoral perspective. Ph.D. – University of Pretoria, 2016

Journal of Contemporary Ministry

Book Reviews

Campbell, H. A., & Garner, S. (2016). *Networked Theology*: *Negotiating Faith in Digital Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Reviewed by Audrey Lim

"The kingdom of God is like a Smartphone with endless battery life and unlimited data" (p. 13). Would Jesus have described the kingdom of God by beginning his parable this way? *Networked Theology* explores the relationship between new media and Christian beliefs and practices, with a focus on how theology is to be reflected in an active engagement of our current digital culture. Campbell and Garner not only have backgrounds in both fields but also are expert scholars in media studies and theology respectively. Key findings from their own work as well as scholarly research and case studies are drawn upon to craft a concept of networked theology for the 21st century.

After laying the foundations of technology theology (pp. 19-37) and new media theory (pp. 39-59), Campbell and Garner set out to identify five key traits of how people have practiced and are practicing religion online:

- Networked community – people live simultaneously in multiple personalised loose religious social networks with varying levels of affiliation and commitment.
- Storied identity – people construct their religious identities through shared narratives of faith.
- Convergent practice – people blend religious rituals from multiple sources in ways that create individualised and self-directed spiritual environments.
- Shifting authority – people negotiate the change in factors for what constitutes legitimate religious authorities.
- Multisite reality – people integrate their online and offline attitudes, behaviours and practices.

Campbell and Garner argue that these traits have direct implications for Christianity and therefore must be addressed. The idea of loving our neighbour in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk.10:25-37) gets reassessed by asking who is our neighbour, where is our neighbour and how should we treat our neighbour in the digital culture. In response, Micah's call to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly (Mic. 6:8) is taken as a framework for answering this. The authors present a four-layer strategy to

enable Christians to develop an informed theological reflection on their use of new media:

- History – uncovering their background and tradition.
- Core beliefs – identifying their core values, priorities and patterns.
- Media negotiation – analysing the positive and negative aspects of new media in light of their history and core beliefs.
- Community discourse about technology – creating statements, guidelines and policies to articulate their approach to new media.

The end goal is to establish online as well as offline "communities of shalom that reflect true neighbourliness through the recognition of others as persons and through integrity in all our relationships" (p. 147).

I found this book thought-provoking, captivating and convincing. Its reflection on theology and digital culture is indeed essential in the 21st century, and will benefit every Christian who uses new media. Its four-layer strategy can especially be applied by those involved in evaluating the impact of their churches' online ministries. Overall it has a good balance of both the theoretical as well as the practical. Unfortunately, a disappointment for me is the chapter addressing new media theory. With a background in electrical and electronic engineering, I found its discussions rather brief and lack some substantial theoretical grounding. The chapter could be enhanced by drawing on broader scholarly sources. Nonetheless the authors have covered a lot of its basics in just a few pages, which is no easy feat.

So, is establishing online communities of shalom really an achievable goal? Be it yes or no, the one sure thing is that we can each do what we are able to do. And I would recommend this book to anyone who earnestly desires to play his or her part in the community.

Cettolin, A. U. (2016). *Spirit, Freedom and Power: Changes in Pentecostal Spirituality*. OR: Wipf & Stock.

Reviewed by Tania Harris

The growth of Pentecostalism is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in history (p. 34), notes Cettolin in his new book: Spirit, Freedom and Power, but it is also a movement that is changing. As an experienced Pentecostal pastor within the Australian Christian Churches (ACC/formerly Assemblies of God (AoG)), the largest Pentecostal denomination in Australia, Cettolin has observed the changes firsthand and sought to explore them in his 2005 doctoral study, 'A Comparative Study of the Phenomenon of Historic Pentecostal Spirituality and its Contemporary Developments within the Assemblies of God in Australia.'

While growing as a movement, there were indications that Australian Pentecostal spirituality was shifting from its classical roots in both belief and practise. Having identified local church pastors as a key to the shifts, Cettolin addresses the question of whether institutionalisation is driving the change. In Spirit, Freedom and Power, he presents the findings of his study in a readable and thoughtful way. Pastors and leaders, Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal alike, along with students of renewal movements will find his work both relevant and insightful.

One of the key strengths of Cettolin's study is his strong grounding in the Western

Pentecostal movement's historical and theological settings. He begins at first by outlining a helpful working definition for 'spirituality'; one that includes both biblical and secular understandings. From there, an overview of Western Pentecostal history is provided showing the complexity and diversity of the movement. The distinctiveness of Pentecostal spirituality is then surveyed through the eyes of numerous contemporary scholars. African American features, the place of experience in liturgies and rituals, supernatural emphases, implicit values, glossolalia, and a passion for the kingdom are all highlighted.

In describing Pentecostal spirituality, Cettolin follows the lead of current literature which focuses more on empirical observations than theological distinctives to define the movement. While in the past, the doctrine of Spirit Baptism (as a distinct experience subsequent to conversion with tongues-speaking as its evidence) has typically defined Pentecostalism, contemporary expressions are more likely to be denoted by their experiential nature and an emphasis on the fullness of life in the Spirit.

Cettolin then moves his analysis to the Australian context. By way of introduction, Cettolin notes some of the trends observable in contemporary Pentecostal Spirituality and the various explanations for them by Australian scholars. A growing professionalism in leadership structure and style, the maintenance of autonomy in local churches, development of new networks, worship style and an increase in social and political involvement are all identified. But at the heart of Cettolin's research is the question of whether AoG pastors have shifted from a focus on the classical doctrinal position for Spirit baptism and glossolalia to a more general experience of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of the spiritual gifts (p. 67).

Findings from his survey of Australian Pentecostal pastors would indicate the answer to this question to be 'yes'. Australian Pentecostal spirituality has unequivocally shifted from its classical roots. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data indicates significant changes in private devotional practices, church services and practices, community service and outreach as well as in pneumatological beliefs. There is a "move away from an individual crisis experience and from classical expressions of spirituality to those which are more corporate and controlled" (p. 111). Cettolin's quantitative research has been methodically gathered and collated with a sound representative sample to base his findings on. While the nature of the qualitative data and criteria by which interviewees were selected is a little more obscure, the combination of qualitative and quantitative study provides a strong picture.

While it is clear that Pentecostal spirituality is changing for Australian AoG pastors and churches, the reasons for the change are not so clear (p. 71). In his book, Cettolin explores Weber's theory of growing institutionalisation as the key factor. Here Cettolin's thought shines as he draws on the work of sociologists and theologians to explore the interaction between charisma and institutionalisation. Margaret Poloma's groundbreaking research in the American AG is compared against the Australian scene and forms a sound basis by which to frame the discussion. In this discussion Cettolin notes that the presence of tension between the opposing poles of charisma and institutional organisation is one that in itself indicates health and life.

Cettolin's conclusions are both insightful and practical. He insists that we must "go beyond a simplistic dichotomy of charisma versus institution, order versus freedom or Spirit versus structure" (p. 89). Institutionalisation is a natural process, neither inherently right nor wrong, but an inevitable outcome of growth and organisation. So

while it is acknowledged that the ACC movement has shifted from in its roots, this is not "necessarily a sign of calcification" but of "flexibility and innovation" (p. iii). Indeed, as a movement who values the leading of the Spirit, change is welcomed as the movement seeks to facilitate new growth and adapts to cultural forces. In this however, there is still a call to action for the local church pastor who has an essential role in maintaining and facilitating the experience of the Holy Spirit in all his members (p. 111).

Cettolin's work hints at additional reasons for the changes. The influences of the Charismatic and Third Wave movements are briefly mentioned (p. 46), but it may have also been useful to touch on the desire of Pentecostals to be accepted into mainstream orthodoxy (the so-called 'evangelicalization' of Pentecostals).

As Cettolin himself states, his research has elicited lessons that are instructive for Pentecostal, Charismatic, Evangelical and other renewal movements, particularly in the Western world (p. 105). Perhaps the most helpful contribution Cettolin has made is in the provision of a framework of thinking for all organisations and movements who are seeking to maintain the spontaneity of Holy Spirit experience while forming institutional structures that facilitate growth. For AoG/ACC leaders, Cettolin's study finds its value in helping to understand the big picture of history so that the future can best be led. For academics who are interested in chartering the waves of change in spiritual movements, Cettolin's work will be illuminating. Theologians will find the study helpful in offering an alternate perspective on the current debates around Spirit Baptism and initial evidence. But perhaps the greatest contribution will be to local church pastors who are seeking to connect to their populations while riding the tension of charismatic experience and organizational needs (p. 111).

Cherry, N. (2015). *Energising Leadership*. South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Andrew Groza

With such a proliferation of books on leadership flooding both secular and Christian markets, is there anything novel to be said? Nita Cherry's book *Energising Leadership* examines an area that is rarely addressed in the extant leadership literature. Cherry understands leadership through the lens of engaging with people's energy in a professional way; she states that "[c]onstructively influencing human energy is the raison d'être for leadership" (p. 23). Viewing leadership through this lens broadens the perspective of a leader's work and lifts the bar for leaders because it requires them to pay attention to things that often go unnoticed. This view highlights that the work of leadership is often more complicated than is given credit. According to Cherry, this is because the energy of people can be affected by many factors (such as environments created by the mission, processes, technologies, rules, relationships, cultures, and spaces in which people work). She also argues that this presents leaders with great opportunities.

Built on that premise, the book unfolds to describe in detail the "energy story" and the need for professional practice. Though this is neither a theological treatise on leadership, nor written from a Christian perspective, there is much in here that speaks directly to the hard, day-to-day work of ministry. Her belief that the "... underlying purpose of leadership is to mobilise enough collective human energy - and for long

enough - to achieve the things we aspire to put right" (p. 4), is something that many a pastor can both agree with, and empathise with the difficulty of achieving.

Not all chapters will be equally beneficial for ministers, but there is much to recommend in the book. Specifically, chapters four through seven are, particularly noteworthy for those engaged in active leadership and ministry. Cherry's insights in chapter four regarding the contribution of leaders to the energy cycle of people and organisations is memorable. Being a professional leader is about "... consciously choosing to mobilise, focus, sustain, and refresh the energy and effort of other people" (p. 83). Each of those tasks (mobilise, focus, sustain, refresh), require different approaches, and she offers direction as to how to discern which state individuals, teams, and organisations are in, so that can be addressed. Furthermore, she highlights the fact that oftentimes energy is blocked, wasted, diverted or sapped by various factors within the environment, and alerts leaders to the fact that "... over time, processes and systems are invented and cultures develop that tie up energy in unproductive ways, or simply become a drain on the enthusiasm and optimism of many people" (p. 84). This invites leaders to take a fresh perspective towards their organisations, not just exclusively focusing on people, but also more broadly, on the environment in which they lead. Doing so, will enable leaders to address practices or systems that often go unnoticed but divert or sap the energies of others, and thereby invest that energy into more productive arenas.

Chapter five looks at real-time leadership, which is about engaging energies face-to-face. Cherry encourages leaders to be present in the moment, attentive to what is going on around them as well as inside them, and to make adjustments as necessary. This practice (being attentive to the energy levels of others, as well as themselves) helps leaders to gain a greater insight into themselves. If they adjust accordingly, the natural by-product is a more effective engagement with other people's energies. Chapter six examines influencing energies from a distance, around the clock - that is, being strategic in the creation of systems and structures that allow human energies to flourish. It is easy to forget that leaders affect the available energy of individuals, teams, and organisations even from a distance. The task here is for leaders to "... exert influence that will continue to operate effectively over time and space without them, and which doesn't depend on their personal presence" (p. 149). In a world that creates increasing opportunities for team engagement across multiple time zones and locations, it is all the more crucial for effective organisations to create systems and processes that encourage the mobilisation of energy, rather than inhibit it.

Perhaps chapter seven is one that is most pressing for ministers, as it explores something ministers would be all too familiar with, the concept of dilemmas. Cherry defines dilemmas as "... situations where difficult choices must be made that seriously disaffect or disadvantage some people in ways that won't go away" (p. 171). Cherry does not shy away from the difficulties attached to leading others, and confronts the fact that many leaders are tempted to ignore or not engage with the complex dilemmas they face. Delaying engagement with a dilemma creates its own challenges, since leaders fail to develop the capability to engage, and the problem becomes even more challenging. Cherry is honest in her appraisal of the difficulties faced by leaders seeking to engage with dilemmas. She points out a number of such difficulties: that an individual cannot see the entire system and therefore cannot single-handedly solve a problem, that leaders commonly overestimate their ability to make sense of information, and that leaders tend to selectively narrow their filters and information channels when under

stress. Rather than under or over-engagement with the issue, she calls for calibrated engagement, and offers guidance for how one might do that. Despite the discomfort and pain caused by dilemmas, ultimately a leader's engagement with them can be transformative and should be seen as an encouragement to growth;

Dilemmas are situations that challenge us because they take us right to the edge of our existing leadership competence. If we recognise them for what they are, they invite us to dig deep, take a leap and transform our practice to the next significant level (p. 182).

Cherry's work is pitched at a slightly more academic audience, which may cause some initial difficulties for those used to reading more widely-aimed works. There are also multiple typos which detract from the readability of the book; quite surprising from a publisher with the stature of Oxford University Press. Furthermore, some of the content can get a little repetitive as chapters tend to recap what has been discussed previously (although this does make non-linear or non-sequential reading easier).

Nevertheless, this is a book that is helpful to ministers and their work. It is a fresh take on an often exhausted subject that provides genuine help for those engaged with the difficult task of leadership. If Cherry's underlying premise is taken to be true; that is, that when we engage with other people's energies and do so in a professional way, that it affects what can be collectively achieved, then this book should give innovative insight to the way we lead, so that we can partner more effectively with God's work of redeeming the world.

Curtis, S. (2016). ***Reach and Teach: Educational Short-Term Missions as a Ministry of the Local Church*****. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.**

Reviewed by Devni Regis

This is a very useful book based on Curtis' experience as a "mobile missionary instructor," it discusses integrating theological education and teaching into Short Term Missions (STM), perhaps replacing the term STM with Educational Short Term Missions where "lay volunteers from American churches" are used to "work with indigenous pastors to create resources that can be used to train other pastors and churches …" (p. 49).

Curtis argues that in the future short-term missionaries should focus on educating, training and equipping the indigenous leaders rather than only focus on converting people, erecting buildings and tourism. This is especially so because of the risk of new Christians being taught heresy by their pastor or leader due to the lack of education and training they have received from Christian missionaries. "For a pastor to be 'able to teach' and 'able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it' (1Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9), he must be educated" (p. 8).

He cites over sixty references including books and journal articles on Short Term Missions, history of missions, cross cultural missions and the Great Commission, to support his argument in this book. Additionally, he includes a short church survey, a missions survey and ten interviews of pastors originating from Burma, Philippines, Uganda, Nepal, and Ghana to stress the importance of integrating theological education into the area of missions.

He also briefly surveys the history of American missions referring to the contribution of "particular ministries of individual people and larger movements" from which we can learn lessons that are useful for "any new missions paradigm" (p. 12).

Curtis urges that STM's should be combined with an "adult discipleship program" involving qualified teachers that are part of the team. He also suggests encouraging those with a passion for missions to develop teaching skills and those with a passion for teaching to develop missions skills, and to prepare and mentor short term missionaries.

Curtis provides a railway model as an EDSTM example. "The rails represent the indigenous pastor's primary means of learning" which is the personal study of the Bible, other resources and experience in ministry. Then "the rail ties represent the EDSTM workshops, where the EDSTMer" can form a relationship with the indigenous pastor to "bridge the gap between the two rails." The seminars and workshops facilitate the indigenous pastor with "sound biblical and theological training" and in the same manner the pastor's ministry experiences through his participation in the workshop "brings cultural context to the development" of this model (pp. 49-50).

He also provides ten steps such as Leadership (selecting committed leaders who have a genuine passion to train others), teaching materials/resources, (considering appropriate materials that will be taught), prayerful discernment in selecting the field of service (prayerfully seeking God's will in choosing to implement this model), building up a relationship with an indigenous pastor (contacting and connecting with the local pastor of the area), forming a team (appointing the appropriate people to be sent into the field), "training in content and culture" (the short-term missionary must have an adequate theological knowledge and be prepared to "interact" with a foreign culture), fundraising (the church must involve its members in raising funds rather than only the board), deployment (preparing the EDSTMer to actually make the move practically by being sent and that requires paying attention to details like visas, vaccinations etc, debriefing (it is important that the missionary are given support to process "their missions encounter") and "replication" which means maintaining an "ongoing ministry of EDSTM" without it being an one off to facilitate this program (pp. 51-80).

Curtis argues that there is a considerable gap between the work that Long Term Missions accomplishes such as church planting, bible translations, discipleship and the needs of the church, but that STM covers some of those needs such as "humanitarian and development projects." However theological training remains to be the most unmet need that can be met considerably through the EDSTM model which he proposes (p. 90)

So in conclusion the EDSTM model that Curtis proposes, if followed correctly as explained, will be of great benefit to churches that focus on short term missions and have the appropriate resources to equip their short term missionaries. In the same manner even though this book is mainly addressed to American Christians, it will be of great benefit to Bible College Students, churches and especially to all Christians who take the Great Commission seriously.

Dreier, M.S.D. (ed) (2013). *Created Led by the Spirit: Planting Missional Congregations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Reviewed by Grant Buchanan

Created Led by the Spirit is an edited work considering different aspects of planting Missional communities within diverse contexts. "The primary purpose of this book," Dreier states, "is to extend the mission of church conversation as it relates to the generative work of planting new missional congregations" (xvii). Through 9 articles by various authors, and a concluding sermon by Paul Chung, the book explores biblical, theological, ecclesiological and contextual issues related to a Spirit led missional ecclesiology. The majority of the contributors come from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and, therefore, most of the case studies are from this context.

Setting the scene in Chapter 1, Dreier suggests that "God's generative building activity makes our own building activity possible, from putting up actual structures to shaping human community… the chapters in this book are thus primarily about the Holy Spirit, who creates and leads us in the development of new congregations" (p. 4). The Holy Spirit both generates community and, in doing so, operates as church planter. Drawing on Acts as a paradigm, she argues that, in the same way that the disciples confronted various cultural, social, political and religious challenges when they went out from Jerusalem, so too church-planters today find themselves going to "all kinds of places, some expected and some surprising, as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit continues today as it did on Acts" (p. 11). A missional hermeneutic, informed by a Trinitarian framework, shapes understanding and implementation of biblical and confessional beliefs, providing a praxis where missional congregations orient themselves and their activities around mission. "Concentrated in the crucified and risen Christ, the perichoretic Trinity imprints us with congregational life that is marked by openness participation, and mutuality in the face of oppression, domination, and inequality" (p. 14). Therefore, planting churches involves the twofold nature of this Trinitarian relationality: that of sending and building community.

Miroslav Volf contributes the second article on human flourishing. Given the title and focus of the book, however, this appears slightly out of place. Although well known for his engagement with the Spirit in much of his writing, here he provides very little. Volf explores hope as primary to human flourishing. "Hope in a Christian sense, is love stretching itself into the future" (p. 27). Volf challenges the prevalent idea that human flourishing comes from the 'experience of satisfaction.' Instead, he states "human beings flourish and are truly happy when they centre their lives on God, the source of everything that is true, good, and beautiful" (p. 29). This idea stands in stark contrast with the more recent phenomenon where self is at the centre and God has been moved to the periphery. Volf concludes this section, stating, "when we place pleasure at the centre of the good life, when we decouple it from the love of God, the ultimate source of meaning, and when we sever it from love of neighbour and hope for a common future, we are left... with no way of organising desire into a structure of meaning." Believing in, and loving God, and, in light of this, loving others as well is central to human flourishing.

The remaining articles each consider the role and purpose of the Spirit in establishing and developing a missional approach to church planting. Each author considers how the biblical narrative provides a basis for a missional theology of the Spirit and how this provides an important framework for establishing missional communities in their own local secular, post-modern and multi-cultural contexts. Lois

Malcolm states in chapter 3, "we live in an area in which the task of discerning the Spirit revolves not only around the reform of Christendom but also around the apostolic proclamation of the gospel in an era that is both post-Christian and post-secular" (p. 46). As she notes, "people no longer simply go to church or believe in God because it is the socially acceptable thing to do.... We seem to be in a 'new age' in which Christianity has to be actually *experienced* or *practised* in order for it to be viable for people" (p. 49). This is an important point for anyone considering planting a church into a new urban context.

A common thread throughout the book highlights this point. Paul's approach to mission helps inform the diversity of cultural contexts the Christian community meets when establishing new churches. Biblical images such as wanderer and stranger, alien and neighbour — themes that define both the Hebrew nation in the Old Testament, and the Christian Community in the New Testament — provide a framework for understanding how the Christian community today can identify themselves within a similar diversity in the world today. As Daniel Anderson notes, each context requires a different expression of worship, of service, of ordained leadership and of a translation of the gospel into "the languages of the micro cultures that abound in our society..." (p. 133).

An affinity with the Trinitarian idea of *perichoresis* is another common thread throughout. This concept reminds us that a missional theology is both relational and one of sending. Again, Daniel Anderson puts it well, "it is the Holy Spirit, in the name of Christ Jesus, to the glory of the father, who creates the church, sends it, and leads it in mission for the sake of God's mission in the world" (p. 149).

The various case studies provided by the authors help ground their discussions in actual missional contexts and communities—each quite diverse, yet highly contextual. Given that the main denominational context is the ELCA, the diversity of expression is wonderfully fresh.

Created and Led by the Spirit provides some insightful though contextual discussion on Spirit-led Missional Church planting; including a timely reminder of the Trinitarian nature of the *missio Dei.* Each author brings something unique from their own culture, context and research to this discussion. Though there is little new theologically, ecclesiologically, or missionally, the value of the book lies in reminding us of the mission-sending nature of the Spirit, and the empowerment the Spirit provides us in establishing new faith communities. It reminds us of the necessity to continually reach out beyond our church walls and be truly missional communities — communities that reflect Jesus through the presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and the embodiment of the *missio Dei*.

Devenish, S.C. (2017). *Ordinary Saints – Lessons in the Art of Giving Your Life Away*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.

Reviewed by Christopher Cat

It is refreshing to read a work that is so clearly infused with the author's own passion and dedication to life, to God and to his audience. *Ordinary Saints* is itself a work of ministry of the very kind the author is seeking to promote. It is an intentional calling out to Christian service for everyday followers of Jesus Christ; a call to be living

witnesses in action and word, and to be an encourager of others to live as disciples of Christ.

Devenish is the director of Postgraduate Studies at Tabor College in Adelaide, South Australia. He draws from his own experiences as a Christian teacher, missionary and discipleship mentor to both Catholic and Protestant priests and pastors as well as from the testimonies of other ordinary saints (usually from his own acquaintance). This gives the book a very engaging and personal flavour that lends sincerity to the appeal and grounds it in relatable, day-to-day living.

Devenish's style is articulate and effectively suited to the educated, lay, Christian leadership he wishes to encourage and instruct. He lays out pertinent themes and ideas clearly with the use of effective headings, concise sections and a purposeful balance of teaching and testimony. He covers the theme from a broad and comprehensive range of perspectives which capture both the potential for success and failure in holy living. He honestly wrestles with the actual struggles of Christian living, including the temptation, suffering and sadness, while also profoundly and deeply eliciting a desire to take on a Christlike, humble, and generous, other-focused service in life.

Devenish's discussion on the divine-human partnership is superb. With enough theological exposition to build the intellectual framework, he adds enough real life example to inspire participation, and then enough practical focus to nurture living application. Into this praxis of exposition, example and application he witnesses the gospel itself in the testimony of Jesus and ordinary saints in such a way that stirs the reader's spirit to the kind of appreciation and gratitude that will motivate the praxis the book is promoting. One comes away from reading the book with a sense of responsibility and empowerment, and a focused sense of God's intention to work effectively in the lives of day-to-day, "ordinary" Christians.

In a commendable effort to show the potential for good in giving up one's own pleasure-seeking for godly living, and the damage caused by self-centred living, Devenish repeatedly builds a construct of the world where the line between Christians and non-believers is marked and dramatic. He neither denies the sinfulness of Christians nor the virtues exercised by some non-Christians, nevertheless his emphasis leans perhaps a little too dogmatically on making stark distinctions that favour Christians while disparaging others. A more complex acknowledgement that God is at work in every person and is not far from each one of us, while making things muddier, may have added to the genuineness of his overall testimony.

In addressing the issue of suffering and pain, Devenish wisely acknowledges that trite theological answers only intensify suffering, and he shows the value of lived experience to create bridges of compassion to the suffering. His exposition of the way God purposefully works through humble, grateful and generous people, who are themselves filled with weaknesses and struggles, is one of the most empowering strengths of his book. Unfortunately, his alignment with theology that sets God up as self-limiting in order to give value to human freedom and a choice to love, while common enough, leaves one faced with a disempowered God and undermines confidence in His creating a sinless future since choice is made necessary to love.

In summary, I would consider this book an excellent read. I would recommend it as devotional and motivational. Reading it is a challenge to answer the author's call with a renewed energy and focus on holy living and a desire to make a loving impact in the world for God.

Mason K. (2014). ***Preventing Suicide: A handbook for Pastors, Chaplains and Pastoral Counsellors*****. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press.**

Reviewed by Dr. Astrid Staley

Mason's book will prove a worthy addition to any minister's library. It will be of particular help to any in the Christian community involved with suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention care of those bereaved by suicide; it will equip caregivers involved at any level to minister more effectively into this challenging area.

Mason, a psychologist, and associate professor of counseling and psychology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, has worked in the mental health field for twenty-six years and brings her expertise to this complex discussion to show practically how pastoral caregivers can be agents of hope to people at risk of suicide. The book first addresses foundational issues in discussions and approaches to suicide before progressing to the more practical component where Mason then shares numerous anecdotes from not only her experience with suicidal people but also those of Christian caregivers in a variety of ministry settings.

The first four chapters are vital for caregivers to explore before engaging practically. Chapter one addresses commonly held preconceived ideas as to who dies by suicide. Here Mason explores what role race, gender, and factors such as biology and mental health play in predicting whether someone will die by suicide. Chapter two shatters ten suicide myths with a primary focus on people within the Christian community evidencing suicidal-ideations (*someone who thinks about suicide, has a plan and the means to carry it out*), which can tragically end in death. These myths are debunked in the "light of Bible and science." Chapter three flows on from the examination of myths about Christians experiencing suicidal-ideations to a theological discussion about Christians who sadly take their life and the historical responses from the church as to their future hope. These three chapters are critical for caregivers to explore, as preconceived ideas and a minister's operating theology can be a hindrance to offering people with suicidal-ideations help, and their readiness to extend comfort to those bereaved by suicide. Self-examination precedes practical engagement. Chapter four then offers an understanding of the historical and contemporary theories to suicide and the importance of a bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach in caring for at-risk people in the Christian community.

Chapters five through to nine, immerse the reader in anecdotes and a multitude of valuable practical strategies in caring for the following five people groups; someone in a suicide crisis (Chapter 5); a survivor of a suicide attempt (Chapter 6); a caregiver (Chapter 7); those bereaved by suicide (Chapter 8), and the faith community (Chapter 9). While some strategies overlap, each group have needs specific to them, which merit understanding when engaging care.

Mason writes in language easily understood by any caregiver with or without prior knowledge on this topic. People with prior understanding or working in this field will no doubt find amongst the strategies offered, something that will contribute to their existing repertoire of approaches. Each chapter is equipped with discussion questions that can be used either in a group setting or for personal reflection. Additional resources are also offered for the reader to refer to if needed. However, the many websites listed as avenues for referring people in crisis will not benefit those located outside of the United States. Caregivers will need to identify appropriate resources from within their community or from country specific websites committed to suicide prevention.

With an increasing number of people, tragically even within the Christian community struggling with suicidal-ideations, it is important for caregivers to equip themselves with the relevant tools to be able to intervene when they find themselves confronted with someone is crisis. This book is certainly a step in that direction.

Menzies, R. (2016). ***Speaking in Tongues: Jesus and the Apostolic Church as Models for the Church Today.*** **Cleveland, TN: CPT Press**.

Reviewed by Dr. Jon Newton

Today's contemporary church, at least in the west, has been significantly influenced by Pentecostalism. The older hostility to Pentecostalism on the part of many Protestants has largely evaporated and many evangelical churches are copying at least some aspects of the larger Pentecostal churches like Hillsong, such as their music, positive message and contemporary edge. However, these new Pentecostal churches have also changed significantly from what previous generations experienced from Pentecostalism, especially in their Sunday services.

Tongues-speaking has always been the most controversial feature of the modern "classical" Pentecostal movement and there are signs that aspects of tongues practice are in decline among classical Pentecostals (not only in large contemporary congregations): "tongues and interpretations" in public have become rare in Pentecostal services, the insistence on tongues as the initial evidence of a post-conversion Spirit baptism is less common and there is evidence that fewer members of Pentecostal churches actually speak in tongues either in worship times or in their own prayer life. Hence, although this book is not primarily about contemporary ministry, its appearance is a timely reminder of what classical Pentecostals have stood for and perhaps a hint to contemporary Pentecostals not to neglect speaking in tongues.

Robert Menzies (PhD Aberdeen) is a leading Pentecostal scholar and missionary and currently the Director of the Asian Centre for Pentecostal Theology. He is firmly committed to the classical Pentecostal view but this perspective doesn't prevent him making an inviting, and mostly convincing, biblical case about the value and importance of speaking in tongues. The book does this by exploring the material in Luke-Acts (Part One), the question of Jesus and tongues (Part Two) and the Pauline material on the subject (Part Three) before drawing a series of conclusions. Each chapter discusses relevant biblical passages in some detail, including some analysis of the Greek (sometimes with fresh insights) and different interpretations of key verses. Each chapter then concludes with is a summary of Menzies' findings, an application (usually consisting of the experience of a specific Pentecostal minister) and reflection questions.

Some of the discussion is fairly predictable to those familiar with the issues, but the author does make some striking claims. Perhaps the one which will attract the most attention is his argument that Jesus probably spoke in tongues, built on consideration of Luke 10:21 and the use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2:25-28, and that he encouraged his disciples to do so as well. Here Menzies portrays tongues as a prophetic expression of ecstatic joy in the Holy Spirit. Clearly it is hard to be definitive here as the only place where Jesus is explicitly said to mention tongues is in the longer ending of Mark, which is disputed territory, though Menzies discusses this at some length and quite creatively (pp. 68-81). Not everyone will agree with Menzies here, but his case that Jesus probably

spoke in tongues is quite strong and will at least make scholars and ministers think carefully before dismissing it.

It is not possible to summarize all the arguments in this book. Menzies addresses most of the common arguments raised for and against the practice of tongues, especially those based on biblical grounds. He seeks to reconcile Luke and Paul with respect to the value and guidelines for speaking in tongues. He defends the Pentecostal view that speaking in tongues is a practice available to all believers who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. He draws on Bruce Johanson to offer a persuasive resolution of the tensions in Paul's argument about tongues as a sign in 1Cor.14:20-25 (pp. 110–115). He discusses a number of New Testament passages where tongues may be implied even though not explicitly mentioned. He explores the potential uses of tongues in devotional life and in church meetings. One thing I didn't find here, however, was a discussion of the practicalities of public tongues in larger churches, even though Menzies mounts a strong defence of the classical Pentecostal practice of messages in tongues during church services followed by prophecy-like interpretations; in fact perhaps his most startling story relates to such a message in a meeting where Billy Graham was preaching (pp. 153-155).

Menzies clearly wants to encourage ministers to value, practice and encourage others to practice, speaking in tongues. In the Introduction to his book, he urges pastors to overcome three fears "if they want their churches to experience the joy and power of speaking in tongues, and in so doing recapture the power of Pentecost and follow in the apostolic model" (p. 5): the fear of disagreement, the fear of embarrassment and the fear of excess. Clearly Menzies sees the teaching and practice of tongues as central to the growth of Pentecostal churches and to the spiritual health of Pentecostal ministers. This is why I think this book should be read by contemporary ministers.

Ortberg, J. (2010). ***The Me I Want to Be Participant's Guide with DVD: Becoming God's Best Version of You*****. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**

Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw

Our church was looking for a resource as a follow up after hosting an Alpha course. We wanted a series of DVD talks of about 15 minutes each with English subtitles so participants of non-English speaking background can easily follow that talks. We were looking for a discussion guide that would help our diverse group grow in their understanding of God and discipleship. We are a small-sized church, so a small group discussion series would suit us well.

John Ortberg is senior pastor at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in California, and is a master teacher and bestselling author of several books on discipleship. His frameworks on spiritual formation are shaped by Dallas Willard, and his teaching helps show how Jesus-centred spirituality is relevant in everyday life.

The Me I Want to Be is Ortberg's teaching series on growing from who we are into the unique and flourishing people who God wants us to be (rather than the "me" I pretend to be, or think I should be, or other people want, or that fails to be, or that I'm afraid God wants). Ortberg teaches about what this means in general and for renewing our mind, redeeming our time, deepening our relationships and transforming our experiences. The material is spread over five talks of 12-15 minutes that introduce a

suggested one hour total session including engagement with 11-16 pages of notes and discussion points per session.

Ortberg captured my imagination when he said on the DVD in a message to pastors that many Christians want to go deeper in their faith, and yet we all need different approaches and frameworks for helping us grow deeper. For example, he discusses different personality types and the sins that particularly tempt each one, and offers checklists to diagnose where we draw life and what most gives us passion. It also urges participants in their encouragement of one another:

> Every day, everyone you know faces life with eternity on the line, and life has a way of beating people down. Every life needs a cheering section. Every life needs a shoulder to lawn on once in a while. Every life needs a prayer to lift them up to God. Every life needs a hugger to wrap some arms around them sometimes. Every life needs to hear a voice saying, "Don't give up" (Participant's Guide, p. 61).

The discussion guide offers thoughtful, open-ended questions for discussion, and growth exercises for between sessions. It can be complemented by the more complete book by the same title.

One of the things I most appreciated about the resource is the inviting picture of God whose heart for us is to thrive and to dream big, to enjoy God's gifts and to be dangerously threatening to forces of injustice and apathy. A feature of Ortberg's teaching is the agency of God – the encouragement that your life is God's project not just your own. *The Me I Want to Be* may sound individualistic and self-centred, but it leads participants to think bigger than our own needs and agendas, for example:

> How will you recognize your mountain? There is no formula. Just as in every other area of your growth, your mountain will not look exactly like anyone else's. But often you will recognize it because it lies at the intersection of the tasks that tap into your greatest strengths and the needs that tap into your deepest passions. You know this for sure: *God has a mountain with your name on it* (Participant's Guide, p. 83).

John Ortberg's *The Me I Want to Be* is a thought-provoking DVD teaching series relevant for small groups or churches interested in exploring spiritual growth, identity, life-giving relationships and vocation.

Pletcher, J. E., & Hall-Pletcher, H. (2016). *EmotiConversations*. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Wills

There is a wide variety of books on the market dealing with the subject of emotions, many of which could be described as self-help books. *EmotiConversations* is different in that it is not a self-help book so much as a book of stories (personal, historical and biblical) which includes comments describing the emotional reactions of people in various situations. It is a thought-provoking book which stresses the importance of recognizing and wrestling with our emotions. Pastor and lecturer John Pletcher has teamed up with his mother, Holly, a retired educator and administrator to challenge the reader to view the workplace as providing a significant, meaningful opportunity for spiritual growth, in what is for most people, a secular environment. The message of the

book is intentionally redemptive, suggesting that instead of 'stuffing' our emotions and distancing ourselves from others when faced with difficulties, we should let God use our emotions to grow us and transform us into the image of Christ – 'for the sake of others'.

The thesis of the book is that human flourishing depends upon our entire substance mind, heart, actions and body must live in right relationship to God, self, others and creation. The text is biblically-based using the book of Ruth as a framework for discussing life's difficulties. It is easy to read with questions for reflection at the end of each of its eight chapters. One hundred and fifty-nine pages in total, including authors' profiles and a solid bibliography, the book would appeal to those who are inspired by stories of tragedy and triumph. Author John Pletcher is of the belief that generally speaking, we don't do emotions well and that includes church leaders. Having been on the receiving end of anger and hostility from those on his ministry team when he tried to implement some changes, the book is intended for church leaders and parishioners alike. It would also lend itself for use in discussion groups as it has a relaxed style and could be used as a jumping off point for discussing emotional issues in a non-threatening way.

A basis for understanding the important connection between emotions and brain function is provided in the first chapter with reference to research by William James and others, linking the body and emotions. Reference is also made to the seminal work of Joseph LeDoux who studied the amygdala and its connection to emotional response. The time-honoured work of David Seamands and Daniel Goleman is also considered in the understanding of emotional intelligence and well-being.

The reader is invited to engage with the text through compelling stories of grief, loss and tragedy with all the accompanying emotions - anger, fear, disappointment, sadness, despair, joy and hope. The importance of strong friendships and how we depend on others in times of crisis is illustrated in Chapter Four by the story of Major General Ulysses S. Grant, and Brigadier General William Sherman in the American Civil War, and how their friendship sustained them and may have turned the tide of the war.

The strength of *EmotiConversations* can be seen in the argument mounted for total commitment to God's cause - spirit, soul, body - learning to love God and others with our whole being, trusting God completely, just as Naomi did in the book of Ruth as she waited for God's redemption of her tragedy. A possible limitation however, is that there is no clear explanation of how to achieve this. It is suggested that we should "apply healthy emotions in pursuit of personal spiritual development" (p. 7). This is confusing, as it seems to be contradicting the argument in the book.

From the hermeneutical perspective, the book has some problems with lack of balance. Emotional growth goes hand in hand with spiritual growth which occurs as we abide in Christ, applying the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, obedience and learning to overcome in the spiritual battle waged against us daily. This important teaching was overlooked in the many references to transformation. Also, simply tracing the narrative of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz, was not always effective for explaining how to gain control of our emotions. The implication throughout the book is that by dealing with our emotions we will be transformed. This seems to be putting the 'cart before the horse,' and throws in a subtly confusing message for the reader, as the Bible teaches that it is the Holy Spirit who brings about spiritual and emotional change as our minds are renewed according to God's Word. A discussion along these lines, perhaps even with fewer stories, would have strengthened the book's impact. In summary, while

EmotiConversations certainly provides helpful insights for anyone involved in people helping professions, the over-emphasis on emotional development at the expense of a robust presentation of the importance of spiritual development, is a significant limitation.

Smith, J. K. A. (2016). *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit.* Grand Rapids, MI: BrazosPress.

Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw
Kindle version

With thinking about education shaped by modernity, it is natural to think that we teach by transferring knowledge. James K A Smith teaches as Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College and writes some of the most helpful material I have read on worship, formation, teaching practices and ministry in a post-secular era. He suggests that people truly learn and implement things in their lives not from mere information transfer or confession of belief, but by adopting new habits or practices that recalibrate what we love. We are not merely thinking beings but characterized by what we love: "Jesus is a teacher who doesn't just inform our intellect but forms our very loves. He isn't content to simply deposit new ideas into your mind; he is after nothing less than your wants, your loves, your longings" (loc. 100).

When we understand the spiritual power of habit, there are obvious implications for education, especially for character and virtue. Learning virtue is not about memorizing content but more about imitation and practice - more like practicing piano scales than studying music theory. Growing disciples of Jesus, therefore, happens best as people adopt habits, practices and liturgies that re-form their affections and desires.

There are also implications for worship. Smith reclaims the importance of historic approaches to worship - including the call to worship, prayer of confession, celebration of sacraments, powerfully poetic and storied liturgy and sending the people of God into their Monday through Saturday week and discipleship project that worship nourishes them for. He actually warns against novelty and innovation in worship, arguing that imaginative power for a postmodern world will more likely come from reclaiming ancient forms of worship and reconnecting with the biblical story. Thus he presents a high view of worship, arguing worship is the crucible of discipleship, or the "imagination station" that steers our loves toward God's kingdom.

Smith also offers advice for parents to integrate liturgies in the home, for teachers aiming to form students they meet in classrooms, and for leaders of children's and youth ministry (including not to ignore spiritual practices for fear of "boring" young people).

He also explains how "secular" liturgies misdirect or miscalibrate our longings. To be human is to worship - the choice is what we worship. However, this is more often subconscious or chosen for us by the societal forms that surround us. Smith masterfully exegetes the shopping mall, university and wedding and shows how they direct our loves and ideals towards consumerism, autonomy and self-concern. He encourages adopting a "liturgical examen" to consider what routines shape us and to what ends.

You Are What You Love expands on Smith's passion for formative practices in worship and education. It is highly recommended reading for pastors, worship leaders,

teachers and parents. Ultimately it offers valuable insights for any Christian serious about understanding how habits form, disform or reform them and why we need Kingdom-focused rituals.

Tripp Y. (2016). ***The End of Captivity? A Primates Reflections on Zoos, Conservation, and Christian Ethics.*** **Eugene, OR: Cascade.**

Reviewed by Grant Buchanan

Go figure. A book about zoos. Yes you read right - a book about zoos … where they keep animals … for our entertainment. But this is more than a book about zoos. It is also a book about shoveling poop - his term not mine, and ethics. This short book (134 pages and with pictures!), turned out to be an informative read that responds to the question 'what is the *end* of captivity?'

Tripp York writes, not as an activist, although he has been one in the past and has many misinformed activists engage in debate and dialogue with him, he writes as an advocate for the animal kingdom. He even went worked at a local zoo to find out what actually goes on in zoos and why zoos may be necessary to the survival of many animals.

Interspersed with brief, at times witty interludes after each chapter, York highlights how the interaction between humans and animals is far more complex than dominator and dominated that many tend to think. There is a greater interrelatedness in the interaction between humans and animals, highlighted by the squirrel monkey, whom Yorked named "Jeeves", who climbed a tree, took aim and deliberately pooped on him (p. 70).

The first part of the book explores various philosophical, theological and political positions people hold regarding the ethics of the existence of zoos. York notes that "the reactions that zoos evoke from people are as varied as the animals within them" (p. 22). While the ideal would be to have animals free to roam within their native habitat, York discusses the weaknesses and potential unrealistic view that this holds. For sure, "the more natural the habitat the more inclined visitors are to view the animals … in a more positive light" (p. 5, n. 3). This being said, modern zoos are far removed from earlier expressions where animals were on display and controlled purely for the entertainment of humans. Zoos today provide protection to endangered species, make breeding and releasing programs possible, financially support wildlife conservation, educate people about the animals and their habitats, and provide research opportunities for conservation and biodiversity (p. 5). In the US, zoos annually attract greater numbers of visitors than all of the sporting events combined (p. 20). Zoos are therefore potential "Gateways to the wild, metaphorically and practically" (p. 11).

York continually challenges us to consider our own part in eliminating the need for zoos in particular in the way we engage our environment, especially since humanity is the greatest enemy to many natural habitats. In chapters three and four, York discusses issues of captivity and freedom of animals. As he rightly notes, many animals that have been released into their natural habitats haven't survived. This is often because their natural habit has been reduced or impacted by human interaction; or because the actual habitat is itself a hostile environment. Many well-known animal advocates such as Jane Goodall with the gorillas, and Steve Irwin in Australia, have highlighted environmental

issues impacting animal habitats as well as educating us about their beloved animals. This does not so much endorse the existence of zoos and wildlife parks, but suggests we cannot avoid them. Because humans intervene in the world through urbanization, the associated infrastructure of roads, tunnels and bridges, increased farming to meet the needs of population growth etc., "non-intervention is impossible … the question is not *whether* we are going to intervene, the questions is *how* we are going to intervene" (p. 9).

The second half of the book (separated by photos), explores the ethical responsibility of humans to respond appropriately as God's image bearers to creation. In chapter four, 'The Ongoing Task of Adam', York sees the act of naming the animals, in Genesis 2, as an act of power. "Through the act of naming, we determine an animal's purpose in relation to us" (p. 69). We classify and name animals in four distinct ways. Firstly, the scientific name classifies "the genus and species (rooted in a larger, hierarchical, tree of life)" based on the properties of the animals, or where they were first discovered, for example, the Boa is *Corallus caninus*, so named for its ferocious bite (p. 69). Secondly, the common name is often associated with an entire species, e. g., 'cows', 'cats' etc. Thirdly, is the name we give to an individual animal (e. g., 'Larry' the Boa bit York's friend, Dennis). This is all part of the interaction between humanity and the animal kingdom. York is concerned most with a fourth nomenclature, the practice of naming animals based on their use to us e. g., 'meat'. By naming animals this way we determine how they are going to live or die, and it is here that we wield the most power (p. 71).

While he is not against us holding this responsibility, York is concerned we have forgotten the place of animals within God's good creation. Numerous passages reveal four things. "First, animals do not belong to us, they belong to God." Second, their purpose is to serve God; third, "God cares for animals, both humans and non-humans"; fourth, according to York, these animals will reside with us in God's future kingdom (p. 75). Our dominion of creation therefore, is rooted in God's dominion. In the Genesis narrative and subsequent scriptures regarding God and creation, we find a God who serves creation by nurturing it. Just as Jesus lowered himself, and gave himself for the sake of all creation, we, in light of his example, should respond accordingly to each other and the wider creation (p. 77).

York does not hide that he is vegetarian; but he does not impose it on others. He does however challenge the inconsistency of many animal advocates who would die for the sake of the Gorillas, yet not blink an eye to the millions of farm animals slaughtered each year for food (p. 87). The issue is not the position one takes on eating food, but the inconsistency of a desire for the rights of some animals and the ignorance of the plight of other animals caged and raised in harsher environments to meet a growing consumer demand (pp. 84-99).

York concludes his exploration of zoos, conservation and ethics, by reiterating the reality of the world we inhabit. The natural world revolves around the survival of the fittest, where faster and stronger species feed off others. Within this reality we are challenged to consider our part as both humans who represent God, but also as species in relation to other species. We should not forget our place in the world habitat, but we must do so living towards the eschatological reality where the lion will lay down with the lamb (Is. 11). But in-between Eden and the new creation, we must also recognize the ongoing struggle that exists in the journey towards the ultimate completion. If we can

comprehend this, and remain faithful to our understanding of creation, we can help others know "there is an alternative to this vision of a world at odds with itself" (p. 114).

The End of Captivity is a delightful, informative, yet also a challenging read. There are some concerns regarding York's theology; however, his light-hearted approach to many of the issues raised makes this a book that will be difficult to forget, especially whenever we pat our pet, eat a steak or hotdog, visit the zoo, watch animal planet … or … read our Bibles.

West, M.A, (2012). *Effective Teamwork: Practical Lessons from Organizational Research*. (3rd ed.) PUB West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons

Review by Allanah Lauder

Churches today are increasingly discovering the strength of effective teamwork for achieving their goals as an organisation while also improving the wellbeing of their members. M.A. West, from Lancaster University Management School and the Work Foundation and a leading business consultant in UK, draws from a wealth of experience in team management and extensive research in this discussion of team culture.

West argues for "real teams" as a superior organisational model in the business world and voluntary organisations, even the military. His argument is framed in terms of two key factors: "team task functioning and team socio-emotional climate" (p. 2). No team can be effective unless both of these factors are operating well. On the other hand, being in a "real team" enhances these two factors. Moreover, he urges, "creating and sustaining effective teams requires persistent renewal and discovery of good practice" (p. 5).

West is points out that term 'realness' exists on a sliding scale and a large percentage of teams are in fact 'pseudo teams'. A "real team" is distinguished from pseudo-teams and work groups by factors such as "shared objectives, interdependence and review meetings" (p. 14) which West contends are the basic dimensions of team working.

The book has four parts. Part one deals with defining effectiveness and the importance of task and social "reflexivity", the processes of communication and group reflection. A key element here is the relational aspect: "feeling valued… is a prerequisite for…offering ideas for new and improved ways of ensuring team effectiveness" (p. 6). This not only has direct impact on effectiveness and wellbeing, but as illustrated through various case studies, can even lead to loss of life in, say, a military operation.

Part two looks at team development including the knowledge, skills and attitudes required, the importance and value of team diversity and "how teams and organisations assess whether they are doing things right versus whether they are doing the right things" (p. 69). West also shows the advantage of people-focused, as opposed to task-focused, leadership that emerges from the ground up and is facilitated from the top down. On the other hand, 'favouritism' in which "leaders typically behave in a way which communicates there is an 'in group' and an 'out group' building resentment and undermining team effectiveness" (p. 70), can be a fatal flaw.

Part three addresses the vision, purpose and thinking that is paramount for teamwork. Poor habits like "groupthink" and 'team defensive systems' that "are…designed to reduce pain and embarrassment and in doing so can inhibit team

functioning, [to] maintain the status quo" can prevent the team from dealing with the root cause of the problems they face (p. 140). West touches on 'the importance of two-way relationships' (or lack of) "in which *all* [Italics mine] members both give and receive support" (p. 174) and learn from each other.

Part four focuses on teams in organisations, and new to the third edition is the inclusion of chapters on 'Top Management' and 'Virtual Teams'. West contends "that there is huge unrealised potential of teams and that this is locked away by the failure of the organisational leaders to recognise that teams will work only to the extent that the organisation is structured around and values team working in practice" (p. 202).

In each chapter, West provides practical guidance in the form of clearly stated key learning points, chapter reviews, topic focuses, case studies and exercises which, in keeping with his philosophy, provoke pointed self-reflection and evaluation. Additionally each chapter ends with a further reading list and web resources. As a result of the thorough examination of each topic, West provides a tool for assessing causes of ineffectiveness and how to deal with them.

Due to the sheer volume and degree of nuanced points, many are often only noted and not fully explored. However, this enables the practitioner to apply West's techniques to any given team, irrespective of its cultural uniqueness. Additionally, the main thrust of each chapter is repeated excessively, although this is in part due to each topic being addressed from a multitude of perspectives. For example, within the topic of virtual team, decision-making is tackled from numerous standpoints including, but not limited to; the role of values such as trust and cohesion, forms of communication, the complexity of content, the impact of asynchronous and synchronous technologies and virtual conflict management.

Perhaps the book's greatest strength, especially for those in ministry, is its attention to the qualities in the people and communities that building teams in this fashion can produce. Within the framework of feedback, risk, mental health, effectiveness, adaptability, continued learning, social responsibility and stakeholder focus, West invariably paints a picture highly applicable to ministry. It is one of togetherness, transparency, transformation and trust within a community with shared purpose and value, which is self-governing, inclusive and people-centric. As explored in the chapter on 'Top Management Teams', West shows that common expectations placed by churches on Senior Pastors, the breath of the required skill set for the role, and their potential isolation could be ameliorated by team leadership.

West's extensive research of secular business practices, when applied to a faith community, facilitates a culture that is both biblical and culturally relevant today. It is an approach to teamwork that is congruent with, not counter-productive to, an increasing maturity within the Body often sought by those in ministry. Furthermore the organisational structure of a church, when formed around teams, acts as a discipling tool for all levels of leadership, reducing the need for programs and addressing systemic issues of control and hierarchy. This book is therefore an invaluable reference guide for anyone (especially ministry leaders) serious about building teams.

HARVEST BIBLE COLLEGE

2017 RESEARCH CONFERENCE August 24-25

The Holy Spirit and a Post-Mission World

Harvest Bible College is excited to announce our seventh annual research conference. This year we will explore the work of the Holy Spirit and ministry in a world that is frequently confused about, or resistant to, Christian mission.

Our keynote speaker is **Professor Amos Yong**, Director of the Centre for Missiological Research and Professor of Theology and Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, USA. Amos is a leading Pentecostal theologian, a prolific author and a speaker on a wide range of topics including Pentecostal theology, religions, science and faith, and disability theology.

Program Contents

Professor Yong will give two keynote addresses around the conference theme. Then a number of scholars (postgraduate students and lecturers from Harvest and other colleges and ministers) will present papers during both days of the conference. These papers will address topics linked to these areas:

- The Holy Spirit and ministry or mission
- Ministry and mission in a changing and even hostile world
- The changing nature of Pentecostalism
- Religious tensions in today's world

For the first time, we are holding a conference dinner on the Thursday night, August 24.

For more details & to register: https://www.harvest.edu.au/about/harvest-research-conference/

Registrations close on Friday, August 18.

Enquiries: contact Dr Jon Newton, Harvest Bible College, PO Box 9183, Scoresby, VIC 3179 or jnewton@harvest.edu.au