

ABSTRACT

ANGLICAN CHURCH PLANTING ESSENTIALS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: A STUDY IN ACTS 2, ANGLICANISM, AND BRITISH MISSIONARY HISTORY

by

Kris McDaniel

Church planting is hard work, especially when one is attempting to remain in dialogue with the early church while maintaining a connection to the larger story of the Christian Church today. In the Anglican Church in America there is a great deal of conversation surrounding the importance of church planting. And, while it is true that there is no shortage of material on the subject of church planting within the wider church world, many Anglicans do not know where to begin. Much of this material is heavily pragmatic, without much to offer in the way of honoring history, ecclesiology and contextualized mission. Consequently, many Christians within the American Anglican landscape are left to their own devices when it comes to launching new church works. This sense of isolation sometimes results in a hit or miss approach to church planting.

First, church plants within an Anglican context must be in constant dialogue with the value systems of the Primitive (early) Church, reflecting the essence of Christianity's earliest forebears. Second, Anglican plants must recover and embody a *mere Anglicanism*—an approach to Anglicanism that focuses on major issues while avoiding the traps inherent to an overly complex ecclesiology approach. Third, Anglican planters would do well to remember their Anglican heritage. The notable missionary movements of Great Britain contain lessons and insights that are uncanny in their relevance for church planters today.

However, it is not enough that these values be embraced in purely abstract terms. Consequently, it is imperative that sending churches assess and evaluate the extent to which they themselves express the very things that they desire to replicate. As the old saying goes, one cannot lead where one has not been willing to go. Without robust expression of these values on the part of the sending church, there will be a limitation with regard to the effectiveness of the coaching/mentoring process.

This truth led to a process of evaluation relative to certain critical values in an Anglican church planting congregation located in the Southeastern United States. The membership and leadership community within the church in question was surveyed in an effort to determine the extent to which the church was living into its call to plant the right kind of church.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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by

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CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter explores the rationale for the development of a strategy for urban planting initiatives at a church located in Atlanta's city-center. Space will be given for an exploration of the auto-biographical history of the church in question, including challenges and opportunities resulting from the experience of sustained numeric church growth.

Once a historical/autobiographical picture has been painted of the church in question, attention will be focused on specific aspects of the research process (stating the purpose, rationale, key terms and delimitations of the project). Following on from this, an examination of relevant literature will ensue whereby various types of relevant literature will be identified along with expert voices in each field. These voices will help ensure a better understanding relating to how planting initiatives might positively impact the local church. And finally, a research methodology will be expressed, which details how the research process will unfold.

Personal Introduction (1-3 pages)

In October of 2002 I became a church planter, gathering a group of friends to launch Trinity, a church in Atlanta's city center. Ten months prior to our October launch I was happily employed as an associate pastor (focusing on young adults) in an established church. Church planting was not on my radar screen until the church where I worked decided to purchase property further out in the suburbs of Atlanta. Upon receiving this news, I instinctively knew that I did not want to go further out, but that God was calling my family to put down roots in the city. We had lived in the city prior to my coming on staff as a pastor at the suburban church in question. While I loved my job, I felt a sense of loss as my life increasingly took on a suburban flavor. Consequently, the decision of our church to move further into a world that I knew was not

my spiritual homeland confirmed that it was time for us to plan and dream about a bold kingdom venture in Atlanta's city center. I began meeting with a select core group, consisting of friends who shared a similar heart for urban ministry, to plan and pray about a church plant in the heart of a city we loved dearly. After 9 months of planning (gestation!), we launched Trinity on October 2, 2002. Our reason for naming the church plant Trinity had much to do with our desire to establish a community who patterned its life after the beauty and interconnectedness demonstrated by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Aiming to emulate the Holy Trinity is a tall order, but hey, we were young and idealistic!

Upon planting in 2002 it became apparent that we had hit a vacuum of sorts in Atlanta's city center. There were very few churches in our target area that were actively seeking to engage the community in the way we felt called to engage it. Additionally, it became apparent that our ethos was attractive to a large number of people who were not currently settled into a church community. Consequently, our church plant rapidly grew to two hundred in weekly attendance, roughly three times the number of our launch team. This initial growth trajectory has continued throughout Trinity's fifteen-year journey. We now number roughly 1850 in weekly attendance, spread over two locations, with a third location set to launch in the autumn of 2018.

One noteworthy comment regarding the mindset of our core team is that none of us aspired to plant and grow a large church. We simply wanted to start a church that felt compelling to us! We had all participated at churches where our attendance felt like a *should or ought* rather than the church being a place that compelled us to *desire* to be part of what God was doing there. To this end, our core team shared a desire to establish an authentic, accessible environment while maintaining a sense of depth at Trinity. This simple, non-splashy approach did not prepare us for the fact that we would soon find ourselves at the center of a growing (and sometimes unwieldy)

church organization! And to cap things off, we had no idea how to organize and launch a church! At the time of our planting no one (including myself) had never read a book about church planting. Our desire to establish a new church was simply born out of an intuitive sense that Atlanta needed a church that would love her well and endeavor to stick around for the long haul.

Upon planting, we immediately began to be confronted with the realities of church growth. By our fourth birthday, our Sunday worship spanned five services throughout the day. It was an exciting time in the LORD. However, in the midst of all the excitement it occurred to me that we were wearing ourselves out! Moreover, our team began to fear that the church growth we were experiencing would serve to hollow us out. By this I mean that there was a concern among our leaders that Trinity would lose a sense of what mattered most—our core heartbeat to be an interconnected worshipping community—as we attempted to manage external, numeric church growth. These concerns catalyzed a season where we began to wrestle with deep questions regarding the growth of our church plant and how we ought to respond to what God was doing in our midst. We were not afraid of numeric growth, we simply wanted to grow in a God-honoring manner. We sensed that we were being called to resist a temptation common among growing churches—namely, a temptation to shift our emphasis from guiding values and attitudes to the management of externals.

Interestingly enough, things came into focus for me one evening as I was reading a *Doctor Seuss* book to one of my children. *The Lorax* tells the story of a greedy developer whose sole ambition is to grow his business at any cost, regardless of the collateral damage he inflicts upon the world around him. When asked how far he would push to be externally successful, he states, “I’m figuring on biggering, and biggering, and biggering!” (Seuss) As I read those words aloud to my son it occurred to me that I was coming to a crossroads in my ministry life. I felt

prompted by the LORD to pray for insight and wisdom to help us steward the growth we were experiencing (and have continued to experience to this day) without reducing our church work to simply “. . . *figgering on biggering*.” I sensed that God was inviting me to assume responsibility for how we were to steward the growth trajectory of our church, rather than simply just passively let things happen to us. This process was not born out of a fear of growth—it was more connected to a desire to steward our influence in such a way that if we grew, we would grow God’s way.

This epiphany, and that is how I see it in retrospect, grew to become an abiding burden from the LORD. Our team began inquiring about how God would have us steward the growth He had brought our way. Out of this season we began to sense that God was leading us to be more aggressive about generating planting initiatives out of Trinity.

At the time of this revelation, Trinity had already played a part in launching a number of new works from our church. But none of these initiatives were deeply strategic to our overall mission and purpose. We sensed that something needed to shift. We needed to give birth to a strategy that would help us plant the right kinds of churches. It is not enough to simply plant churches, we sensed a calling to plant certain kinds of churches—churches with a particular ethos. It is our conviction that every church is gifted with a certain vibe, or dynamic, and we, at Trinity, felt called to articulate—and learn how to replicate—Trinity’s preferred DNA.

Statement of the Problem

The momentum generated through church growth at Trinity Anglican, located in Atlanta’s city center, has created a set of challenges that must be addressed. The church leaders at Trinity are not content to simply lead an ever-growing monolithic church organization. Numeric church growth for its own sake cuts across a significant aspect of Trinity’s calling,

which is to extend the kingdom of God in and around Atlanta through the formation of new church works. Speaking of the essential nature of church planting author Stuart Murray notes, “Church planting has the capacity to recall the church to its essentially missionary character and calling, to engender creativity and fresh initiatives, and to help churches take risks and break out of a maintenance mentality” (Murray 354). The catalytic potential of church planting brings real benefit to sending churches as well as to the people reached by the plant itself, but planting initiatives must be engaged in the right way.

The call to engage in the formation of new church works must be done with intentionality. Early in Trinity’s story, the leadership planted various kinds of churches. Some of these new works flourished while others failed. The churches that were most unlike Trinity in terms of ethos, style and structure tended to drift in terms of connectivity and receptivity to ongoing coaching. Because of their lack of continued integration, these churches did not enjoy the same benefits afforded to the church plants that remained connected to the sending church. Consequently, the churches that did not embody the sending church’s ethos typically did not flourish as the others did. Because the leaders at the church in question believe that ongoing coaching and relationship are essential to long term success, they sought to discern how to plant churches that would be more likely to remain in relationship.

As a result of this dynamic, the leadership team at the church in question feels called to identify essential values that ought to be instilled in, and insisted upon, in new church works.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to identify value markers that would inform planting initiatives at a church located in Atlanta’s city center that express an Acts 2 ethos, a mere Anglicanism, and the goodness of various missionary movements in Britain’s history, the land

where Anglicanism was birthed. The extent to which these values are being currently embodied at the church in question was also measured.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

What values of the primitive church can be identified from an examination of Acts 2?

Research Question #2

What constitutes a “mere Anglicanism”?

Research Question #3

An exploration of notable missionary movements in Britain’s Christian past.

Research Question #4

To what extent does Trinity embody the essential values discovered through an exploration of Acts 2, mere Anglicanism, and missionary past of Britain?

Rationale for the Project (1-2 pages)

In order to steward the continued and sustained growth experienced at Trinity Anglican, the leaders have responded to a call to launch and sustain new church works that are consistent with the ethos of the sending church. Planting churches that resonate with the sending church will help to promote relationship and effectively sustain an ongoing coaching dynamic between mother and daughter congregations. Identifying the values that the sending church seeks to replicate will help bring clarity to the planting process in two ways. First, potential planters will know on the front end whether they resonate with the sending church’s DNA. This will enable them to make good decisions about whether they desire to enter into the planting process with this particular sending church. And second, essential agreement relating to certain church

planting values will empower sending churches to be bold in their approach to coaching and mentoring.

It is one thing to determine that certain values need to be replicated; it is quite another to identify what those values are. The sending church in question did not want to merely plant new works that vaguely mirrored its approach to church life and ministry. Consequently, the sending church endeavored to explore the various factors that have shaped its DNA. The goal for the sending church was to sift through the mountain of data that makes up the story of the church in an effort to distill it all down to a manageable list of values. It was hoped that these values, once identified, would attract the right kinds of leaders to participate in the sending church's church planting processes.

The process of identifying these essential values—values which the sending church desires to embody and replicate—centered on three areas of investigation and reflection. First, church leaders desire for their worship to exist in dialogue with the practices of the ancient church. This commitment prompted an extensive study of Acts 2 with an eye toward identifying the various aspects of the ethos of the primitive church found within this pivotal chapter in the New Testament.

Second, the church in question worships in the Anglican tradition. Consequently, a survey of Anglican essentials was engaged in an effort to identify components of a *mere Anglicanism*. The rationale for exploring a *mere Anglicanism* is born of the fact that the church in question endeavors to express its Anglican identity in such a way that does not present unhelpful barriers to those coming from outside that particular worshipping tradition. A lean Anglican ethos allows for the essential goodness of the tradition to be expressed, while leaving space for others to participate without distraction. Because Trinity intends to plant churches that

also worship within the Anglican tradition, identifying how Anglicanism will be expressed within those new works is an important task.

Third, because mission (and missionary work) lies at the heart of church planting, and because Trinity desires to engage mission in a manner that is consistent with her Anglican roots, a survey of the various missionary movements in Britain's history was engaged.

Consequently, a three-pronged investigation was engaged in an effort to identify core values (or priorities) that would serve as a guiding tool in helping us initiate a particular kind of church plant. Finally, an extensive evaluation of these key values was undertaken in an effort to determine areas of relative strength and weakness relating to aforementioned values in the sending church.

Definition of Key Terms

Planting Initiatives

New church works were launched from the sending church that serves as the basis of this project. The church in question has a two-pronged approach to launching new church works:

1. A fully autonomous new church work that is planted into a neighborhood/community
2. Churches established according to the parish model—one church but multiple locations with location operating under the leadership of the wider church with shared resources and governing bodies

Atlanta

Atlanta is a city with a 2017 metro population of nearly six million located in the Southeastern United States.

Anglicanism

Anglicanism is a Protestant denomination stemming from the English Reformation. The church in question for the purposes of this project belongs to the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). ACNA is an expression of worldwide Anglicanism in the US. It has more conservative leanings than the Episcopal Church of America.

Mere Anglicanism

This is an essentialist approach to Anglicanism that honors and celebrates distinctive aspects of the tradition while giving space for diverse expression in other, less central, areas of concern.

Acts 2 Ethos

These are the distinct characteristics derived from an extensive survey of Acts 2. These distinct characteristics give us a glimpse into the life and values of the early Church.

Trinity Anglican

This is a church (1,600 members in weekly attendance) located in the city center of Atlanta, GA that worships within the Anglican tradition. Trinity is a three streams church:

1. Liturgical—historical, participatory (work of the people), rooted in tradition
2. Evangelical—high view of mission and missions, high view of Scripture, emphasis placed on the need for conversion
3. Charismatic—belief in the person and work of the Holy Spirit, belief in the gifts of the Spirit, belief that the work of the Spirit in the life of a believer, is for today

Delimitations

The purpose of this project was to identify value markers that would inform planting initiatives at a church located in Atlanta's city center that embody components of a mere

Anglicanism, an Acts 2 ethos, while remaining sensitive to past missionary movements in England, where Anglicanism was birthed.

The research delimitations of this study are limited to the member community at Trinity Anglican, located in Atlanta, GA. Trinity Anglican averages 1,600 on Sunday and has roughly 850 members. The adult members of the church are best suited to evaluate Trinity's health relative to the values highlighted during the course of study due to their level of involvement and commitment to the church. Trinity manages its member list regularly, adding new members while purging those who no longer worship with us or have requested, for whatever reason, that they be removed from the list. Consequently, the member list represents a reliable and responsive community of individuals who would be likely to participate in online surveys.

Additionally, the members are best suited to evaluate to what extent the values highlighted in the research are being embodied by the sending church. This embodiment on the part of the sending church will determine to what extent these values are demonstrated in future church planting initiatives. As the saying goes, "One cannot lead where he has not been."

Review of Relevant Literature

In order to adequately express which values should be embraced and demonstrated in future church launches, a wide array of literature had to be engaged. This process involved investigation in three primary areas: commentaries and scholarly articles that explore the dynamics at play in the second chapter of Acts, various books and resources exploring Anglicanism, and histories and volumes that chronicle missionary movements in the British Isles (the seed bed from which the Anglican Church sprung). In the following paragraphs we shall highlight notable authors and works that helped bring clarity to each area of investigation.

The Bible, specifically an extensive survey of Acts 2, was the first investigative stop in the process of determining what values would shape the ethos of future church works that would be birthed from the sending church in question. In addition to engagement with the text itself, a host of commentaries and peer reviewed articles were consulted. The works referenced in the exploration of Acts 2 constitute a wide array of voices, hailing from diverse worshipping traditions.

The next step in the investigative process concerned an exploration of Anglicanism. The intention in this portion of the project was to survey Anglicanism with an eye toward distilling the tradition into the simplest terms possible. The search for what constitutes a *mere Anglicanism* was done through extensive engagement with various resources which focus on Anglican history, theology, and praxis. Books and peer reviewed articles were incorporated into the research process.

The final point of exploration in the process centered on a survey of notable missionary movements in British history. Since the Anglican Church hails from the British Isles, it seemed appropriate to explore what might be learned from the treasure chest of the past work of God among British people. To accomplish this, a wide array of books and articles were consulted. These works, some old and some written quite recently, provided context and color to several snapshots of the British Church. The goal here was not to engage in an exhaustive survey of the Church in Britain, but rather to emphasize a number of moments in that long story which might provide insights that would be useful and relevant to emerging Anglican church works today.

Research Methodology

The research/data collection portion of this project, was comprised of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. First, concerning quantitative research, the researcher disseminated

an online survey to members who belong to the sending church. Additionally, the researcher convened two focus group conversations in an effort to gather qualitative data. One focus group was populated by lay leaders at the church in question, while the other focus group conversation was comprised of staff members who work at the church.

The purpose of the survey and the focus group conversations was focused on determining to what extent Trinity (the mother church) embodies the seven values that emerged during the course of the literature review portion of the project, values which it hopes to instill in future church plants. The rationale for measuring the seven aforementioned values at the sending church is connected to the fact that for a sending church to consistently replicate a set of articulated values in future church plants, that church must first embody those values. And before the church can mandate with confidence that emerging church plants embody certain values, the church in question must determine whether this is the case at home.

Type of Research

A pre-intervention approach was in order to evaluate the extent to which certain values are currently embodied by the church in question, before those values are instilled in future church planting efforts.

Participants

The adult members at Trinity were invited to participate in the online survey. This population was chosen because they have consciously opted into the life of church. Additionally, the leadership at Trinity manages the member email distribution list, keeping it up to date. Consequently, the member list provides the church with a group of individuals who are positioned to offer concrete feedback relating to the extent to which certain values are being embodied within the church.

Additionally, two different focus groups were convened to offer further insight relating to Trinity's embodiment of the values identified during the literature review portion of the project:

1. One group was comprised of a random selection of staff members. There are twenty-eight paid staff persons at Trinity, with responsibilities ranging from pastoral work to janitorial services. The goal in convening this group was to receive feedback from paid persons within the church.
2. The second group was comprised of people serving in lay leadership positions within the church. The goal in convening this group was to glean insight into perceptions of those who are close to the mission of the church, but who are not on the payroll.

Instrumentation

A Twenty-one-question online survey, which consists of questions relating to the seven values highlighted in the literature review portion of the research project, was administered to lay people at Trinity (Appendix A).

In addition to the online survey, two focus group conversations were conducted. One focus group was comprised of members of the church staff, while the other focus group was made up of lay leaders at the church in question. Open ended questions relating to the seven values highlighted above were posed to members of the focus groups. The groups were facilitated by the researcher. The group conversations were recorded and transcribed with the names of the members being protected. Consequently, this enabled respondents to share openly and honestly about how the church is doing in the areas in question (Appendix B).

Data Collection

The first step in the data collection process was the dissemination of the online survey. An online survey (Appendix A) was sent via survey monkey to the 850 members of the church

on January 8, 2018. Each member received the survey via the email address they have provided to the church in question. The survey consisted of twenty-one questions relating to the ministry of the church. These questions focused on the seven values that were identified during the literature review portion of the project. There were three questions associated with each of the seven values (thus, twenty-one total questions). Members had the freedom to refrain from engaging in the survey should they desire to do so. Respondents were provided a two-week window of time in which to respond to the survey. At the conclusion of this two-week timeframe, the researcher enlisted the services of the church's administrative pastor to run reports on the data collected via responses to the online survey. At that time, reports were generated based on the data provided by respondents.

During this same timeframe (January 1-10, 2018), a number of individuals were invited to participate in two different focus group conversations. The first focus group (consisting of staff members) occurred on January 10, 2018. The second focus group (consisting of lay leaders) occurred on January 21, 2018.

The first focus group was comprised of five to seven staff members. The method for inviting staff members was to randomly select seven names from a randomizing application to ensure that a truly random assortment of individuals on the church staff were chosen. Each individual was given ample opportunity to opt out of the focus group. If fewer than five individuals affirmed their desire to participate, then one staff member was chosen (same method as with original invitees) until the desired number (minimum of five) is reached. The focus group conversation was held at Trinity Anglican and facilitated by the researcher. Members of the focus group met in an office located at the church building. A recording device was placed in the center of the circle so that responses can be recorded. The researcher invited participants to

respond to the questions devised for the focus group (document with focus group questions attached). The focus group time lasted one hour. At the conclusion of the focus group the researcher listened to the recordings and transcribed the conversation with an eye toward identifying key themes/words that emerged from the dialogue.

The second focus group was comprised of five to seven church lay leaders. The method for inviting church members was to randomly select seven names from our leadership community database. The researcher worked with our administrative pastor to devise a method where names were randomly selected from our digital member database. The logic for selection was as follows: if each person selected indicated that he/she would like to participate, then the focus group roster would be set. However, if fewer than five individuals affirmed their desire to participate, then one church member was chosen (same method as with original invitees) until the desired number (minimum of 5) was reached. The focus group conversation was held at Trinity Anglican and facilitated by the researcher. Participants met in an office located at the church building. A recording device was placed in the center of the circle so that responses were able to be recorded. The researcher invited participants to respond to the questions devised for the focus group conversation (document with focus group questions attached). The focus group time was set to last no longer than one hour. At the conclusion of the focus group the researcher listened to the recordings and transcribed the conversation that unfolded, with an eye toward identifying key themes/words that emerge from the dialogue.

The focus groups were able to allow for space in the conversation, as the researcher made sure to leave room for respondents to offer honest and unfiltered (unprepared) feedback on questions posed. Sensing states the following concerning a benefit of pre-intervention focus group interviews, “There are no predetermined responses, and the interviewer is free to probe

and explore for more depth. An interview guide ensures good use of time, makes the process more systematic and comprehensive, and keeps the interviewer focused on the purpose of the interview” (Sensing 2,704).

At the conclusion of the data collection process (January 21, 2018), the researcher worked to organize the data collected from the online survey and two focus groups.

Data Analysis

After the survey and focus group conversations were completed, the researcher compiled the data so as to analyze the results. Concerning the online survey of members, data was collected and compiled into relevant categories in an effort to identify areas of strength and weakness of the church relative to the seven values explored by the instrument. This quantitative data yielded insights into membership perceptions relative to the seven values highlighted in the survey. This data was analyzed and compiled into charts and graphs, as well as reported on in narrative form.

In an effort to ascertain the extent to which the church in question expresses each of the aforementioned values, an online survey and two focus group conversations were engaged. The online survey consisted of twenty-one questions, with three questions per value posed, so as to determine membership perceptions of how the church was engaging each value in question by approaching the value from different angles. The data yield was then tallied, with each cluster of three questions being lumped together to get at a total score for each value. The online survey had four possible responses to each of the twenty-one questions. Each answer was assigned a numeric value: *Strongly agree* was allotted two points, *somewhat agree* was allotted one point, *somewhat disagree* was assigned a value of negative one point, while *strongly disagree* was assigned a numeric value of negative two points. Taken together, the answers to the questions in

the online survey provided the researcher with data, enabling him to assign an overall number for each value. The values were then compared to one another, thus providing insight into relative strength of the seven values within the church in question. This data was supplemented through focus group conversations, which are a form of qualitative research. Taken together, the data yielded insights which were useful in measuring the extent to which the church in question is living into the very things it hopes to instill in future church plants.

Relating to the focus group conversations, transcripts were made from the interview recording. These transcripts were leveraged with the researcher looking for common themes/phrases/words. These qualitative conversations yielded insights into the perceptions of various leaders within the church community relative to the seven values explored in the focus groups.

Generalizability

This project is focused on evaluating the extent to which a particular congregation embodies a number of values that are specific to its cultural ethos and denominational context. Consequently, the generalizability of this project is largely limited to the congregation in question.

There are, however, aspects of this project which may correspond to other church contexts. Namely, church planting churches within an Anglican context will likely find aspects of the literature review and research methodology to be relevant for their own contexts.

The project is significant in that the congregation in question is committed to the generation of new church plants, and desires to steward this calling by engaging planting efforts with purpose and intention. Additionally, the church in question sought to measure its own health relative to certain core commitments/values that were identified in the literature review portion

of the project. Furthermore, this identification of certain key values was essential in that these value markers express critical ingredients that must be present in prospective church plants.

Project Overview

The remainder of this project unfolds in the following manner. Chapter two comprises the literature review portion of the project, with particular attention given to an exploration of the following three areas; an exploration of the ethos of the early church as witnessed in Acts 2, a survey of Anglican essentials, and finally, an exploration of the various movements in British missionary history. Chapter three involves an exploration of the research methodology engaged in the project, with particular attention given to how data was collected. Chapter four contains the qualitative and quantitative data collected during the research portion of the project. Finally, Chapter 5 contains a summary of major findings, unexpected results, as well as concluding thoughts offered by the researcher.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The current chapter will be structured around an exploration and analysis of relevant literature surrounding the research questions that have given shape to the boundaries of the project itself:

1. The first section consists of an in-depth exploration of the second chapter of Acts, reflecting on the text as a snapshot offering insight into the life and values of the Primitive Church.
2. Secondly, the review reflects on what constitutes a *Mere Anglicanism*, determining in the broadest manner possible what treasures exist within the Anglican Church.
3. Finally, the third section examines missionary movements in Britain's past with an eye toward gleaning mission insights that will encourage the recovery of an Acts 2 ethos in modern church planting efforts.

Acts 2 as a Snapshot of the Early Church

In the following pages explore the second chapter of Acts in an effort to understand the rhythms, values and beliefs of the Primitive Church. Consensus holds that the Book of Acts was penned by Luke and disseminated among members of the Christian community during the mid-80s AD (Witherington 51-63). During the time that elapsed between the resurrection of Jesus and the circulation of Acts a great deal had occurred in the lives of these first Christians.

Consequently, Luke is not providing a contemporary (late 70s to mid-80s) picture of the Christian community. Rather, he is inviting Christians living in the mid-80s AD to look back and see how things were at the very beginning: "Luke composed Acts about 50 years after Jesus' death and

resurrection, long after the diaspora of the Jerusalem Christian community and the 70 AD Roman destruction of the city. Luke's not giving us a contemporary picture of that community; he's writing for a mid-80s church" (Karban 28-29).

At the time of Act's circulation, the Christian community in Jerusalem had suffered massive persecution and had been dispersed throughout the region. They had witnessed the sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. Undoubtedly, the earliest opportunities for Christians to read the text of Acts 2 would have occurred during a time of extraordinary uncertainty and upheaval. In support of this notion Roger Karban notes:

Most Lucan scholars believe the evangelist included summaries of an ideal life in the early Jerusalem community because the Christians for whom he wrote in the mid-80s—like Paul's mid-50s Corinthian readers—were having problems recognizing the body of Christ among them. His description of the church "in the beginning" was actually the church he was trying to help create "at the end." (Karbon 28-29)

St. Luke tells the story of the earliest Christians in an effort to encourage a recovery of what matters most. The LORD, through Luke, is calling the Church back to its roots. To a beleaguered congregation—one that had encountered much difficulty since the events in Acts 2 took place—the second chapter of Acts comes as a reminder of where they were not too many years before. Luke is reminding the early Christians of their roots in the midst of a season of uncertainty because in some ways paradise had indeed been lost to them. And so, with his pen St. Luke reminds the Christian community of their beginning so that they can envision what a forward trajectory might look like.

This is why Acts 2 stands as such a significant (and often scrutinized) part of the larger story of the establishment and advancement of the Church. Simply put, no other episode in the Book of Acts has received more attention than what is written in the second chapter (Wall 53).

And Luke takes great pains, here at the beginning of his telling of the catalytic growth of the first Christian Church, to tell us that without the events of Acts 2 “there would be no story to tell” (Dunn 22). Simply put, the forty-seven verses constitute the remarkable foundation stone on which the rest of Acts is constructed.

In the following pages we shall explore a number of themes that emerge from a thorough reading and analysis of Acts 2. Taken together, these themes offer us a portrait of the ethos of the Primitive Church:

1. The primitive Church was **Holy Spirit empowered**.
2. The Primitive church **championed Evangelism, mission and conversion**.
3. The Primitive Church placed **emphasis on inspired preaching/teaching**.
4. The Primitive Church perceived that what God was doing in Acts 2 **stood in continuity with OT**.
5. The Primitive Church expressed a **high Christology**.
6. The Primitive Church engaged the **Sacraments of baptism and communion**.
7. The Primitive Church were a people who **valued devotion and Spiritual formation**.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Waited for the Spirit

In Acts 1:4 the resurrected Jesus commands the disciples to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit: “While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. ““This, he said, is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.””

These friends of Christ, having been forced to absorb so much since Jesus' resurrection, do as they are told. They wait. At this point in the narrative, the initiative rests with God. The friends of Jesus adopt a posture of waiting in obedience to the direct command of Jesus.

We are told that the Holy Spirit comes to this gathered assembly of Jesus' friends on the Day of Pentecost, a feast of the Jews relating to covenant renewal, where the Jews brought first fruits of the wheat harvest as an offering of thanksgiving to the LORD (Keener 326-27). The nature of celebration surrounding Pentecost, therefore, was connected to celebrating God's faithfulness in keeping covenant with His people. And yet, during the Feast of Pentecost, these friends in the upper room do not bring a first fruit of the wheat harvest, they bring a different kind of gift. They simply offer themselves as they wait. "The Spirit arrives in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost as the fulfillment of prophecy and as the answer to the community's expectant prayers; it is a clear sign of God's faithfulness" (Wall 57).

Pentecost, for those assembled in the upper room, is a demonstration of God's faithfulness in completing what Jesus set in motion when He told his friends to wait until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. And yet, as Wall suggests, their waiting was not an exercise in passivity. Their waiting was full of "expectant prayer."

Wind and Fire

Of the Spirit's arrival we are told the following in Acts 2:1-4:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

In considering the terms *wind* and *fire* as they relate to the Spirit's arrival, it is important to note that the scripture does not teach that the Spirit *is* wind and fire, but that the Spirit's coming engages the human senses, specifically the senses of hearing and seeing (Wall 54).

Scholar F.F. Bruce helpfully suggests that the Spirit's wind in Acts 2:2 is reminiscent of the breath of God seen in Ezekiel 37. That prophetic story speaks of God's breath entering into an army that had been reduced to dry bones, bringing life and vitality into that which was dead and lifeless. Bruce also notes similarities between the tongues of fire and the burning bush encountered by Moses in Exodus 3:2-5. He notes, "As in the burning bush, fire denotes the divine presence" (Bruce 50). These two phenomena come together to paint a provocative picture of the Spirit's arrival on the disciples. And this arrival makes a distinct impression upon them! These beleaguered friends of Jesus are dramatically impacted as the Spirit presses upon them power for the moment at hand (Jervell 45). They are, like the bones of Ezekiel 37, brought back to life.

Filled with the Spirit

As the Spirit arrives, we are told that everyone in the upper room is "filled with the Holy Spirit." This notion of being filled seems to be linked to Jesus' words in Acts 1 where He tells the disciples that they will be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). Jesus' employment of the term "baptize" as He speaks to His friends of the Spirit's engagement with them is significant. The term *baptism* speaks of an immersive experience (Arrington 5). Furthermore, the notion of being "baptized" has parallels in the wider ancient world that may help offer insight into what Jesus had in mind when He told His friends that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. In 200 BC a Greek poet and physician called Nicander published a recipe for making pickles. He indicated that for a vegetable to be pickled it must first be dipped (*bapto* in Greek)

into boiling water and then baptized (*baptizo* in Greek) into vinegar. Both verbs speak to the immersion of vegetables in liquid, but only the final action—the immersion in vinegar—constitutes a permanent change (Howe 62). Consequently, Jesus’ employment of the term *baptizo* in Acts 1:5 rather than the more benign *bapto* would indicate that Jesus had in mind a more visceral encounter, an encounter that would bring about profound changes in the lives of the disciples.

Another question to ponder relating to the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit is connected to, exactly who is to be filled. Peter answers this question in his Pentecost sermon as he quotes from the prophet Joel in Acts 2:17-18: “In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit and they shall prophesy.”

The text Peter references from the prophet Joel indicates that God’s Holy Spirit is for everyone. Men and women will receive the Spirit. Both young and old people alike will have the Spirit poured out on them. Finally, Joel states that slaves will receive the gift of the Spirit. It would seem that no one is left out of the mix: “This Spirit belongs to a people of God as their shared, permanent property. Luke makes this point clearer by repetition: ‘they were all together’ in a ‘entire house where they (all) were sitting’ when the Spirit came to rest on ‘each of them’ so that ‘all of them were filled’” (Wall 57).

Further reinforcing the inclusive nature of the gift of the Spirit, Ben Witherington states: “In general, the point of the Joel passage is that not just some but all of God’s people from the least to the greatest will have the Spirit and be equipped for witness or service with various gifts in the eschatological age ushered in by Jesus” (Witherington 140).

This all-inclusive pouring out of the Spirit opens up the door for the Christian community to engage the process of mission and evangelism. But this work will require an ongoing experience of God's help and power. For the disciples to continue on in the work they have been called to engage, they must be continually strengthened and equipped for ministry. Acts 13:52 speaks of the disciples experiencing the "ongoing" or "continual" filling of the Holy Spirit.

Toward the end of Acts 2, we are told that a sense of awe came upon everyone (verse 43). And by *everyone* Luke may very well mean both those inside and outside the band of disciples. St. Luke reminds us that a significant aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit in these early days had to do with miraculous intervention in the lives of humans. These miracles, fueled by the power of the Spirit, lend authenticity to the work of God in the lives of Jesus' friends (Witherington 161). This powerful work of the Spirit, and the validation that comes with it, catalyzes everything else that happens in the Book of Acts. Ben Witherington states: "Without the coming of the Spirit there would be no prophecy, no preaching, no mission, no conversions, and no worldwide Christian movement" (Witherington 130).

Everything flows from the coming of the Spirit. Without the energy and life that comes from the Spirit's coming, there is no muscle for the work that is to come. Ben Witherington further reinforces this point as he states: "It (the Pentecost event) is the beginning of the creation of God's eschatological people, properly speaking" (Witherington 132).

As these members of the primitive Church receive the gift of the Spirit, they are enabled to step into the mission field of the world. N.T. Wright brilliantly states:

The Holy Spirit; and the task of the church. The two march together hand in hand. We can't talk about them apart. . . . Equally, the task of the church cannot be attempted without the Spirit. I have sometimes heard Christian people talk as though, having done

what he's done in Jesus, God now wants us to do our part by getting on with things under our own steam. But that is a tragic misunderstanding, and leads either to arrogance or to burnout, or both. Without God's Spirit, there is nothing we can do that will count for God's kingdom. Without God's Spirit, the church simply can't be the church.

(Wright online 1)

Championed Evangelism, Mission and Conversion

The members of the early Church were compelled by the Holy Spirit to engage in mission. Almost immediately, the Christian mission is thrust into the streets. Quite literally, the Pentecost event creates a stir. Acts 2:6 tells us that as the disciples began speaking in other languages they draw the attention of a crowd of dispersed Jews and foreign converts to Judaism visiting Jerusalem. F.F. Bruce notes that the disciples' sudden command of the known languages of the world constitutes a "reversal of Babel" (Bruce 59). And, in the spirit of a Babel reversal, a crowd gathers (rather than disperses) to investigate this supernatural phenomenon. They gather because each one hears an exposition of God's deeds of power in their native tongue. John Davies notes the following concerning the significance of the Spirit enabling the heart language of these foreigners to be heard from the upper room: "To be there in Jerusalem at all, they must have had some knowledge of Greek or Latin or Hebrew/Aramaic. But these were not the languages of their heart and home. When they heard the apostles, they could exclaim with excitement, "This is for US, it's our programme; we're IN" (Davies 427).

The ability on the part of the disciples to speak in the mother tongue of so many who live in foreign countries propels the mission of the Church forward. The LORD of heaven goes beyond the call of duty, bypassing learned secondary language abilities—ones that had undoubtedly been acquired later in life so as to get by when visiting Jerusalem—and has the

disciples communicate God's deeds in the childhood language of each. This is a radically inclusive action on the part of the Spirit. Davies further highlights this important fact as he states: "The first evidence of the gift of the Spirit is the inclusion of all the world in communication, in a very particular way; not by forcing all into one frame but by recognizing and celebrating diversity" (Davies 427).

Here we see the outward movement of the Holy Spirit working to overcome barriers—even language barriers—in order to bear witness to the goodness of God among diverse peoples. There is an echo of the gospel going "to the ends of the world" in this initial event (Witherington 13).

The notion of a reversal of Babel provides helpful insight into how God seems to be doing a new thing at Pentecost. Prior to this fateful day, Jews would often perceive the occurrence of signs and wonders as an indication that God was acting to bring judgment on Israel's enemies (events of the Exodus from Egypt), but here we witness a new trajectory where signs of God's power are indicators of the Spirit's preparing the church for missionary work. In short, the powerful acts of the Spirit are for the healing of outsiders rather than their demise (Johnson 50).

The Acts 2 Church's commitment to evangelism and conversion is also seen in Peter's words in Acts 2:38-39: "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

These words constitute a clear call for outsiders to enter into a process of Christian initiation and conversion. These short sentences provide the fullest summary of what is required for one to become a follower of Jesus (Witherington 153).

It must be noted that the advancement of mission does not stop with those who are present on the day of Pentecost. The evangelistic thrust of Peter's sermon in Acts 2 contains within it an agenda that is quite ambitious. Peter states the following toward the end of his sermon: "For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone on whom the LORD our God calls to him" (Acts 2:39).

These words carry with them an invitation to a wide range of individuals, including future Gentile converts to the Christian faith. Here, at the very beginning of the Christian movement, God creates a placeholder for generations of conversions and for the transmission of the faith from one generation to the next. There is a continual advancement of mission in sight from the very beginning of the story of the Church (Witherington 156).

Any reflection on the value of evangelism and conversion would be remiss if it ignored the large number of people who join the ranks of Christians at the conclusion of Peter's sermon. Acts 2:41 states: "So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added." This initial influx of conversions would prove to be a hint of things to come, as the second chapter of Acts concludes with: "And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). The continual addition of new converts speaks to the emphasis placed upon conversion among these members of the early Church. And these conversions create a dynamic whereby many who make up the Christian community are new believers.

Emphasized Inspired Preaching and Tongues of Fire

A very significant aspect of the Acts 2 Church's evangelism program centered on the importance of inspired preaching. At the very outset of the Pentecost Event we see tongues of fire rest upon those present in the upper room (Acts 2:3). This phenomenal encounter with the

Spirit offers a significant clue that the Holy Spirit intended to impact human speech: “This connection of Spirit and proclamation (tongues of fire being analogous of speech acts which would follow) does not yet concern the content of the message but rather the powerful and persuasive manner by which the gospel is boldly preached” (see also 2:29, 4:13, 9:27-28, 14:3) (Wall 54).

Furthermore, J. Levison argued in his work *The Spirit in First Century Judaism* that fire is symbolic of prophetic inspiration, and that on the Day of Pentecost the fire of the Spirit rests upon the disciples, thus marking them with powerful and persuasive ability to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. These friends of Jesus, upon having tongues of fire rest up on them, are able to think, reason and speak in new and profound ways (Levison 114-21). This is further reinforced by the commentators in the *New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary for Acts* who state that both thought processes and communication ability are heightened at the coming of the Holy Spirit (Wall 54).

Soon after these tongues of fire come to rest upon the disciples, Peter stands up to deliver a sermon. And a stirring sermon it is! “But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say’” (Acts 2:14).

Peter’s standing and raising his voice is the typical stance of an orator in antiquity (Haenchen 178). Peter is, quite literally, doing what preachers do! Furthermore, it would appear that Peter had been designated to offer this sermon on behalf of the eleven (Witherington 139).

Connected Emotionally

Early on, it becomes evident that Peter’s style of preaching is meant to foster a connection with his hearers. Ben Witherington states: “Concerns of ethos or character are of

major import if a speech is to persuade an audience, and Luke makes clear in subtle ways that Peter has established the necessary rapport to convince many” (Witherington 138).

It is not enough for him to simply get the facts straight. Peter must make a connection with his audience. To do this, he employs a method of communication where he moves from formal speech at the beginning of his sermon to more intimate speech as he draws to a climactic close, inviting a response of repentance and baptism. Peter begins his sermon with formal salutations like “Men of Judea” (verse 14), and again “Men of Israel” (verse 22), but he concludes with a much more intimate, less formal “fellow Israelites” in verse 29. The crowds of people present, who have been cut to the heart by Peter’s sermon, respond with very intimate language in verse 37. They state: “Brothers, what should we do?” The use of the term “brothers” is an indication that the crowd has been won over by Peter’s sermon (Zehnle 21). This is a clear indication that Peter was able to establish an emotional connection with his hearers, thus moving them toward a response of faith.

Logical Progression in Preaching

Peter crafts his Pentecost sermon with an eye toward logical flow. His sermon is organized in a systematical manner, thus offering evidence that Peter is employing a clear plan designed to prove his points (Puosi 267). This use of logic opens a pathway for Peter’s hearers to respond to the words he is sharing: “Peter is not careless with evidence but carefully crafts it into a persuasive speech that deals with the immediate crisis of Israel’s skepticism. For this reason, he is able to lead some into faith. One implication of the rhetorical of his speech is that faith is the *logical* response to Peter’s persuasive speech” (Wall 63).

Peter's sermon allows some of his hearers to embrace faith. Thus, his sermon stands in line with John Wesley when he referred to preaching as "an awakening experience" (Robinson 50).

Order and Intentionality in Preaching

Peter's sermon follows a pattern of preaching among the Apostles. F. F. Bruce highlights four components of early Apostolic preaching. They are:

1. Declaration that the age of fulfillment had arrived
2. The offering of an account of the ministry, death and triumph of Jesus through resurrection
3. A citation of Old Testament scriptural texts that are fulfilled by the event at hand and validate Jesus as the one to whom they point
4. A clear call to repentance (Bruce 63)

Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost contains all four elements noted above. Consequently, it would appear that Peter is standing within an emerging tradition as he offers his Pentecost sermon. Patterns such as these that emerge from the teaching tradition of the Apostles offer significant insight into the intentionality with which these men of God engaged the craft of preaching and teaching.

The Act of Bearing Witness

Peter, standing in the emerging apostolic tradition, bears witness to the resurrection in verse 24: "But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power."

Note that Peter takes no pains to prove the resurrection. He simply bears witness to it. For Peter, and for those who preached in the Apostolic Age, bearing witness was enough. The Christ

Event had occurred and they were forever changed as a result of it. Relating to the notion of bearing witness Howard Marshall states: “Here is the key fact (the resurrection), stressed time and time again by the first preachers; they did not need to prove that it had happened, they simply proclaimed it and bore witness to it” (Marshall 75; emphasis mine).

Perceived Continuity of the Holy Spirit’s Actions

As those in the upper room are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in other languages, there are those among the crowd who believe that they are drunk at nine o’clock in the morning. They jeer at the friends of Jesus, saying, “They are filled with new wine” (verse 13). Peter responds to this cynical reading of the situation by preaching a sermon whereby he prominently references three passages from the Old Testament as he connects what has happened—both at Pentecost and in the person and work of Jesus—with the long-standing story of the Israelites. In short, Peter and the eleven did not perceive their newborn Church as a novel, and disconnected, innovation. The Apostles affirm that the “new thing” God is doing in Jesus and the Holy Spirit stands in dialogue with what God has done in the Old Testament. Moreover, the new work stands as a fulfilling of what God has said in the Old Testament (Witherington 140). Consequently, Peter interprets the new thing that God is doing within an Old Testament framework, with an eye toward expounding on the various ways in which God is fulfilling His promises through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The goal in doing so is to establish continuity with the Jewish story. For Peter and the eleven, the work of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit must be understood as standing in continuity with the Jewish scriptures.

In the following paragraphs we shall explore the three passages cited by Peter with an eye toward how the early Church did, in fact, interpret Old Testament texts in light of Pentecost and the advent of Jesus Christ.

Joel 2:28-32a

Ben Witherington notes that Peter slightly modifies the Joel text for his purposes (Witherington 142). The original context of Joel's prophecy involves a call to repentance in the anticipation of God's heart to forgive (Joel 2:12-14), and this same theme is explored by Peter later on (verse 38) in his Pentecost sermon. Thus, Peter is drawing on the Spirit of Joel's original prophetic word, bringing it into the present moment (Bruce 61).

Another way Peter works to bring Joel's original word into the present moment is seen in the way he adapts some of the language of the original prophecy so as to heighten the force of Joel's prophecy for the present. Rather than Joel's rendering "after these things," Peter employs the use of "in the last days" to make clear that he believes the Pentecost event was, in fact, a fulfilling of Joel 2 and consequently, a Last-Days event. Additionally, Peter adds the term "my" to Joel's use of *servants* in verse 18. There is a sense of heightened connection here, for servant no longer simply connotes the status of those of low estate—these are now servants of God. Peter, through subtle shifts in his interpretation of Joel, does not lose the Spirit of Joel while managing to add weight to the prophet's articulation of the heart of God for humanity (Witherington 142). Additionally, the dreams and visions referenced by Peter in his sermon, specifically noted in verse 17, speak to Luke's belief that the coming of the Spirit is synonymous with the dawning of the age to come. Dreams and visions are part and parcel to the prophetic ministry of seeing into the heart of God and perceiving what He is saying to His people. "The effect of the Spirit's outpouring is the gift of prophecy, exercises in visions and dreams and by word of mouth" (Bruce 61).

As Peter progresses through Joel's prophecy, he references "portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below" (verse 19). It is interesting to note how many of the phenomena

referenced by Peter as he quotes Joel are also included in Luke's telling of the events that would have spanned the seven weeks since Christ's death on the cross. There are strong links between the imagery found in Joel 2:20 and Luke 23:44 where the sun is darkened on the day Jesus dies (Talbert 198). Further on, F. F. Bruce states: "More particularly, little more than seven weeks earlier the people of Jerusalem had indeed seen the darkening of the sun, during the early afternoon of Good Friday; and later in that same afternoon the paschal moon may well have risen blood-red in the sky in consequence of that preternatural gloom" (Bruce 62).

These connections, interpreted in light of recent events, are taken as a sign of God's fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Psalm 16:8-11

In verses 25-31 Peter references a Psalm of David. In doing so Peter affirms that David himself was a type of the coming Messiah, and therefore would necessarily factor into God's divine plan of redemption (Wall 66). Acts 2:31 reflects Peter's messianic interpretation of Psalm 16:10. Peter proves that this poem, penned by David, could not apply to David himself. He does this by referencing the fact that his contemporary hearers were aware of the location of David's tomb. Consequently, Psalm 16 had to have another reference point (Munck 18). And it would appear that Peter is suggesting that David himself was speaking prophetically in Psalm 16. It is important to note that Jews maintained that David himself was not simply a warrior king—he was also known to possess prophetic gifting, prophesying on a number of occasions (Fitzmyer 257). Consequently, Peter takes an interpretive step as he states the following in Acts 2:31: "Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.'"

Psalm 110:1

Peter continues his sermon by referencing King David once again. This time, Peter references Psalm 110 where he reminds his hearers that David, Israel's greatest Patriarch, did not ascend into heaven after his death. By contrasting the death of David, Israel's greatest king, with that of Jesus, Peter is making a forceful argument. Psalm 110:1 states: "The LORD says to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.'" These words, taken literally, could imply that scripture teaches that David did, in fact, ascend into heaven upon his death. However, most modern scholars maintain that these words were meant to describe the honor and dignity of David's office as king while on earth (Marshall 79). Peter, taking David's Psalm, takes a bold interpretive step. Jesus has, quite literally, taken His place at the right hand of God. Metaphors have been put aside. Peter's assertion that Jesus has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven circles back to his earlier statement in verse 21—namely, that Jesus is able to save those who call on Him. David cannot save. Jesus alone is able to save (Wall, 66). Consequently, Jesus is the genuine article to which David points. The Messianic imagery surrounding King David's reign has reached its fulfillment in Christ Jesus.

Continued Temple Worship

Finally, we see in verse 46 that the disciples continue to spend "much time together in the temple." These friends of Christ have no intention of abandoning their Jewish roots. For these friends of Christ to meet in the temple strongly suggests that they continued on in the traditions of Jewish worship. Daily worship in the Temple involved the offering of a burnt sacrifice, combined with offering incense in the morning and afternoon (Marshall 85). These first Christians saw no need to retreat from public Jewish worshipping life. To the contrary, their continued worship in the Temple speaks to their commitment to possess "a public face" in their worshipping practice (Witherington 163). This "public face" reminds readers that the disciples

did not retreat to the relative safety of the upper room but continued on with public and accessible worshipping practices. To this end we see that not only did the disciples pray in the Temple, they were also known to teach and proclaim Jesus there. Acts 5:42 states: “And every day in the temple and at home (or from house to house) they did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah.”

By continuing their devotion in the midst of the Temple, we have a hint that these friends of Jesus have not yet quite worked out the implications of Jesus’ death as a “once and for all” sacrifice for sin. The fact that part of the early church’s experience in the Temple would have involved animal sacrifice is, no doubt, an indication that certain aspects of their Christology were still in process (Wall 163). There would come a time when the Christian community would see this practice as incompatible with their understanding of Jesus’ finished work at the cross, but that awareness had not yet dawned on them. Consequently, we see an emerging Christology among these early Christian leaders (Marshall 85).

Expressed a High Christology

As we saw at the conclusion of the last section, the earliest Christians had to wrestle with just what to do with the risen Jesus Christ. The Christ Event had left an indelible mark upon their hearts and lives, but there was still work to do in articulating just what they believed about Jesus. Jewish participation in Temple worship (Acts 2:46), which included animal sacrifice, is an indication of the fact that the early Church’s Christology is still being shaped (see above on temple worship). However, it would be inappropriate to suggest that the Church of Acts 2 had not already done significant work in giving shape to their understanding of Jesus. Peter’s sermon in Acts 2 gives us a concise look at how these men and women understood their friend and savior. Much discussion has been made as to whether the Christology noted here in Acts 2 is still

“in process” or if we see a “mature Christology” (Puosi 269). Either way, Acts 2 provides a helpful beginning point for reflection upon the early Church’s view of Jesus as Peter (and Luke with his pen) offers insight into just how these earliest Christians choose to articulate Christ’s redeeming work.

The section of Peter’s Pentecost sermon that specifically deals with Christology falls within verses 22-36. There is an intentional order and flow to his sermon, reminding us of the emphasis placed upon preaching and speech giving (see section above on importance of preaching in the Primitive Church). Here Peter makes a number of statements about Jesus that deserve attention and reflection. They are:

1. Jesus is a man attested by God with deeds of power (verse 22).
2. Jesus was crucified by sinful men (verse 23).
3. God has raised Him up from the dead (verse 24, 32).
4. Jesus is spoken of in the Old Testament (verse 25-31, 34-35).
5. This exalted Jesus is both Lord and Messiah (verse 36).

The flow and progression of Peter’s Christological statements is clearly seen. And while the Christian community would continue to wrestle with how to articulate their Christology, this snapshot seen in Peter’s sermon provides keen insight into how these friends of Christ had already begun to perceive the preeminence of Jesus Christ in their theology.

Jesus Was a Man Attested by God with Deeds of Power

At the outset of his reflection on Jesus, Peter references Jesus’ life. “You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know . . .” (Acts 2:22).

Peter calls him “Jesus of Nazareth,” thus locating the savior in history by reminding everyone of his hometown. Jesus is a man with a place, a history. He is no disconnected free agent teacher. Nazareth, the town where Jesus would spend most of His time, is the same rough necked place that prompted Nathaniel to inquire, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). Peter then emphasizes the import and impact of Jesus’ life by speaking of his ministry deeds. This emphasis on Jesus’ ministry is an important aspect of Peter’s Christology. Scholar Johannes Munck notes that in the gospels over one half of what is said about Jesus involves these “deeds of power, wonders and signs” noted here in Acts 2. The Christology of the Acts 2 Church was shaped, in part, by reflecting upon the life of Jesus (Munck 18). The early Christian emphasis on the powerful deeds performed Jesus is essential in understanding their Christology. These friends of Jesus did not articulate a version of faith where the cross was all that mattered:

[T]he significance of Jesus is not reduced to the significance of his death. More telling than the references to all of the biography of Jesus in Acts is the fact that Luke starts his account of early Christianity, its witness and spread, with a detailed account of the life of Jesus, which is far more encompassing and richer than his death. **All of his life** is of saving significance. (Stenschke 35; emphasis mine)

Sinful Men Crucified Jesus

Peter states in verse 23: “[T]his man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.” Here Peter publicly calls out Jewish involvement in the death of Jesus (Marshall 75). His motive for doing so is born out of a desire to convert a largely Jewish audience to faith in Jesus Christ. However, because Jewish/Roman cooperation is featured in the crucifixion narrative, it is worthy

of consideration to determine whether there is historical precedent for the Jews handing a prisoner over to the Romans for execution. The fact is that the Jewish magistrates handed over to the Romans another man named Jesus (ironically) in AD 62 when they found that they could not handle him properly (Vermes viii-ix).

Peter states explicitly that the Jews had Jesus handed over to them “according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.” Thus, the crucifixion is no accident. It cannot be described in terms of a miscarriage of justice. No, Jesus’ death on the cross is part of the plan of God—a plan meant to heal the world. Despite the fact that Jesus’ execution was born out of hatred of him on the part of the Jews, God is still in control (Marshall 75). We do not find in Peter’s discourse a fully developed theology of the cross like that which we receive from Paul in Hebrews. Rather, according to N.T. Wright, we have:

What it does is simply to say: a/God intended Jesus to die as the climax of his rescue operation; b/ the intentions and actions that sent Jesus to his death were desperately wicked. This doesn’t for a moment justify the wickedness. Rather, it declares that God, knowing how powerful that wickedness was, had long planned to nullify its power by taking its full force *upon himself, in the person of his Messiah, the man in whom God himself would be embodied.* (Wright 39; italics his)

Rather, Peter highlights that which is essentially true about the death of Christ, namely, that God is in control, even in the midst of the desperate circumstances surrounding Jesus’ journey to the cross.

God Raised Jesus from the Dead

In verse 24 Peter declares: “But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.”

It is impossible, according to the Apostle, for Jesus to remain within the grip of death. Whatever wicked motives were at play in the crucifixion cannot hold sway over Jesus. Death cannot hold Him down. Scholar Georg Bertram states: “The abyss can no more hold the Redeemer than a pregnant woman can hold the child in her body. Under severe labor pains the womb of the underworld must release the Redeemer” (Kittel 673).

Peter’s indication that the resurrection is just as much a part of the plan of God as was the crucifixion confirms that God is in complete control. All that has happened falls within “the determinate counsel of God” (Bruce 64).

Jesus Was Spoken of in the Old Testament

As we have explored earlier, Peter references Psalm 16 and Psalm 110, interpreting those Psalms in light of Jesus. Peter states that despite David’s assertion that the LORD will not allow his body to see decay (verse 27), the fact remains that David’s body is in his Jerusalem tomb, located near the Pool of Siloam (Witherington 146). Consequently, David must have been pointing to Jesus’ resurrection when he speaks of a body free of decay. Furthermore, Peter cites Psalm 110 where he once again claims that David is prophetically referencing the risen Christ being seated at the right hand of the Father. Surely David has not ascended into heaven! Once again, Peter’s contemporaries would have, no doubt, been able to visit his grave. The early Christian Church would have read Psalm 110 in light of God the Father speaking to the Messiah, saying, “Sit at my right hand . . .” (Marshall 79-80)

Jesus is Both LORD and Messiah

Peter concludes his sermon with the resounding statement: “Therefore, let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified” (verse 36).

Jesus, the crucified one, is now both Lord and Messiah. Catholic scholar Eric Puosi suggests it is possible that Peter's Christology is advancing even in this moment:

It would seem that the resurrection is here considered as the seal to Jesus' right to be called "Lord" and "Messiah." This primitive Christology is the sign of the progressive theological understanding of God's Revelation. Maybe, the early Christians did not become immediately aware of the divinity of Jesus. It is not immediately after the resurrection that the Church became able fully to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Rather, this happened only in communion with the resurrected Lord through the outpouring of the Spirit. (Puosi 271)

The disciples' "communion" with the resurrected Lord, and subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit (as Jesus promised) has made it clear that Jesus is the "Lord" referenced by Joel where it is said, "Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (cited by Peter in Acts 2:21). Therefore, at the end of the sermon Peter directly refers to Jesus as "both Lord and Messiah," indicating that one must call upon Jesus for salvation from sin and death (Wall 66).

Christological Conclusion

Peter's sermon offers insight into the Christology of the Primitive Church. And it must be said that these first members of the Christian movement possess a fairly robust view of Jesus—one that stands in continuity with later traditional theology (Puosi 273).

Engaged the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion

In the closing verses of Acts 2 the sacraments of Baptism and the LORD's Supper come into view. Baptism is noted emphatically and directly in verses 38 and 41, where the LORD's Supper is alluded to more indirectly in verses 42 and 46.

Baptism

At the conclusion of Peter's sermon, the crowd is cut to the heart. They inquire as to what they should do in response to all that has been said. Peter responds emphatically to their query. In Acts 2:38 he states: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Scholar Howard Marshall indicates that baptism, even among these first members of Christ's Church, was perceived to be a critical expression of fidelity to the risen Christ (Marshall 81). It (water baptism) is the visible, external sign that reflects an internal work of faith (Bruce 70). In a very real way baptism stands as a tangible expression, a kind of visible manifestation, of that which God has wrought in the invisible heart of a Christian believer. This linking speaks to the power of baptism as it relates to Christian witness. In support of this, J. Dunn in his *Acts of the Apostles* indicated that in the book of Acts baptism "assumes Spirit filling and a readiness on the part of the converted to engage in Christian witness" (Dunn 32-33). To be baptized is to be publicly aligned with Jesus. This action alone constitutes a form of witness, thus creating *a witnessing people* as more and more converts are baptized.

In his sermon, Peter links together repentance, baptism, forgiveness and the reception of the Holy Spirit. This is a departure from the baptisms of John the Baptizer. Noted New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states: "Peter's words to the crowd differ considerably from those of John (the Baptizer), and here we begin to see what would be distinctive about Christian baptism. Not the connection between repentance and baptism but the additional connection with the name of Jesus and the reception of the Holy Spirit sets Christian baptism apart" (Witherington 154).

Peter's words constitute a witness to both continuity (the linking of baptism with repentance in a manner that is identical to the ministry of John) and discontinuity (the inclusion

of the gift of the Holy Spirit at baptism as a departure from the baptism of John). Relating to the continuing link between baptism and repentance, F. F. Bruce notes the following: “Repentance was plainly called for; a complete change of heart, a spiritual about-face, was essential if those who had failed to recognize their God-sent deliverer in Jesus were nevertheless to enjoy the deliverance which he had come to procure for them and was now offering them from his place of exaltation” (Bruce 69).

Here, repentance is an essential aspect of the conversion process. Following the chronology of Peter’s statement in verse 38 one must repent first, then be baptized. After this, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given.

Scholar G. Lampe, exploring the import of the gift of the Spirit at baptism in his *The Seal of the Spirit*, indicates that the bestowing of the Spirit as a new feature of baptism represents more than repentance. It signals a “realization and fulfillment of Israel’s hope” (Lampe 33). Thus, the linking of the gift of the Spirit with baptism found in Acts 2 demonstrates a development in the early Church’s understanding of Baptism relative to that which was experienced during the ministry of John the Baptizer.

The LORD’s Supper

There is less direct evidence for the LORD’s Supper (or Eucharist meal) found in Acts 2 relative to Baptism. Verse 42 speaks of the disciples engaging in the “the breaking of bread,” while verse 46 indicates that the disciples “broke bread” in their homes. While it could be argued that these references simply indicate that the disciples were sharing meals together (Munck 22), there is evidence to suggest that these references are, in fact, connected to the early Church’s rehearsing of the LORD’s Supper. Ben Witherington indicates that the term “breaking of bread” is likely a reference to the LORD’s Supper being shared during mealtime in the earliest days of

Christian worship (Witherington 160). F.F. Bruce confirms this assertion that the LORD's Supper is in view in verse 42. Furthermore, Rudolf Otto in his *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* carries the argument a step further. He indicates that while the inclusion of Eucharistic celebration seems to have been part of a common meal, the fact that Luke indicates that the bread is "broken" on two occasions (verses 42 and 46) is an indication that the Christian Church understood there to be a connection between this aspect of their meal and the broken body of Christ the savior (Otto 315).

Valued Devotion and Spiritual Formation

There is strong evidence in Acts 2 that the Primitive Church placed a high value upon devotion and a process of spiritual formation. In response to the crowd's question about what they ought to do in response to the sermon, Peter offers a clear pathway forward for those who would desire to join the ranks of Christians. Ben Witherington, reflecting upon Peter's words, offers a helpful summary of the early Church's strategy regarding Christian initiation:

"[R]epentance, faith, baptism, the name of Jesus, and reception of the Spirit were all important elements when the matter of 'what must we do' or how people enter the community of Christ comes up" (Witherington 154).

These elements are essential to Christian initiation into the Body of Christ. And what follows at the conclusion of the second chapter of Acts provides readers a glimpse of what life was like as part of the body of Christian believers in those earliest days. Acts 2:42 states: "They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." New Testament scholar N.T. Wright, reflecting upon Acts 2:42, states: "Luke is careful to point out the landmarks. In fact, Acts 2:42 is often regarded as laying down 'the four marks of the church.' The apostle's teaching; the common life of those who believed; the breaking of

bread; and the prayers. These four go together. You can't separate them, or leave one out, without damage to the whole thing" (Wright 44).

These "four marks of the church," or aspects of spiritual formation in the life of the first Christians, warrant further consideration.

The Apostle's Teaching

The believing community was firm in their commitment to the teachings of the Apostles. The authoritative writings of these first friends of Christ became the basis of the New Testament (Bruce 73). The early church understood the importance of submission to these truths handed down to them by the apostles. Speaking of the work of the church in engaging the Apostle's teaching: "The church gathered these documents for her specific purpose: to aid in preserving her peculiar message, to aid in maintaining across time, from the apostles to the End, the self-identity of her message that the God of Israel has raised his servant Jesus from the dead" (Davis 725).

The Common Life of Those Who Believed

The NRSV refers to this common life as "fellowship." The common life shared by the members of the Primitive Church was holistic (Marshall 83). Their life together involved sharing on a number of levels. They shared meals with one another, but the notion of fellowship described in verse 42 goes beyond this, reaching to the level of true spiritual friendships (Wall 72). Scholar Craig Keener, in an article on the community shared by the Christians in Luke/Acts states: "In Luke-Acts, true conversion involves repentance and commitment to a new Lord. Such commitment to the new Lord *also involves commitment to one's new siblings in the new community*" (Keener 72 italics mine).

These Christians discover that they are members in a new family—and that they must get to know their new siblings!

The Breaking of Bread

We have already noted that Peter’s choice of “breaking of bread” is likely an allusion to the broken body of Christ, and therefore this meal sharing carries with it Eucharistic elements (Otto 315). However, aside from the Eucharistic aspects of their meal sharing, it is evident that these early Christians simply spent a lot of time together, enjoying one another’s company. And a big part of this shared life involved sharing a common meal in one another’s homes. These meals were a kind of voluntary potluck, if you will! (Bruce 74) It is worth noting that meal sharing among other groups in antiquity was not uncommon, but typically occurred on a far less frequent basis. Many groups of Greek origin met once per month for food and fellowship. Seen in this light, the daily Christian meal sharing (verse 46) stands out as truly remarkable (Keener 330).

The Prayers

In addition to their commitment to the apostle’s teaching, a shared life, and the breaking of bread, the early Christians were committed to prayer. F.F. Bruce highlights the fact that these early Christians would have gathered at their own appointed times for prayer in addition to joining in on the Jewish prayer rites at the temple (Bruce 73).

The Fruit of Devotion: Harmony, Need, Meeting and Joy

As we turn our attention to the final section of Acts 2 it becomes clear that the life of the body of believers constitutes a flourishing community. Verses 44 and 45 indicate a strong bond of “togetherness” among the members of the community. The term to describe this sense of friendship is *koinonia*—and it is only used once (verse 44) in the book of Acts (Wall 71).

This sense of friendship leads members of the Church to value one another more than they value their possessions. Reflecting upon this sense of togetherness, Father Edward Steiner states: “Luke is giving us a picture of Paradise. It is not the Eden of Genesis. It is something altogether new and better! Unity with God is a sign of the Kingdom; thus, the Church is intended to a visible sign of the Kingdom present on earth. It is not the Kingdom in its fullness because there is still sin, but it is the visible sign of the Kingdom already present” (Steiner 37).

Consequently, these Christians are empowered to place their affection, and sense of responsibility, for one another above temporal things. This is an indication of the blossoming of the fruit of the Spirit among the members of the family of God (Hoyt 74).

This sense of togetherness prompted the Christian community to aggressively take care of those among their number who are struggling to make ends meet. Ben Witherington notes that the Christians of Acts 2 refused to claim an exclusive right to their own property. Instead, when needs arose within their Church family, they were willing to sell their assets in order to take care of their own (Witherington 162). N.T. Wright expounds on the truly radical nature of this mutual sharing as he reminds readers that Jews perceived their property as part of their “ancestral heritage” and part of “God’s promised inheritance.” So, their willingness to sell their property to take care of one another’s needs speaks to an emerging understanding of God’s kingdom (Wright 46). Furthermore, this instinct toward mutual support reveals the early Christian’s understanding of *a social dynamic* in God’s kingdom. Namely, the Church was beginning to perceive that the ultimate reality of God’s kingdom necessarily must find some tangible manifestation in our human relating (North 225-31).

The shared life of the Primitive Church results in a true and abiding sense of joy at the conclusion of Acts 2. We are told that these believers possessed “glad and generous hearts,” as

they spent time “praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.” (verses 46-47) Here, at the conclusion of the chapter we see that this gladness and goodwill are markers of what has amounted to a life changing experience. Richard McCarron summarizes: “From an experience of the good news, people have a life-changing experience. This is ritualized in a water rite and then lived in community shaped by a constellation of distinctive practices that punctuate each day and show an interplay of the personal and the communal, the domestic and the public, marked by an ethos of joy and care for those in need” (McCarron journal).

Conclusion on Acts 2

As we conclude our survey of Acts 2, it is important to circle back to the beginning. Acts was first circulated sometime between the late 70s to mid-80s AD, during a time of distress for many Christians (Karban, article). The Flavian Dynasty (Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian) stood at the helm of the Roman Empire during the probable timeframe for Luke’s authorship of Acts. According to Tacitus, a senator and historian of Rome, the Flavians were known to execute those who celebrated and eulogized the victims of Roman Emperors, specifically victims who died by Nero’s hand or their own (Mellor 10). And it is certain that Peter and Paul were both executed by the Romans, most likely at the hands of Nero himself (Witherington 63). Consequently, Acts comes to the church during a time of turbulence. And St. Luke, as he tells the story of the Church’s glorious beginning, appears to be calling this beloved community to recover (and hold fast to) that essential character that will see them through dark days. N. T. Wright states: “There is an attractiveness, an energy about a life in which we stop clinging on to everything we can get and start sharing it, giving it away, celebrating God’s generosity by being generous ourselves. And that attractiveness is one of the things that draws other people in” (Wright “Acts” 47).

A “Mere Anglicanism”

There are diverse ways of expressing the values and beliefs of the Anglican Church. Because the Anglican worshipping tradition claims roots that extend back to the primitive church, and has been expressed in many different contexts, Anglicans certainly do not fit in a “one size fits all” mold. The purpose of this section is to reflect upon essential components of an Anglican ethos in an effort to express a “mere Anglicanism.” In the following pages we shall endeavor to explore a number of these essential components that emerge when viewing the Anglican Church through as broad a lens as possible. Our goal here is not to be exhaustive, but rather to distill a number of treasures from the wide and varied history of the worshipping tradition of the Church of England, with an eye toward discerning how Anglicans might learn to “travel light” as they seek to be the Church in the twenty-first century and beyond. The following statements are key:

1. Anglicans possess a broad view of the Church.
2. Anglicans celebrate two sacraments.
3. Anglicans embrace the importance of episcopal governance as well as the significance of the laity.
4. Anglicans are a people of devotion.
5. Anglicans honor the importance of mission and evangelism.

A Broad View of the Church

A Relational Hope for the Wider Church

Anglicans possess, at their best, a gracious and broad view of the wider Body of Christ. The Anglican Church seeks to maintain a place among the faithful without boasting of a unique and superior position among the world’s denominations:

Anglicans believe that they belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ. But they do not believe that they are the only ones who so belong. . . . First, the canons of [The Church of England] insist that it “belongs to the true and apostolic Church of Christ.” Second, the Preface to the Declaration of Assent states that the Church of England “is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.” . . . **Thus, Anglican churches see themselves not as *the* church, but *a* church within the one Church.”**

(*Avis Christian Church* 140-41; emphasis mine)

This desire on the part of Anglicans to find their place within a larger story, the story God has been telling through the collective story of the body of Christ, positions Anglicans to pursue conciliar relationships with Christians of all stripes. Acknowledging the space they occupy within the wider body of Christians, S. Sykes states: “Anglicans have used, therefore, the terms ‘part’, ‘portion’ or branch to describe both their own and other churches” (Sykes 165-66).

This attitude has, in the best of times, fostered a desire for Anglicans to care about and seek to serve the Church by bring healing to the broken places within the wider body of Christ.

This reconciling attitude has positioned Anglicans to live at the forefront of ecumenical movements within the larger body of Christ. Bishop John Howe in his *Our Anglican Heritage*, lists several reasons why this is so:

First, our origins are humble, if not humiliating . . . **Second**, our commitment to the “three-legged stool” of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason offers a well-tempered way to progress in discussions which too often become bogged down in differing understandings of how to move forward—or even which way forward is . . . **Third**, our understanding of *adiaphora* (things indifferent) means we know that there are actually very few hills worth dying, or killing on! . . . **Fourth**, Anglicans hold within their embrace a broad spectrum

of theology and liturgical practice . . . **Fifth**, the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral clearly states what we hold as foundational beliefs and practices for ecumenical progress . . .

Sixth, the vast majority of Anglicans belong to the two-thirds world church at a time when the two-thirds world is increasingly important. (Howe 147-48; emphasis mine)

This ability of Anglicans to maintain helpful relations with those outside our communion has been in play for quite some time. Historian Mark Noll notes that it was the practice of George Whitefield, a noted American Anglican clergyman in the 1700s, to pursue cooperative relationships with any Protestant Christian who was willing to collaborate in the work God had called him to accomplish (Noll 51). Whitefield's willingness to engage those outside his immediate sphere expresses a deeply held Anglican value, which is connected to "casting a wide net and spreading the good news through whatever means" is required (Howe 148). Anglicanism has historically embraced a broader view of God's LORDSHIP over all creation and society, thus prompting Anglicans to stand for unity rather than fragmentation. To this end, John Howe states:

It has always tried, though often unsuccessfully, to be a broad church that embraces all people who love Jesus or who earnestly seek him and who are willing to walk in the light as God reveals himself to them. The ideal was and is to be a bridge church, a *via media*, a Communion that is in communion with the LORD Jesus, with all who claim him and their Lord, and with the world he loves and died to save. (Howe 150)

A Relational Hope within the Anglican Communion

Pursuing relational harmony within the Anglican family has, at times, proved more difficult than ecumenical pursuits outside the Communion. Protestantism emerged out of a series of fateful decisions made by Churches in various European nations to break fellowship with

Rome. Logic would follow that once Christians made the initial decision to break fellowship with one another it becomes easier to do it again. Consequently, it would appear that this tendency toward division found within both individual denominations as well as in the wider body of Christ today may, in fact, be an unintended consequence of the Protestant Reformation (Howe 150).

This tendency toward division does not mean that Anglicans must inevitably capitulate to pressure to divide and break fellowship with one another. It does, however, serve as a sober reminder of the complexities involved as Christians seek to honor the spirit of Saint Paul's words in Romans 12:18, "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

Striving for this biblical ideal, the American Episcopal Church, during the Civil War, held seats left open by southern bishops who refused to meet with their northern counterparts during the bitter years of that conflict. And, at the conclusion of the war, northern bishops welcomed the southern bishops back into fellowship and leadership, thus demonstrating a desire to walk together despite facing obvious challenges and complexities (Howe 191). This desire for reconciliation was informed by the same value which prompts Anglicans to advocate for gracious collaboration among the wider body of Christ.

This spirit of collaboration and charity does, however, have its limits. And yet, it is the duty of Anglican leaders to push unity to its limits rather than abandon fellowship prematurely. Here the words of Bishop JC Ryle stand as a challenge to a movement committed to conciliar relating: "Men ought to tolerate and put up with much, before they think of separating and dividing and leaving one Church for another. It is a step (that) nothing but the deliberate teaching of false doctrine can really justify. It is a step that should never be taken without much consideration, much waiting, and much prayer" (J. C. Ryle, *Knots Untied*, 187).

It would seem that one of the significant questions facing Anglicans today is connected to just what constitutes a “deliberate teaching of false doctrine.” There are, undoubtedly, some within the communion who are more willing to persist in relating despite significant theological differences. It would appear that the relational, collaborative ethos of Anglicanism should, at the very least, challenge Anglicans to engage in a very intentional deliberative process before they break fellowship with one another.

The simple fact that Anglicans are said to occupy a VIA MEDIA, or middle way, suggests a commitment to walking in communion with those of varying perspectives. The fact that the Anglican Church is both Catholic and reformed suggests that Anglicans have a hardwired sensibility toward embracing and articulating a wide (and historic) view of the Church. The Bidding Prayer prefacing Queen Elizabeth’s Injunctions of 1559 called Anglicans to remember their place among the wider story of the Body of Christ. The prayer is as follows: “Ye shall pray for Christ’s Holy Catholic Church, that is for the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world, and especially for the Church of England and Ireland” (Gee 440).

To pray for the whole Church, including those of varying stripes and allegiances, is something for which Anglicans will always be known.

Finally, the collaborative hope found within Anglicanism stems from the fact that the worshipping tradition of the Anglican Church is linked to the ethos of the Primitive Church found in the Book of Acts. J. Moorman in his book *A History of the Church in England* explains that “the Via Media they sought was not a compromise, a ‘lowest common denominator’; it was a real attempt to recover the simplicity and purity of primitive Christianity” (Moorman 234).

In support of the notion put forth by Moorman, F.A. Clarke records the dying words of Thomas Ken, an Anglican Churchman who stood in the tradition of the Caroline Divines. Ken states: “I die in the tradition laid down by the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith, professed by the whole Church before the disunion of East and West. More particularly I die in the Communion of the Church of England as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan innovations, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross” (Clarke 223).

If it is true that the spirit of Anglicanism hails from the time before “the disunion of East and West,” then it follows logically that Anglicans are constantly invited to occupy a space that is, at times, filled with tension, as those with diverse viewpoints are drawn into dialogue with “the middle way.”

Anglicans Celebrate Two Sacraments

Sacrament Defined

Before any exploration can take place regarding the Anglican view of sacrament, one must possess a workable definition of the term in question. Broadly defined, a sacrament is an outward manifestation (or sign) of an inward grace. The word *sacrament* itself is roughly defined as “a pledge of future performance,” indicating that “God would perform some future action on behalf of the person receiving the sacrament” (Howe 58). Specifically, in the Anglican tradition a sacrament had to meet the following criteria in order to be called such. In the Anglican tradition, the [sacramental action] needed to have certain characteristics: 1) be clearly commanded by Christ; 2) involve some tangible material element (bread, wine, or water); 3) be binding on all Christians at all times and in all places (Howe 59):

These criteria help bring understanding to why Anglicans maintain that both baptism and Eucharist are sacraments of the Church. However, it must be said that a sacrament is not

simply a sign, or symbol. For in the Articles of Religion (39 Articles) the following is said of the sacraments of baptism and communion, Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be *certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace*, and God's good will towards us, by the which *he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.* (79 BCP 872; italics mine)

Early Anglicans spoke of the sacraments as possessing power from God to transform a believer's life while at the same time existing as a sign, or profession of faith. Consequently, it came to be understood that sacraments were empowering signs whereby a Christian acts in faith (observing sacraments as a matter of ritual and discipline) and, as a result of this obedience, becomes a recipient of God's transforming help as He "doth work invisibly in us" (Sykes 77).

Since the beginning of the English Reformation, Anglicans have held fast only to the sacraments of Baptism and the LORD's Supper (also referred to as Eucharist and communion). This contrasted sharply with the Roman Catholic assertion that there were seven sacraments. Article 25 in The Articles of Religion indicates that the Roman Catholic Church has erred in conferring sacramental status to other activities:

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God. (1979 BCP 872)

The Anglican affirmation of two sacraments over and against seven is demonstrative of a desire on the part of the English Reformers to articulate their theology in as simple a way as was possible. These sacraments, along with the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, constitute an “irreducible minimum of what makes the Church the Church” (Avis 164). The rationale for why Anglicans maintain two sacraments is reinforced in *The Study of Anglicanism*:

The living out of the connections between worship and life takes place for Christians in the context of the Church. . . . Through **baptism**, the members of the Church have been incorporated into God’s saving work in Christ. . . . The baptized community, through participation in the **paschal mystery**, is nurtured for maturity in the life of faith and is enabled to go forth to proclaim that saving mystery to the world. Through faith believers are given access to an intimate union with God . . . That union is created through **baptism** and in turn signified and deepened through the shared **Eucharistic meal**. (Sykes 77; emphasis mine)

Both Baptism and the Lord’s Supper provide a tangible, physical connection between worship and life. This connection point occurs within the context of the church. Furthermore, Anglicans affirm that sacraments are necessarily rooted in real life. They are, in a fundamental sense, incarnational. “The whole idea behind the sacraments for Anglicans is that God acts through persons, events and things. The physical material world is not alien to God; it is his creation” (Sykes 72).

Beyond simply connecting to our physical world, sacraments also correspond to our physical nature: “Through their physicality the sacraments correspond to our physical nature, so that as the expression of love involves not just an interior attitude but the whole person, so is it

also with faith: faith requires an en-fleshing, a response in which the whole physical being is involved” (Sykes 78).

Baptism

Now we shall turn our attention to a brief reflection of each sacrament, beginning with Baptism. The earliest references to baptism in Jewish literature connect baptism to ceremonial cleansing. This notion of purification was connected to a time when God would act on behalf of his people, setting them free from bondage. Thus, baptism became associated with God’s purifying work in the heart of His people. This is evidenced in Ezekiel 36:23-26 where the prophet states:

I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord God, when through you I will display my holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and will bring you into your own land. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.* (NRSV; emphasis mine)

From this text we are able to see how Jews understood that God desired to “sprinkle clean water” on them as a sign of purification and deliverance. This sprinkling is not simply meant to cleanse, it also has a softening effect on the heart of a person. Charles Price, in his *Liturgy for Living*, reflects upon the Jewish imagination whereby they are able to enter into the story of the Exodus, thus participating in the larger story of faith. He states that “every Jew had to participate in the Jewish mystery—the exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the wandering the

wilderness, the crossing of the Jordan. Participation in the story makes one a Jew” (Price 99; emphasis mine).

Also, when a Gentile convert would join Judaism he/she would go through a water baptism rite, thus participating in the story of Israel as part of their initiation in joining the faith. Later on, followers of Jesus adopted this mindset of participation and applied it to Christian baptism:

Baptism signifies our union by faith with the mission and work of Jesus. Our baptism involves dying to a self-centered understanding of reality and being reborn to a life of self-giving grounded in Christ. Baptism . . . is a commitment to a life-style radically different from that of the world . . . Baptism is the radical sign of a new framework for human life, a life sustained by the power of the Spirit which is Christ’s. (Price 102-03)

The early Christians saw baptism as an act of obedience and an occasion for the empowering work of the Spirit to join with the believer as she works out her life with God. Baptism, therefore, constitutes a doorway (or initiation) to a new kind of life (Easton 45).

The Anglican Church took ancient rites of baptism and simplified them. The earliest versions of the Prayer Book (1549) contain these rites (Price 107-109). Additionally, it is worth noting that the many aspects of a Christian’s spiritual life (prayer for the sick, marriage, communion, etc. . . .) “presume the essential act of baptism” (Price 103). Consequently, it was understood that baptism, as a foundational act, sets the stage for one’s spiritual life. Because baptism is seen as being utterly foundational, it follows logic that it would be made available to persons of all ages (Holeton 227-57).

Another way in which the English reformers adapted their engagement with baptism was connected to moving baptismal services from small-family structured environments to times

when the entire congregation would gather together. Consequently, Easter became a favored time for baptisms to occur (Sykes 295-302). The result of these changes was that the wider community was exposed to the beauty and mystery of Christian baptism, thus elevating the prominence of the sacrament in the eyes of the community.

Eucharist

Shortly before the English Reformation, the Eucharist meal was rarely celebrated with members of the laity, with non-clerical individuals only having access to the communion table once or twice a year. However, with the advent of the Book of Common Prayer the celebration of communion was extended to the laity on a weekly basis (Jacobs 17). This represented a massive shift in the culture of English worship.

The nature of the Eucharist itself involves an intimate sharing/participation in the life of Christ through vital participation with his body and blood (Sykes 312). However, Anglicans are comfortable with there being a level of mystery involved in just how this vital participation occurs. It is enough for Anglicans to suggest that there is a real, but undefined, presence of Jesus experienced at communion (Howe 88).

The order of the LORD's Supper corresponds to Jesus' words in the gospels. 1) Taking, 2) Blessing, 3) Breaking and 4) Giving. Members of the Primitive Church in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 also employ this pattern of taking, blessing, breaking and giving.

Anglicans join with many other Christian believers in their affirmation that at the Eucharist, Christians attest to the complete nature of Jesus' death on the cross. This sacrifice on the part of Christ is not added to, nor is it repeated in the reception of communion. The physical elements of bread and wine remain unchanged, but as they are consecrated they become an empowered sign. Additionally, the act of receiving the Eucharistic meal is itself a sacrifice of

praise and thanksgiving, leading the believer to worship. Finally, communion connects Christians to the “mystical body of Christ” (Howe 89).

Eucharist Meal Is Contextual

The Anglican Communion today does not reflect the culture and nature of the English Church. It is, instead, a remarkably diverse community with outposts located all over the world. Consequently, the various expressions of the Anglican Church around the globe are free to adopt indigenous Eucharistic rites (“Renewing the Anglican Eucharist”). This freedom to contextualize demonstrates a deeply held Anglican value of paying attention to particular contexts with an eye toward crafting worship experiences that speak in the common vernacular. This attention to context and vernacular reminds us of the deeper intention of the Eucharist. Namely, that the elements on the Communion Table are able to draw a believer into communion with God: “What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ, his promise in witness hereof sufficeth, his word he knoweth which way to accomplish, why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this, “O my God thou art true, O my soul thou art happy!” (Keble 362).

The above quote by Anglican Divine Richard Hooker brilliantly sums up what is ultimately true about the Eucharistic meal. Namely, regardless of whatever mysteries abound at the table, when a Christian proceeds to receive the elements of the Eucharist she encounters God in such a manner that her soul is edified.

The Importance of Episcopal Governance as Well as the Significance of the Laity

Anglicans organize their pastoral life around a threefold episcopal governance and a robust participation from members of the laity. Regarding episcopal government, the Introduction to the Book of Common Prayer (1928) states: “It is evident unto all men, diligently

reading Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests and Deacons” (1928 BCP).

However, since her earliest days Anglicans have also embraced a theology that promotes the empowering of those who are members of the laity (Howe 130). This understanding of empowered leadership means that “the character of Anglican polity is not hierarchical but holistic” (Avis 164-65). This four-fold approach (laity, deacons, priests, bishops) to ministerial structures is consistent with how many Christians have understood ministerial roles throughout the ages (Howe 128).

Members of ordained ministry within the Anglican Church are said to have taken up holy orders, thus affirming the belief that ordained persons engage in Christ's work on behalf of the Church as they preach, administer the sacraments, and partner with church members through pastoral care (Avis 67).

The Cumulative Nature of Holy Orders

Anglicans understand that holy orders are cumulative and sequential, meaning that once a person is ordained to an order they never lose the character of that order (Avis “Identity” 67-68). Meaning, a deacon never progresses beyond the character of the diaconate, despite the fact that she may become a priest, or even ascend to the role of bishop. There is, therefore, a hardwired “remembering” found within Anglican holy orders that calls clergy to never lose sight of the fact that the foundation of all ministry work is a life marked by service.

The Laity

The role of the laity within Anglicanism is significant. The work of ministry is not meant to be left solely to those members of the clergy who have taken up holy orders. Consequently, Anglicans have always envisioned a robust laity within the ministry of the Church. Archbishop

of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, perceived the need to have laypersons become more involved in offering input at Synodical gatherings. In the late 1700s the Episcopal Church in the United States declared that a representative body of the clergy and laity ought to serve in governing the affairs of the Church (Sykes 284-85). It is, from these brief examples, plain to see that Anglicans have always created space for the laity to lead alongside ordained clergy in matters of Church governance. However, we would be remiss if we limited the contribution of the laity to governing concerns.

Anglican laypersons are seen as standard bearers for the Church's mission engagement in the world. The bishops of the Anglican communion remarked upon the essential role of the laity within the Church at the Lambeth Conference of 1988. The bishops exhorted laypersons to "take hold of their ministerial responsibility for doing their Christian living out in the world," saying that the Church has a role in casting vision such that laity: "[C]an see their sharing in the life of the streets and shops, of wrestling with the land, of feeding, housing and transportation, of business and unemployment, as **their Christian vocation of ministry**" (*The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Lambeth Conference 1988* 52, 49-53, 231-32; emphasis mine).

This call for non-ordained persons to exhibit faith and ministry is significant, for it speaks to a fundamental conviction of the Reformation—namely, the priesthood of all believers. Everyone, not just those who have taken up holy orders, is invited to participate in the work of God. This view of universal participation within the body of Christ's faithful is the result of the empowering work of God. Richard Hooker states: "The result of *metanoia*, turning to Christ was active charity publicly expressed by the lives of those who received the sacraments in faith" (Hooker "Laws" preface -Lvi).

According to Hooker the result, or fruit of repentance and the sacraments, is a life demonstrated by “active charity.” This call to active charity is for all who receive the sacraments and enter into the worshipping life of the Church. This call further highlights the nature of Anglican thinking on the dignity of the gifts bestowed upon each Christian. Namely, that there are “differences among vocations,” but no “spiritual hierarchy” (Sykes 279). The ground is level at the foot of the cross, so to speak. The very word *liturgy* suggests a work that involves ALL people, lay and ordained alike. Consequently, the function of liturgical worship as shared experience between the laity and clergy suggests that “we are all celebrants together” (Weil 197).

The fruit of lay empowering within the Anglican tradition can be seen in the various missionary societies that have benefitted from significant lay participation. Evangelical reform societies of the eighteen and nineteenth centuries were heavily populated by laypersons. Also, Anglican laity provided strong leadership in the episcopal expansion in the nineteenth century here in the United States. C.S. Lewis and Dorothy Sayers were powerful lay voices that shaped English culture in the twentieth century. And finally, the Anglican emphasis upon lay catechumens in advancing the cause of the East African revivals of the early twentieth century stand as stellar examples of the critical role of laypersons in advancing mission within the Anglican Church (Sykes 288-90). These points of data remind us that Christians, ordained or otherwise, comprise a vibrant body in the world (Sykes 282).

Anglicans Are a People of Devotion

Another treasure at the heart of Anglicanism is the emphasis placed upon prayer and devotion to the LORD. At their very core Anglicans are a praying people. Thomas Cranmer and the English reformers understood the need for Anglicans to grow spiritually. These men affirmed

an essential Anglican view of the person: “[W]e are creatures whose end is God himself, made with a longing to go beyond ourselves into God” (Sykes 358).

As we explore the devotional ethos of the Anglican Church, special attention shall be paid to the Book of Common Prayer, the Daily Office, and to the rhythms of the Church Calendar.

The Book of Common Prayer

For the Anglican Church, the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) comprises the foundation for her devotional life. The Prayer book contains lectionaries (Bible reading/teaching plans) for engaging in private prayer and public worship. It also contains rites and prayers for a wide array of activities including weddings, funerals, baptisms, and confirmation. Additionally, an Anglicanized translation (one translated with an ear toward how the text would sound while read aloud during worship) of the entire Psalter is contained within the BCP. In short, elements such as these have aided the Prayer Book’s transformative effect upon the spiritual lives of countless millions all around the world. Truly, the Book of Common Prayer stands as a crowning achievement within Anglicanism. “Perhaps greatest influence on Anglican spirituality is the BCP itself” (Avis *Christian Church* 135):

At the time of the composition of the BCP there were great challenges facing many English Christians. It was difficult for many to adequately integrate ideas of faith into normal life. The demands of life have always had a tendency to push devotion to the margins, thus creating inconsistencies between stated faith and actual practice. One of the great motivators for the creation of the BCP was to address these gaps between faith and praxis, thus enabling English Christians to “keep in their way the vigil the first disciples

had failed to keep.” (Jacobs 30) To this end, Cranmer sought to simplify Church liturgies, thus creating an air of accessibility around worship. He did this through the BCP.

In no other Christian tradition does the authorized liturgy take on so great a significance. The Prayer Book is first of all the basis for **corporate prayer**. . . . In addition to this essential role, and as a kind of natural overflow from it, the Prayer Book is also a formative element in the **private prayer** of Anglicans. Even in solitude, the use of collects or psalms, or the texts of the various rites, **link the individual Anglican at prayer with the common prayer of the larger fellowship**. (Sykes 59; emphasis mine)

The formative power of the BCP regarding both private and common (corporate) prayer provides shape to what Anglicans believe. The Prayer Book fulfills the notion that the law of prayer is the law of belief (*lex orandi lex credendi*) because, “the texts which are heard and prayed . . . inform profoundly the Christian self-understanding and . . . theological reflection of Anglicans” (Sykes 189).

The impact of the BCP upon theological reflection is best seen in the way it leveraged the sacred text of the Bible in both public and private worship, thus creating a space where the Scriptures were brought to bear upon the “whole range of human life, personal as well as social” (Sykes 353). The Prayer Book’s provision of reading plans gave shape to people’s processes as they sought to understand the content and flow of the Scriptures (Price 79). This work of integrating the scriptures into the “whole range of human life” was accomplished by making the Book of Common Prayer financially accessible. “Assuming the average skilled worker’s weekly wage was approximately five shillings, an unbound Prayer Book would cost slightly less than half of those earnings, or the equivalent of two decent seats at the Blackfriars theater in the 1590s” (Targoff 24).

Simplified Corporate Prayer

Another significant development in the devotional life of Anglicans involved Cranmer's reduction in the number of times Christians were meant to gather for prayer. Originally, the "Hours of Prayer" were part of a rhythm created so that monks and nuns could keep vigil with the LORD in a way that the disciples had failed to do in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46). So, they set times of prayer that kept them close to prayer at all times of the day. Christians were meant to pray at 12:00 a.m., 3:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Cranmer took this (largely) unsustainable rhythm and reduced it to Matins (morning) and Evensong (evening) prayer. This rhythm of twice daily prayer ensured, for observant Christians, that each day began and ended with prayer (Jacobs 29-31).

The Bible and Preaching

At the time of the English Reformation the sacred text of the Bible was largely inaccessible to many in Britain. Two problems existed that perpetuated this challenge. One, there were not many Bibles to be found. And two, many people in Britain were unable to read. One of the hallmarks of Henry VIII's reign was connected to his placement of an English language Bible in every parish hall in England (Howe 17). Additionally, people were now able to hear entire chapters of the Old Testament and New Testament read aloud every morning and evening during Matins and Evensong. These readings were supplemented with individual books of the Bible read aloud from beginning to end, with the entire Psalter being read aloud as well (Price 79). These simple worship services served to raise the level of Biblical literacy among early Anglicans.

In addition to Bible reading, there was another factor that proved to be effective in aiding the Spiritual growth of Anglicans:

The Word of God burst forth with new energy at the time of the Reformation. There was a revival of preaching. The 1549 Prayer Book **required a homily at the Eucharist. But even more significant was the steady, systematic reading of Scripture in the vernacular tongue, both at the Eucharist and in the Daily Office. Worshipers could hear in their own tongue the marvelous works of God.** (Price 81; emphasis mine)

Previously, Church services were held in Latin with little to no emphasis given to preaching. Consequently, this revival of the craft of preaching amounted to a revelation! People, like those Christians gathered outside the upper room in Acts 2, were finally able to hear the Word of God expounded upon in the common vernacular. Thus, exhortation came to the English in a language they could understand and this resulted in increased learning and spiritual growth.

The Daily Office

The daily pattern of private prayer (Daily Office) put forth in the Book of Common Prayer (and engaged by countless millions of Anglican Christians each day) has proven to be an effective tool for spiritual devotion: "The [Daily] Offices are perhaps the most characteristic Anglican form of private devotions. And with their round of praise, instruction in the Word of God, and eloquent prayers to cover the chief concerns of human life, they commend themselves to all who seriously desire to live their lives with God in Christ" (Price 172).

Additionally, recent editions of the Prayer Book (1979, for instance) include a section entitled *Devotionals for Individuals and Families* (1979 BCP 137). These recent additions offer further insight into how the Offices continue to serve as a core part of Anglican devotion and prayer.

The Church Calendar

Another way in which Anglicanism encourages a robust devotional experience is through observance of the rhythms and seasons of the Church year. Just as the calendar marks a linear progression through the seasons of the year, so the Church Calendar invites Christians to enter into the various seasons that comprise Anglican worshipping life:

[T]he whole year, from its beginning on the First Sunday in Advent . . . to its close at the end of November, has been arranged and presented to assist worshiper to devote their attention **in succession** to the salient aspects of the Christian mystery: preparation, incarnation, revelation, the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, his resurrection and ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the life of the church and Christians in the world. (Price 226; emphasis mine)

Furthermore, seasons of the calendar such as Lent, Easter, Advent, and Epiphany invite Christians to mark time as they move forward into the future. This journeying through the seasons is a kind of annual *pilgrimage* where the Christian moves “forward step by step in trust discipleship into God’s future” (Avis “Christian Church” 149).

Anglicans Honor the Importance of Mission and Evangelism

At the time of the English Reformation, church services on the British Isles were spoken in Latin. This presented problems when it came to British citizens hearing and internalizing the message of the Good News of Jesus, since it was quite rare to encounter an English person who was able to speak Latin. Furthermore, many priests administering the Mass were also unable to speak Latin, so they would mumble words that sounded vaguely like the Latin Masses they had learned in their training. The phrase *hocus pocus* emerged as a result of people’s misunderstanding the Priest’s utterance of “*hoc est corpus meum*,” a phrase in Latin which is actually a translation of Jesus’ words “this is my body” at the Last Super. This linguistic

misunderstanding, combined with confusion over exactly what was happening in the communion liturgy itself, caused the recipients to fail to engage with what was actually going on in their worship services.

As a result of these gaps in knowledge, Church services prior to the advent of the Anglican Church were largely unfruitful on a cognitive level when it came to the reception of the Christian message. The very fact that Cranmer and the Anglican reformers paid such attention to bringing Mass into the language of the people, thus honoring the importance of local context and the spoken vernacular of the worshipping community, speaks to an inherent desire to engage people for the gospel. This respect for context and vernacular and the deepened impact of the gospel that becomes possible when the scripture and sermon are spoken in the common tongue, harkens back to the powerful beginnings of the Church in Acts 2, where individuals hear the good news proclaimed in their native tongues. Consequently, possibly the most significant aspect of Anglican missiology is found in the re-working of Church services so that a small child could understand the message of Christianity.

At its core, the Anglican Church is committed to engaging in mission for the sake of the gospel. Archbishop Drexel Gomez, the Archbishop of the West Indies, an area where the Anglican Church has made significant inroads, states the following of the spirit of the Church with regard to mission:

The fact is Anglicanism is an inherently missionary Christian tradition. At the roots of its faith it is **active and expansive and engaged** in the world. . . . Anglicans gave people a **common prayer**, an order to their life as a church community, and a **Bible they could read and understand in their own language**, disseminated in their life together. That has been our mission. (Gomez 1 ; emphasis mine)

Seen in this light, Anglicans have been able to bolster mission engagement by doing the things they do best. Each of the aspects of Anglican mission listed by Archbishop Gomez reflect the fact that Anglicans (in their praying, ordering and translating) were simply being faithful to discharge the good thing the LORD had given them. And in doing so, the gospel is proclaimed. Charles Price in his *Liturgy for Living* states: “The English Book of Common Prayer and its counterparts in many countries around the world have been an unusually effective means for proclaiming the Gospel” (Price 80-81).

It would appear that the simple worship structures put forth in the Book of Common Prayer have aided in the multiplication of new church works in various parts of the world.

British Missionary History

Genesis 26 tells the story of Isaac and his encampment in Gerar. While in this foreign land, Isaac experiences God’s blessings and becomes rich. His abundance causes the Philistines to become jealous. Genesis 26:17-22 tells the story:

And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us; you have become too powerful for us.” So, Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar and settled there. Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham; for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham; and he gave them the names that his father had given them. But when Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, the herders of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herders, saying, “The water is ours.” So, he called the well Esek (contention), because they contended with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also; so, he called it Sitnah (enmity). He moved on from there and dug another well, and they did not

quarrel over it; so, he called it Rehoboth (broad places or room), saying, “Now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

This story, in part, illustrates the importance of remembering the past. Isaac recognized the significance of the work his father had done in digging wells. And rather than abandon that prior effort, he engaged in a process of recovery in order to experience the goodness of the wells of his father. It was only after restoring the wells of the past that Isaac moves on to dig new wells. As Christians seeking to be faithful in a new day, we must heed the example of Isaac, looking to the faithful work of those who have gone before us. G.K. Chesterton highlights this important truth in his *Orthodoxy*:

Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about. All democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death. Democracy tells us not to neglect a good man’s opinion, even if he is our groom; tradition asks us not to neglect a good man’s opinion, even if he is our father.

(Chesterton 74)

In the following pages, we shall examine several significant figures/movements in Britain’s Christian past with an eye toward how gleaning from these “wells” might aid in the recovery of an Acts 2 ethos.

The Earliest Days of the Church in England—Two Snapshots of Britain’s Christian Origins

Christianity in Britain is very old. Less than two hundred years after the catalytic events of Acts 2, there is evidence of Christianity in what is now called Great Britain. Tertullian, a

Roman historian, states the following in the year 210 AD: “Regions of the Britons inaccessible to Romans but subject to Christ” (Mosheim 120).

Just forty years after Tertullian’s statement regarding the presence of Christianity in Britain, Origin (an early theologian) lists the British Isles as a place where Christian community is to be found (Barley 37). These ancient Christian communities were not, however, beneficiaries of the structure and stability afforded to more established Church expressions in the world. In 359 AD British bishops attended The Council of Rimini were so impoverished that they had to accept money to pay for their travel expenses. This indication of the poverty of the early Church in Britain likely afforded her a low standing among other, more established Church expressions (Moorman 5).

Patrick

It was not long before the British Isles became the target of intentional Church missionary work. Church historian Justo Gonzalez notes: “The most notable expansion beyond the borders of the empire took place in Ireland. There Christianity had gained a strong foothold before the downfall of the Empire. Although the spread of Christianity probably occurred via several channels, it is usually attributed to St. Patrick” (Gonzalez 257).

In 432 AD Patrick was made a Bishop in the Roman Church and sent to Britain (Ireland) as a missionary (Moorman 7). As a young man, Patrick had been abducted by Irish slave traders where he was forced to tend sheep for his slave master for six long years. It was during this time that Patrick, who had previously come from a Christian family, began to grow in his love and affection for the LORD in new and profound ways. A portion of scholar Liam de Paor’s translation of *St. Patrick’s Declaration* letter gives us insight into Patrick’s spiritual journey in Ireland:

But after I had arrived in Ireland, I found myself pasturing flocks daily, and I prayed a number of times each day. More and more the love and fear of God came to me, and faith grew and my spirit was exercised, until I was praying up to a hundred times every day—and in the night nearly as often. So that I would often remain in the woods and on the mountain in snow, frost and rain, waking to pray before first light. And I felt no ill effect nor was I in any way sluggish—because, as I now realize, the Spirit was seething within me. (Paor 99)

It is plain to see from Patrick's own words that God was able to reach him, despite the fact that he was suffering under very difficult circumstances. Patrick's emphasis upon the work of the Spirit harkens back to the ethos of the early Christians.

George Hunter notes another significant part of Patrick's spiritual journey, specifically as it relates to his later missionary work:

He came to understand the Celtic people, and their language and culture, with the kind of intuitive insight that is usually possible only, as in Patrick's case, from the underside. Miliuc's (Patrick's captor) people knew that this slave understood them . . . in time Patrick came to love his captors, to identify with them, and to hope for their reconciliation to God. (Hunter 2)

The fact that Patrick had assimilated into the culture of his captors would suggest that Patrick did not simply view his captivity as a burden to be reluctantly born. Patrick learned the culture and language of his captors, and began to long for their conversion to Christianity. Patrick's acquisition of the Irish language would prove to be quite strategic, for at the time of Patrick's captivity (and later mission work) the people of Ireland, numbering somewhere between 200,000 and 500,000, all spoke the same language, despite hailing from a number of different tribes

(Hunter 8). This effort of assimilation paved the way for later missionary work among the Irish to occur.

After six years as a slave, Patrick was able to escape captivity after a series of dreams and promptings from the LORD (Freeman 2-30). It is not known how long Patrick spent in England before feeling compelled to return to the land of Ireland. At some point Patrick began to have dreams and visions where he sensed the LORD was calling him to go back to Ireland as a missionary. The manner in which Patrick received guidance and instruction is reminiscent of the processes of the early Christians in Acts.

Patrick, full of confidence that the LORD is leading him, decided to return to Ireland. Consequently, his missionary return to the land of his former captors constituted a full circle journey for Patrick. Ireland, at the time of Patrick's return, was ripe for evangelism. Brendan Lehane suggests that one reason for this may have been due to the fact that Ireland had been quite isolated from the outside world. Due to the fact that no proselytizing had taken place there for over one thousand years, the people of Ireland were likely quite open to Patrick's religious ideas (Lehane 8). Additionally, there is strong evidence to suggest that the missionary approach adopted by Patrick oriented around a team of men and women. This "apostolic band," typically around twelve in number, would travel and engage the local community in ways that would resonate with them, thus demonstrating that they cared about the people they were attempting to reach for the LORD (Hunter 9). In demonstration of his concern for the people of Ireland, Patrick was known, at least on one occasion, to bless a river so that the people living near it might catch more fish! Patrick also focused a great deal of energy evangelizing people who occupied places in the halls of power (Gougaud 38-39). He seemed to realize that if an influential person was converted to the faith, subsequent work would flow more easily. This approach is akin in spirit to

the early Church's emphasis upon urban ministry. St. Paul's missionary strategy was almost entirely focused upon centers of population density in the Roman world of his day. The influential, whether they live in cities or in castles, are often curators of the culture around them. Consequently, Patrick's emphasis on influencing the influencers helped accelerate the expansion of his missionary agenda.

If the LORD blessed the missionary efforts of Patrick and his band, the group would plant a church. In truth, Patrick and his friends planted monasteries:

Monasteries displaced dioceses as the basic unit and abbots became more powerful than bishops. The monastery became not only a cent(re)for prayer and learning but the heart of the organization of the church and extraordinarily evangelistic. The story of Celtic evangelism is not about the extension of a diocesan structure but about the expansion of communities. The Celts did not church-plant; they monastery planted. (Finney 28)

After establishing a church/monastery, Patrick would leave one of his team behind to continue the work of leading and loving those who had converted to the faith. It would seem that Patrick's zeal to bring people to Jesus, and then build churches so the faithful could gather and continue to grow within the context of community, was quite effective. Louis Gougaud states the following of Patrick's twenty-eight-year ministry venture in Ireland:

Most certainly did he not succeed in converting all the heathens of the island; but he won so many of them for Christ, he founded so many churches, ordained so many clerics, kindled such a zeal in men's hearts, that it seems right to believe that to him was directly due the wonderful out-blossoming of Christianity which distinguished Ireland in the following ages. (Gougaud 44-45)

After his death, Patrick's successors continued the work in Ireland by establishing monasteries all over the country. They were distinct from monasteries in other parts of the world in that in a Celtic monastery there were fewer clergy present. Irish monasteries would not have been marked by silence and meditation. They were noisy places with men and women working out faith together as family members. These clusters of community sought to engage all aspects of life, thus fostering a holistic approach to ministry. Patrick and his teams essentially planted cities of culture within an almost entirely rural Ireland as some monasteries grew to over three thousand members (Hunter 16-19). The willingness and ability of early Irish missionaries to meet people in the gritty places of life helped them foster real and lasting community among converts. By fostering a vision of faith that is concerned with hope, love, sorrow, anger, joy, and relationships, these early Christian missionaries were able to engage the space where their people live most of their lives (Heibert 35-47).

Summary Insights from St. Patrick

1. He walked in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. He honored the significance culture and loved his mission field.
3. He worked within the context of a team.
4. He planted a multitude of churches, thus establishing a movement.
5. He targeted people of influence so as to extend the reach of his ministry.
6. He encouraged an expression of faith that met people in the gritty places of life.

Gregory and Augustine

Roughly one hundred and sixty years after Patrick's earliest work in Ireland, Pope Gregory (later known as Gregory the Great) ascended to the Papacy in 590AD. However, in the few years before being made Pope, Gregory had made several attempts to engage in missionary

work to the people of Britain. A story, probably from 586AD, is told where Gregory witnessed an allotment of young British boys being sold at a slave auction in Rome (Moorman 12).

Gonzalez, in his *The Story of Christianity*, shares words from the pen of a biographer of Gregory the Great, indicating how deeply these Angle slaves impacted Gregory's heart:

“What is the nationality of these lads?” Gregory asked.

“They are Angles,” he was told.

“Angels they are in truth, for their faces look like such. Where is their country?”

“In Deiri.”

“De ira (‘from wrath’) they are indeed, for they have been called from wrath to God’s mercy. Who is their king?”

“Aella.”

“Alleluia! In that last must the name of God be praised!” (Gonzalez 275)

This story, whether apocryphal or not, provides color and context for what would prove to be a massive shift in the mission of the Latin Church (Hodgkin 259). The future of Latin Christianity pivoted as Pope Gregory, in 597, sent a young monk named Augustine, to the British Isles to serve as a missionary. As the mission to Britain is being organized, Gregory writes in a letter: “It has come to our ears that by the mercy of God the English race earnestly desire to be converted to the Christian faith . . .” (Blair 47).

Augustine would only serve as a missionary in England (based in Canterbury) for seven years, but much work was done to further establish the Christian religion in Britain during his tenure (Moorman 17). In his *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Bede describes how Gregory writes to Augustine after he receives word that supernatural ministry is happening on the British Isles at the hand of Augustine:

I know, most beloved brother, that Almighty God, out of love for you has worked great miracles through you for the race which it was his will to have among the chosen. It is therefore necessary that you should rejoice over this heavenly gift and fear as you rejoice. You will rejoice because *the souls of the English are drawn by outward miracles to inward grace . . .* (Bede 58)

It would appear that the ministry of Augustine carried with it aspects of the supernatural. In addition to this, it is evident from further correspondence between Pope Gregory and Augustine that he shared all things in common with his brothers in England. Gregory writes:

You, my brother, being conversant with monastic rules, ought not to live apart from your clergy in the English Church, which, by the guidance of God, has lately been converted to the faith; but you ought to institute that manner of life which our fathers followed in the earliest beginnings of the Church: none of them said that anything he possessed was his own but they had all things in common. (Bede 225)

From this letter we are able to deduce that Gregory anticipated Augustine's sharing would involve more than simple physical possessions. While it certainly involved the sharing of physical goods in their life together, Gregory's admonition also implies that Augustine live among members of the newly converted English, modeling the spiritual life to which they would become accustomed. Gregory's words amount to a call for Augustine and the English to embody the ethos of the Acts 2 community as they demonstrate "a manner of life which our fathers followed in the earliest beginnings of the Church."

Furthermore, Augustine consecrated a number of bishops at the request of Pope Gregory so that order and structure might be maintained as the Christian religion advanced across Britain. During a time of expansion and growth, Augustine, working under the authority of the Pope,

created structures of leadership and pastoral care “so that by an abundance of office-holders (bishops) the Church of Christ may be more perfectly governed in all matters that relate to the practice of holy religion” (Bede 349). Augustine, functioning as a leader, sought to bring order and discipline to the newly established Christian community.

However, despite the obvious administrative aspects of Augustine’s role in England, one would be remiss to think of his function in primarily administrative terms. Augustine was a gifted preacher and pastor who placed great emphasis upon sin, repentance and transformation in his writings and sermons. In short, he was a man who understood the need for inward change.

Augustine states:

In sins where there is a real will to harm another . . . the sin is committed either for the sake of revenge; or to gain something that another has; or to escape some danger; or through envy; or for mere pleasure in another’s suffering. These are the main heads of sin, which swarm forth from the lust for holding the first place, or the lust of the eye, or the lust of the sense . . . (Augustine *Confessions* 47)

Additionally, Augustine exhorted his congregants with regard to smaller transgressions.

Augustine preached: “Don’t shrug sins aside because they are small; fear them, rather, because they are many . . . If someone is thrown into the flea-pit, doesn’t he die there? . . . human nature is weak and can be destroyed even by the tiniest creatures. So, it is with little sins . . . don’t just shrug these sins aside (Augustine *Sermons* 40).

In his pastoral dealings with sin, Augustine did not simply point out the faults of others. In his *Confessions* Augustine says of himself: “I was all hot for honors, money, and marriage: and you made mock of my hotness. In my pursuit of these, I suffered most bitter

disappointments, but in this You were good to me since I was thus prevented from taking delight in anything not Yourself” (Augustine *Confessions* 101).

However, it must be noted that Augustine did not simply warn against the dangers of sin. He spoke regularly of God’s pursuit of humanity and of the powerful transformation that comes after repentance. Augustine states: “You (God) are ever close upon the heels of those who flee from you, for you are at once God of vengeance and fount of mercy, and you turn us to yourself by ways most wonderful” (Augustine *Confessions* 59).

These glimpses into the theology and practice of Augustine, provide insight into what motivated him pastorally. These values, no doubt, would have found expression in his work as a missionary in England.

Finally, Augustine placed great value on the human journey/story. Augustinian scholar Peter Brown states of Augustine: “He felt compelled to reveal himself: he was glad to have an audience whose ideal of friendship had prepared them to listen without contempt, as he insisted on telling them what it was like to steal pears as a teenager, to have cast off a mistress, to be still in doubt as to which temptation he might yet not resist” (Brown 153).

In making these connections Augustine helped his hearers see that their worst enemies were not outside them (barbarians and such), but that doubts, sins and an individual’s sinful past required the redeeming hand of God. Such a shift in emphasis opens the door for self-examination and reflection. Thus, Augustine’s *Confessions* constituted a fresh invitation for readers to consider how God longs to bring transformation to those who would hope for it. And a great deal of Augustine’s preaching and writing honors the messy process of transformation. Brown states: “[T]he *Confessions* is not the affirmation of a cured man: it is the portrait of a convalescent” (Brown 172).

For Augustine, life with God is a journey—a story—and that story is full of ups and downs. And all along the way, Christians are convalescing.

Summary of Augustine

1. Augustine walked in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Augustine transparently shared life in common with his fellow monks.
3. Augustine was a capable organizer.
4. Augustine leveraged preaching and teaching to make a connection with his hearers.
5. Augustine painted a picture of life as a journey, thus encouraging self-reflection and process.

A Brief History of the Church of England (1509-1604 AD)

Now, we shall turn our attention to the Advent of what is now called *The Church of England* or *Anglican Church*. Because Anglicanism features heavily in this study, we shall endeavor to offer a brief historical accounting of the events that gave rise to the Church of England. The Anglican Church was birthed in England during the sixteenth century during the reign of Henry VIII. The ethos of the Anglican worshipping tradition reflects a contextualized embodiment of the principles of the Reformation that were sweeping across continental Europe during this fateful time. At the time of Henry's ascension to the throne reforming ideas were already being discussed in various parts of England, for the currents of change were already under way upon the continent of Europe. Henry himself was known to engage in discussions that focused on the works of German reformer, Martin Luther. He, like many who held positions of authority, initially resisted these reforming ideas. In particular, his early opposition to Luther's teachings on the sacraments prompted the Pope to bestow upon Henry the title "Defender of the Faith" (Moorman 162-63).

Time, however, has a way of shifting the order of things. In 1534, the English Parliament passed *The Act of Succession and Supremacy* whereby they declared of England's sovereign leader: "The king's majesty justly and right is and ought to be and shall be reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England called Anglicana Ecclesia" (Howe 16).

This decision on the part of Parliament to bestow upon Henry (and future monarchs in England) the authority to rule the Church of England without input from Rome was truly monumental. Historian Mark Noll regards this *Act of Succession and Supremacy* as one of the ten most important events in the entire history of the Church (Howe 16). British historian J. Moorman brings the import of this Parliamentary decision into clear focus: "For almost a thousand years the Church in England has been directly under the jurisdiction of Rome. Now, by a stroke of a pen, that ancient allegiance had been severed and all the powers which the papacy had exerted had been transferred to the king or to the Archbishop of Canterbury" (Moorman 168-69).

One is right to ask why such a monumental decision was made. The answer to this logical question, at least on the surface, may not prove satisfactory. The mitigating factor that pushed Henry to exert pressure upon his Parliament to sanction England's break from Rome was connected to Henry's desire to separate from his wife, Katharine of Aragon, so he could pursue marriage with Anne Boleyn. This desire on Henry's part was not solely motivated by lust, despite the fact that he had clearly cultivated feelings for Anne Boleyn. Katharine had reached the age of forty and had only born Henry one living child, a daughter named Mary, who would feature heavily in later installments of the English Ecclesiastical drama. Henry desired sons who would rule after him. Furthermore, Henry had taken Katharine as his wife after her former husband, Henry's elder brother Arthur, had died in 1502. Henry claimed that this action (taking

his brother's wife) was immoral and that God had judged it as sin, thus the reason for the lack of sons born to their union. Because of this, Henry, in seeking to end his marriage, dubiously claimed that he was trying to do an honorable thing! Henry's quest to end his marriage to Katharine went on for years with no resolution. However, upon the passing of *The Acts of Succession and Supremacy* Henry was finally able to proceed with his objective of dissolving his marriage to Katharine (Moorman 163-167).

However, in order for Henry to arrive at this pivotal point a new figure had to emerge. Thomas Cranmer was made Archbishop of Canterbury in January of 1533, shortly before *The Act of Succession* was signed into law. A bookish, and relatively unknown cleric, Cranmer had worked tirelessly to obtain academic opinions on the subject of Henry's desire for marital annulment from Katharine. Upon returning from the Continent where he had been pursuing such ends, Cranmer was made archbishop in a stunning turn of events, thus appearing to many to be a pawn in Henry's administration (MacCulloch 83). However, it would be folly to presume that Cranmer simply served as a puppet Archbishop. His contribution to the worshipping life of the English Church is immense. In his *A History of the Church in England*, J. Moorman indicates a number of contributions made by Cranmer that are still felt in the Anglican Church to this day. Moorman notes five such contributions that are worthy of consideration. First, Cranmer saw the need for simplicity. The old Church liturgies were far too complex, creating far too much work on the part of the clergy just to simply get through a Church service. Cranmer worked to simplify the way Church was experienced. Second, Cranmer saw a need for more congregational involvement in worship services. At the time of his installment as Archbishop of Canterbury members of the laity had become mere spectators in Church worship rites. Cranmer saw this as a serious problem. This revelation that there was a significant gap to be bridged if laity were to

become involved in worship in meaningful ways led to Cranmer's third contribution. He created a liturgy in the language of the people. Fourth, Cranmer set about restoring "primitive customs" such as offering both elements in Holy Communion (the bread and the wine) to members of the laity. And finally, Cranmer saw the need for more "edification through sermons and reading of the Scriptures" (Moorman, 188-189). These innovations on the part of Thomas Cranmer set the tone for how early Anglicanism would be expressed and gave rise to many of the treasures of Anglican worship to which we shall shortly turn our attention. These enhancements to English worship, combined with an English translation of the Bible being placed in every Church in England during this time period, forever changed the landscape of Anglican devotional life (Howe 17).

Events spanning the next seventy years revealed much turmoil and upheaval as the English wrestled with their worshipping life, including a brief English reversion back to Catholicism under the Reign of Mary, the lone child of Henry VIII and Katharine of Aragon's marriage. Mary Tudor ascended to the throne after Henry's son Edward perished at the tender age of sixteen after a very brief reign as king of England (Moorman 191). Mary's reign was marked by vigorous persecution of those who had worked tirelessly to establish the Protestant ideals of the Church of England. A devout Roman Catholic, Mary had Thomas Cranmer burned at the stake in 1556 under her watchful eye. His death is noteworthy for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that he had been pressed to recant his Protestant teachings in the days leading up to this death. Consequently, as Cranmer faced his death, he did so with a sense of shame and embarrassment. He had failed his convictions when faced with pressure. At his trial and execution, however, Cranmer recanted his recantation! This momentous occasion is beautifully captured by Marcus Loane (an Anglican bishop) in his book *Masters of the English Reformation:*

“And now,” he said, “I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that I ever said or did in my life, and that is the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth: which here now I renounce and refuse . . . And forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished; for if I may to the fire, it shall first be burned.” (Loane 239)

At this, Cranmer was dragged from the place of his trial and taken to the place of his execution. Loane reports that Cranmer himself set the pace as they processed toward the place where he would be burned at the stake. As a result of Cranmer’s haste, the very people who were meant to lead him to his death had to run to keep up. Cranmer died in sure and certain hope of the resurrection, placing his right hand into the flames, ensuring that the hand that “hath offended” burned first (Strype 558).

Other notable Anglican leaders met Cranmer’s fate during Mary’s five-year stint as Queen. Noted Anglican Bishop J.C. Ryle sums up Mary Tutor’s rule in the following words:

It is a broad fact that these 288 sufferers were not put to death for any offence against property or person. They were not rebels against the Queen’s authority, caught red-handed in arms. They were not thieves, or murderers, or drunkards, or unbelievers, or men and women of immoral lives. On the contrary, they were, with barely an exception, some of the holiest, purest, and best Christians in England, and several of them the most learned men of their day. (Ryle 5)

Among her 288 sufferers, the story of two Anglican martyrs stands out in particular. On October 16, 1555 Bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley were led to their execution. Both men were devout and much beloved by the laity they served. Hugh Latimer was particularly esteemed because of his preaching abilities. It has been noted that his sermons were, “Racy, full

of anecdote, reminiscence and humo[u]r, rich in homely English words like ‘ugsomeness,’ ‘dodipoles’ and ‘belly-cheer,’ these sermons are in indication of the vigor and courage and outspokenness which belonged to the New Age” (Moorman 183).

Latimer railed against the excesses of the Roman Church in many of his letters and sermons. He directed particular condemnation to the luxurious lifestyle and laxity of Bishops in abandoning their God-given call to preach the Word of God with boldness and clarity (Latimer 67, 70). Bold stances such as these often led to the incarceration and condemnation of men like Latimer and Ridley under Mary’s reign. Consequently, on that fateful day in October of 1555, as they were both being led to execution Latimer is reported to have said to Ridley, “Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England as I trust shall never be put out” (Foxe, 550).

Men like Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer saw themselves standard bearers whose task was to carry the torch of the Primitive Church in their present time.

Things would not remain as bleak as they were under Mary Tutor. After her brief and bloody reign, Mary’s half-sister Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry’s union with Anne Boleyn, ascended to the throne. Elizabeth’s long reign helped establish peace and stability for the Church of England, thus securing England’s Protestant trajectory. Under her leadership Cranmer’s *Articles of Religion* was reduced from forty-two articles to thirty-nine and published in 1563 (Howe 32). This document has continued to provide the Anglican Church with guidance and direction on theological matters to the present day.

Furthermore, during Elizabeth’s reign theologian Richard Hooker articulated what would come to be known as the prevailing Anglican theological method. He argued for engagement with scripture, tradition, and reason when wrestling through theological issues. According to

Hooker, when Scripture is clear on a matter then the matter ought to be settled. But, contrary to the view held by Puritans of his time, Hooker indicated that when Scripture is silent or ambiguous on a matter, one must appeal to Tradition (what Christians have believed in the past) and Reason (common sense) to make a determination (Hooker 102).

It was during this time that it became clear that the Anglican Church sought to occupy a *Via Media* (middle way) between the Roman Church and certain expressions of Protestantism (primarily Puritanism). British historian, J. Moorman states the following in his *A History of the Church in England*, “Aiming at a *Via Media* between two poles—the *via media* sought was not a compromise, a ‘lowest common denominator’; it was a real attempt to recover the simplicity and purity of primitive Christianity” (Moorman 234).

Moorman’s assertion reminds readers that the Anglican Church’s *via media* approach is actually quite ambitious. In truth, maintaining a *middle way* in an effort to recover the simplicity and purity of primitive Christianity requires discipline and intentionality, not to mention a conscious commitment to understanding the life of the primitive church.

Summary of Insights Relating to the English Reformers

1. The English reformers paid particular attention to context and vernacular evidenced in worship and devotional materials (English Bible, masses in language of the people, etc. . . .)
2. Emphasis was placed upon simplicity, accessibility and participation in corporate and private worship.
3. Emphasis was placed on preaching as an aide in spiritual formation.
4. Boldness and conviction in devotion as was evidenced in the English martyrs.

5. A long obedience in the same direction was demonstrated as Anglicanism was established after much turbulence.

John Wesley

John Wesley's ministry spanned much of the eighteenth century, which was an era marked by the dawn of the industrial revolution. This tumultuous time brought droves of people to cities, all seeking work in the emerging factory culture of Britain. These changes forever altered the idyllic, slower paced life that many in England had previously enjoyed. "With all this went loss of stability, the tearing up of roots which went deep into the past, the disappearance of old customs and the severing of old ties and loyalties" (Moorman 294).

The sudden population expansion seen in cities created many problems. Overcrowding in the cities, as well as a lack of clean living conditions, were part and parcel of city living for those in the lower classes in the eighteenth century. This time period was also a low water mark for many among the ranks of Britain's clergy. Many men of the Church (who were typically high born and therefore members of the upper classes) were relatively apathetic, having traded their calling for the pursuit of wealth in an effort to enjoy lives of comfort and prestige:

The complacency and worldliness of the bishops and superior clergy, their concern with their own advancement and that of their families, their sensitivity to their privileges and their prestige, left the Church without any real spiritual leadership at a time when such leadership was sorely needed. In the end the Church was saved not by its natural leaders but by a handful of individuals who dedicated themselves and all that they had to the salvation of society. The greatest of these was John Wesley. (Moorman 297)

However, before John Wesley would stand as a spiritual leader in England, he had some growing up to do. As a young man, Wesley and a group of friends, upset by the laxity seen in the lives of

young academics, chose to meet regularly for reading, prayer and worship. They saw themselves as a reforming movement on the university campus. As a young man Wesley had all the markings of a young zealot. His spiritual rigor was born more out of a distaste for what he saw going on around him than from a heart of love for the LORD (Moorman 297).

Wesley's Conversion

Not long after his university days Wesley, still full of youthful zeal, volunteered to travel to Georgia as a missionary. He spent two years stateside (1736-1738) and returned to England having been largely unsuccessful in his efforts to minister to the colonists. It would appear that his intense personality and confrontational style of ministry did not sit well with residents in the British colony (Moorman 297-98). However, on May 24, 1738 a deflated and discouraged Wesley had a life-changing encounter with the LORD while worshipping with a group of Moravian Christians. Wesley finally finds faith. He wrote: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and then I testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart" (Overton 61).

Wesley was a changed man, and from this moment, the necessity of heart conversion would stand as a hallmark of his ministry (Pelikan 124).

Wesley's Evangelism

Not long after this encounter, Wesley learned of his friend George Whitefield's work bringing the good news to common folks through out of door preaching. Armed with his newfound faith (while still remaining frustrated with the laxity in the Church), Wesley headed out of doors, adopting "the world as his parish" (Moorman 298). It is fascinating to note that this fateful decision to follow Whitefield out of doors was due, in large part, to the fact that by May

of 1738 there were no pulpits left open to him in London because of his zealous ministry style (Moorman 298)! And yet the LORD used this mightily, bringing Wesley before those who were not likely to darken the door of a church. Howard Snyder remarks: “Methodism under John Wesley became a vital movement of the common people, the ‘disinherited masses’ to whom the gospel was totally foreign” (Snyder 139).

Spanning the next fifty-two years Wesley would travel over 200,000 thousand miles on horseback and preach over 40,000 sermons (Moorman 298).

Wesley’s Strategic Genius

As converts began adding up as a result of Wesley’s evangelism program among the irreligious, he made conscious decisions regarding how to encourage community and discipleship among new Christians. Consequently, *Societies*, *Classes* and *Bands* emerged under Wesley’s watchful eye. Regarding *Societies* Wesley himself writes:

Thus arose, without any previous design on either side, what was afterwards called a *Society*—a very innocent name, and very common in London for any number of people associating themselves together . . . They therefore united themselves “in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation. (Wesley 256-57)

These gatherings of new converts, called *Societies*, looked and felt a lot like churches, but Wesley insisted that they were something quite different. Howard Snyder describes how Wesley perceived these societies:

Wesley insisted that he was appointing preachers, not pastors, and that his appointment was not ordination to the priesthood. Yet he saw his actions as consistent with Anglican Church order and with early church practice. *Underlying his reasoning was his*

perception of the Methodist societies as an evangelical order within the Church of England, not as churches themselves. (Snyder 104; emphasis mine)

Here we see that Wesley saw himself as introducing a missionary order, rather than a church, to the existing structures of the Church of England. This decision enabled Wesley to organize large numbers of new Christians in community without having to ordain ministers under the Anglican structure. This allowed for *societies* to take root quickly, thus meeting an essential discipleship need. Additionally, because the structure of the *societies* was so effective, some of them grew to 1,100 participants (Snyder 43)!

Recognizing the need to further subdivide his growing *Societies*, Wesley developed the concept of *classes*. *Classes* were organized in groups of twelve individuals each, with both men and women offering leadership. *Classes* were more intimate, and more intentional than the larger gatherings. Wesley notes the following of his *classes*:

Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to “bear one another’s burdens,” and “naturally” to “care for each other.” As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. And “speaking the truth in love, they grew up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ. (Wesley 262)

From Wesley’s words it becomes evident that the *classes* of which he speaks are meant to provide a more intimate space for believers to experience spiritual growth together. Further on, Howard Snyder states: “The class meeting was thus the cornerstone of the whole edifice. The classes were house churches (not classes for instruction, as the term class might suggest), meeting in the various neighborhoods where people lived. The class leaders (men and women) were effective pastors and disciplers” (Snyder 65).

The class system was where the bulk of discipleship would take place. Members would pay offerings in this environment, report on how things were going in their spiritual lives and receive exhortation and prayer from their leaders (Snyder 65). And the leaders of these gatherings were very much empowered by Wesley to do the work assigned to them. The multitude of class leaders existing within a single society also affirmed Wesley's desire that pastoral leadership be both intimate and plural (Snyder 70). Regarding the essential need for plurality within leadership structures, Wesley states: "No one whom I ever yet knew has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation" (Stevens 461).

Finally, Wesley divided his classes into *bands*. Bands existed as small clusters of people who gathered in groups to advance the good accomplished in the class system. These *bands* were organized with an eye toward creating homogenous clusters conducive to the promotion of spiritual growth. One of the purposes of Wesley's *bands* was to help Christians learn how to tell their stories by working through their struggles and victories as they progressed toward maturity in Christ (Snyder 70-72). These *bands* emerged very early on in Wesley's ministry. On Christmas Day 1738, Wesley wrote the following concerning the purpose of his *bands*:

The design of our meeting is to obey that command of God, "Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another that ye may be healed."

To this end we intend:

1. To meet once a week, at the least.
2. To come punctually that the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.

3. To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour, with singing or prayer.
4. To speak, each of us in order, freely and plainly the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting.
5. To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.
6. To desire some person among us to speak *his* own state first, and then to ask the rest in order as many and as searching questions as may be concerning their state, sins and temptations. (Wesley 77)

It is plain to see that the goal of these gatherings was connected to vulnerability and transparency.

The genius of Wesley's organizational ability, combined with his evangelistic fervor as a circuit preacher, left an indelible mark upon the English Church.

Summary of Insights Relating to John Wesley

1. John Wesley experienced a personal transformation and encouraged the same in his evangelistic efforts.
2. John Wesley worked tirelessly as an Evangelist, taking the good news to the lost rather than expecting them to come to him.
3. John Wesley did not allow failure and disappointment to keep him from pressing forward in ministry.
4. John Wesley created intuitive lean structures that enabled discipleship and community to flourish.

5. John Wesley placed a high value on his team ministry.

Research Literature

For the purposes of research, both quantitative and qualitative research tools were employed. “The classic qualitative-quantitative debate has been largely resolved with recognition that a variety of methodological approaches are needed and credible, that mixed methods can be especially valuable, and that the challenged is to appropriately match methods to questions rather than some narrow methodological orthodoxy” (Patton xxii). Consequently, both methods were employed in the research for this project. Additionally, a grounded theory approach to research was employed through the use of focus group questions and a survey. Grounded theory allows for analysis of data during the research process. This approach helps yield real world/real time insights throughout the process of research. “Grounded theory is a research tool which enables you to seek out and conceptualize the latent social patterns and structures of your area of interest through the process of constant comparison” (Scott 54).

The survey portion of the research falls under the quantitative research category because members will be asked to answer questions based on a number system where they rate their response. This will yield statistical insights from among a large number of individuals. Sensing states, “Quantitative studies are designed to investigate an issue with great breadth” (Sensing 2,258).

In his book on research methods, Tim Sensing states the following regarding qualitative research, “Qualitative research is grounded in the social world of experience and seeks to make sense of lived experience” (Sensing 1,629). The focus group questions were expert reviewed for content and were effective at helping get at the “lived experience” of various participants in the life of the church in question. These conversations constituted an approach to qualitative research

and were able to mine out data that would not likely be collected through quantitative research.

Furthermore, Sensing states:

This is why the semi-structured format worked so well, as Merriam describes this format as one in which " . . . either all of the questions are more flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions. Usually, specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a highly structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic. (Sensing 74)

This approach helped yield insights that were critical to helping the researcher better understand the lived experiences of various participants in the project.

Both instruments (the survey and the focus group questions) were designed in an effort to yield maximum insight from participants. The concise nature of the online survey allowed for easy access and timely completion, while the focus group conversations were limited to one hour. This attention to expediency was intended to keep the experiences from being overly time consuming on the part of the participant. The time limitation for the focus group conversations also motivated the interview/researcher to remain focused on topic. The focus group conversations were recorded so that insights could be transcribed at a later time, thus preventing the loss of valuable insight as the conversation unfolded.

Summary of Chapter 2

In the first section we engaged in a detailed reflection upon the 47 verses that comprise Acts 2, a text that offers a glimpse into the life and rhythms of the early Church. The Day of

Pentecost is widely regarded as the beginning of the story of the Church. Consequently, a return to the Church's birthplace yields a number of insights into the values and convictions of our earliest forebears. Acts 2 reveals seven themes, or values, held by those members of the Primitive Church. First, the Primitive Church was Holy Spirit empowered. The Person and work of the Spirit is clearly witnessed in the events of Acts 2. The Spirit is seen catalyzing and advancing missionary work from the very beginning of the story. Secondly, the Primitive Church championed evangelism, mission, and conversion. Acts 2 demonstrates the importance of people coming to know Jesus. We are told people came to know the LORD, both on the day of Pentecost as well as on subsequent days as the work continued. Next, we see that the Primitive Church placed emphasis on inspired preaching and teaching. Peter's sermon in Acts 2 stands as an early example of Apostolic preaching. He worked to build a rapport with his audience and utilized various rhetorical devices to win them over.

Following on from this, it is clear that the Primitive Church perceived that what God was doing in Acts 2 stood in continuity with the Old Testament. Peter, in his sermon, referenced three separate Old Testament texts to offer support/proofs for what was happening in the current time. Next, the Primitive Church expressed a high Christology. Peter's sermon outlined a solid foundation for what would later become a more robust Christology. Also, the Primitive Church engaged the sacraments of baptism and communion, with baptism being directly mentioned and communion being strongly alluded to on more than one occasion. And finally, these early followers of Jesus were committed to devotion and spiritual formation. These values, taken together, offer significant insight into the life and belief structure of the first Christians.

The second section of Chapter 2 called for an investigation into what constitutes a *Mere Anglicanism*. By *Mere Anglicanism* we mean that which emerges when this particular

worshipping tradition is viewed through the broadest possible lens. The goal here was not to be exhaustive, but rather to distill essential values so that those who worship within this tradition might learn to travel lightly as they head into the future.

First, it is evident that Anglicans possess a broad view of the wider body of Christ. Anglican Christians do not see themselves as “the Church,” but rather embrace their place as part of the big story God has been telling throughout the ages and all over the world. Secondly, Anglicans, like the members of the Acts 2 Church, celebrate two sacraments—baptism and communion. Next, Anglicans embrace the importance of ordained leadership as well as the significance of the role of the laity within the life of the Church. Also, Anglicans are a people of devotion. The foundational text (apart from the Bible) of the Anglican Church is the Book of Common Prayer. Anglicans are a praying people before they are anything else. And finally, Anglicans honor the importance of mission and evangelism.

The third section in the literature review called for a reflection upon the history of Britain with an eye toward helping Anglican Christians recover aspects of their story that might aid in future missionary work. Sometimes one must look back before he is able to move forward. Consequently, we engaged in a historical reflection upon significant missionary moments in Britain’s past. We examined the life and ministry of Saint Patrick, an early missionary to Ireland. Patrick embodied several values that proved to be very helpful in his work. He walked in the power of the Holy Spirit. He also honored the significance of culture and learned to love those to whom he was sent. Patrick was also deeply committed to the concept of team ministry. In terms of missionary emphasis, Patrick emphasized outreach to people of influence. This is connected to his honoring of culture. It demonstrates Patrick’s understanding that, in the culture of Ireland, to win a king for Jesus meant that other doors would open more readily. And finally, Patrick and

his friends entered into the nitty-gritty places of life, embodying a brand of Christianity that fit with the ethos of Ireland.

Saint Augustine, in his work among the British, also walked in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. He was deeply connected to his fellow monks, and also a capable organizer. Augustine was a remarkably gifted preacher, who easily made a connection with his hearers. He also maintained his connection with the missionary pastors in his charge, refusing to live apart from them. And finally, Augustine saw life as a journey, and encouraged his hearers toward self-reflection and spiritual growth.

The English Reformers found themselves standing at a critical time in Britain's history. Men such as Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer paid particular attention to the importance of context and vernacular in their work to bring worship to the English people in a language (and manner) to which they could relate. These men placed great emphasis upon simplicity, accessibility and the participation of lay people in worship. There was also, among the early Anglicans, an emphasis placed upon inspired preaching. Additionally, many of these men and women perished for their faith during this time period. They possessed great boldness, given by the Holy Spirit, as they submitted to martyrdom. The obedience of these early Anglican leaders helped set a trajectory that has spanned to the present day.

Finally, we examined the life and ministry of John Wesley. Wesley himself experienced a personal transformation, and he encouraged the same in his evangelistic efforts. Wesley labored tirelessly as an evangelist, taking "church" to outsiders rather than waiting for them to come to him. Despite suffering several setbacks during his ministry life, Wesley did not allow disappointment to keep him from pushing ahead in faith. John Wesley crafted brilliantly simple

and sustainable structures—structures that enabled discipleship and community to flourish. Finally, Wesley was committed to team ministry and the empowering of lay persons.

Taken together, findings from the three sections in Chapter 2 (Acts 2, Anglican essentials, missionary survey of Britain) can be distilled into the following seven values:

1. Possesses broad view of the church
2. Embodies two visible sacraments
3. Demonstrates a team approach to ministry comprised of episcopal leadership (bishops, priests, deacons) and empowered laity
4. Honors the place of community relationships, spiritual formation and spiritual devotion
5. Demonstrates a high view of God as Trinity in worship and practice
6. Places emphasis on preaching that demonstrates holistic engagement with Old and New Testament.
7. Places importance upon mission and evangelism

These seven values will serve as the guiding template for evaluating and coaching new church works that emerge from the sending church in question.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

In order to determine the extent to which Trinity Anglican embodies the values identified in the literature review process, an analysis of these values was undertaken within the sending church that serves as the focus of this research project. Before that church can confidently instill the seven values highlighted in the literature review in future church plants, these values must be evaluated and embraced within the culture of the sending church. This chapter will discuss how the research concerning these values' embodiment in the local church will be accomplished. This discovery process will be engaged through an online survey of members within the church in question, as well as two focus group conversations with various staff and lay leaders within the church.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to identify essential church planting characteristics through an exploration of Acts 2, Anglicanism, and various moments in British missionary history in order to evaluate the extent to which these values are lived out at the church in question (Trinity). The research portion of the project was engaged in an effort to monitor the extent to which the church planting values identified in the literature review are embodied in the sending church.

Research Questions

Research questions provide shape and structure to a research project. For this project four research questions were engaged in an effort to identify certain church planting characteristics and evaluate the extent to which these characteristics are being embodied at the church that served as the context for the research project.

RQ #1. What Touchstones of the Primitive Church Can Be Found in Acts 2?

An extensive Biblical survey of Acts 2 was undertaken in an effort to identify certain foundational values embodied by the Primitive Church. This research question corresponds directly with the portion of our purpose statement that expressly mentions Acts 2. Methodology employed relating to data and research will be further articulated under Research Question #4 heading.

RQ #2. What constitutes a mere Anglicanism?

Research Question #2 centers around the portion of our purpose statement about what constitutes a *mere Anglicanism*. Since the church in question (Trinity Anglican) worships in the Anglican tradition, it was appropriate to incorporate a survey of Anglicanism into the literature review portion of the project. Methodology employed relating to data and research will be further articulated under Research Question #4 heading.

RQ #3. An exploration of notable moments in Britain's missionary past.

Research Question #3 focuses on certain missionary moments in Britain's past. This research question was engaged in an effort to discern how mission engaged within the geographic area that gave rise to the Anglican tradition might offer insights for modern missionary efforts within a church planting context. Methodology employed relating to data and research will be further articulated under Research Question #4 heading.

RQ #4—To What Extent Does Trinity Embody the Essential Values Discovered through an Exploration of Acts 2, Mere Anglicanism and the Missionary Past of Britain?

Research Question #4 focuses on identifying how values identified by RQ's #1-3 (Acts 2, mere Anglicanism, and British missionary past) are being expressed within a particular context

(namely, Trinity Anglican in Atlanta, GA). Consequently, the research tools employed in Chapter 3 will all focus on RQ#4.

Instrument One: A Survey of the Members at Trinity

A survey was used to evaluate to what extent the church in question (Trinity) embodies the following seven values distilled from research related to RQ's 1-3:

1. Possesses a broad view of the Church.
2. Two visible sacraments (baptism and communion).
3. Collaborative ministry between ordained ministers and lay persons.
4. A community who values and practices formation and spiritual devotion.
5. Demonstrates a high view of the Trinity in worship and practice.
6. Importance placed upon preaching that demonstrates a holistic engagement with Old and New Testaments.
7. Importance placed upon evangelism and mission work.

In the survey, three questions are posed for each of the seven values highlighted in the literature review. The survey, which was disseminated to 850+ members of the church in question, was accompanied by a cover letter describing the nature of the survey, along with a note of thanks for those who take the time to complete the twenty-one-question survey. **Survey—Appendix A**

Focus Group: For the purpose of research, two focus groups were convened.

Group 1 was comprised of six to eight staff members. This group was comprised of a mix of male/female, east and west side locations, pastoral and support staff.

Group 2 was comprised of six to eight lay leaders. This group was also a mix of male and female, east and west side locations and those who serve in pastoral and support roles (an

example of a pastoral role would be a community group leader or lay worship leader, while a support role would be a parking volunteer or café worker/greeter).

Focus Group Questions—Appendix B

Ministry Context(s)

The ministry context for this project was a church located in the city center of Atlanta, Ga. The church in question was planted in October of 2002 and currently worships in two locations with an average Sunday attendance in excess of 1,600. The church is primarily populated by men and women under fifty years of age. The mindset of those in the community is reflective of the culture in which the church exists. Atlanta is a growing city, boasting a vibrant collection of local eateries, coffee shops, retail stores, and green spaces, as well as various employment opportunities. Additionally, the art and entertainment industry has become a touchstone of Atlanta's emergence as a cultural hub in the Southeastern United States. Atlanta is also a politically diverse city. Trinity reflects that part of the cultural ethos of the city. One area where Trinity is not as diverse as the city in which she resides is relative to ethnic diversity. Trinity is majority white, with a smaller percentage of African American, Asian and Latina people.

Trinity is part of the Anglican Church in North America, with particular participation in a diocese called Churches for the Sake of Others (C4SO). C4SO primarily exists to encourage and advance the cause of church planting within the Anglican Church in North America. The church in question expresses a commitment to a three streams approach to ministry, embodying a blend of liturgical, evangelical and charismatic practices and worship styles. This approach to embodying multiple worshipping traditions provides Trinity with opportunity to draw people from a wide range of church backgrounds. Trinity is egalitarian with regard to its view of women and men in ministry roles.

In summary, Trinity is a church that reflects its urban environment. The church is politically diverse, primarily comprised of young professionals, and engaged in the life of the city. The constituency of the church live in and around the areas where the church worships.

Participants

The participants involved in this study were all part of the worshipping community at Trinity Anglican, located in Atlanta, GA. Research Question #3 indicates that the church in question needed to be evaluated for the purposes of the project. Consequently, the participants in the research portion of the project were selected from three specific populations within the church in question. The first group was part of the adult membership community (generally ages eighteen and up) of the church in question. The entire membership roster (850 individuals) was provided with an online survey (See Appendix A). The next group was comprised of a random selection of six to eight staff members at the church in question. They were part of a focus group (See Appendix B). The third, and final, group was comprised of lay leaders within the church community. They participated in a focus group (See Appendix B).

Criteria for Selection

Online Survey population

The membership base at Trinity was the obvious choice for the survey portion of the research process. This group, numbering some 850 individuals, comprises the core constituency of the church. In order for a person to become a member at Trinity they must attend a membership informational meeting and affirm the following:

1. Their Christian commitment
2. That they have been baptized (either as a small child or as an adult)

3. They subscribe to and support the mission and ministry philosophy of the church (see Appendix C for membership info card).

The church in question is rigorous in its efforts to maintain accurate and up to date contact information relating to its membership roster. The membership was selected to participate in the survey because this group of individuals engages in regular participation in the ministry of the church and is therefore likely to offer helpful insights relating to the church's embodiment of the values in question.

Focus Groups

For the purposes of our research, two distinct focus group conversations were engaged around the 7 essential values identified in Chapter 2. One group was comprised of 6-8 staff leaders (a mixture of pastoral and support staffers). The second group was populated by 6-8 lay leaders.

Description of Participants

The membership and leadership community at Trinity (which includes leaders and staff members) is a diverse community, comprised of male and female persons of varying ethnicity. The church is predominately white, with a smaller number of Latino, African American and Asian members. Members range in age from eighteen to ninety-one years of age. Every member of the church has professed Christian faith and has been baptized.

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent

Individuals invited to participate had every freedom to choose whether this was something they would like to do. They were provided with an informed consent signature page present at the front of the survey, which allowed them to opt out of the survey should they desire to do so.

Additionally, all members participating in the focus groups were given an informed consent form to sign. If participants chose to refrain, or to cease participation once they had begun, they were free to do so (Appendix D—Informed Consent for survey/focus groups).

Confidentiality

Any and all data collected during the research process was stored on a password protected computer. Any transcripts or printed survey results were locked in a secure drawer in the researcher's office. Research data was destroyed once data had been collated and project findings had been written.

Additionally, those participating in focus groups were assigned a moniker other than their given name. Consequently, any citation or quote given was connected to a pseudonym rather than a person's given name. While it could not be entirely guaranteed due to having a number of individuals participate in the focus groups, every effort was engaged to protect the confidentiality of focus group participants.

Anonymity

The identities of the respondents to the online survey portion of the research were kept anonymous, as the survey did not request name information.

Instrumentation

Two tools were used to gather relevant data from the church in question.

An online researcher designed survey was distributed (via Survey Monkey). The survey consisted of twenty-one questions that explored the seven church planting characteristics identified in Chapter 2 of the project. Three questions were posed for each of the seven characteristics. This tool was designed by the researcher in consultation with a number of experts within the church planting field, with an eye toward gathering quantitative data relative to the

seven planting characteristics in question. In addition to containing twenty-one questions designed to determine the extent to which the church in question embodies the relevant church planting values, basic demographic information was also included. The online survey began with an opt out question should any member wish to refrain from participating (see Appendix A).

Two focus groups answered researcher designed questions that centered on the seven values identified in Chapter 2 of the research process. These questions were also vetted by a number of experts in the field of church planting, with an eye toward gathering qualitative data as various populations discussed/reflected upon the seven planting characteristics identified in Chapter 2 of the project. The purpose of the focus group instrument was to gain insights that might have been missed (Appendix B).

The two forms of research (online survey and focus groups) constituted a blended approach to evaluating the extent to which the church in question embodies the characteristics identified in Chapter 2 of the project.

Pilot Test or Expert Review

Research instruments were reviewed by various experts in the field of church work and church planting with an eye toward refining the instrument's effectiveness in mining relevant data. Todd Hunter, an Anglican Bishop and church planter, was one of the expert reviewers. His experience in the arena of Anglican church planting made him an ideal candidate for the expert review portion of the project. Bishop Hunter affirmed the relevance of the survey and focus group questions. For the purposes of the twenty-one question online survey, none of the experts offered any critical feedback on alterations for the questions. Similarly, each expert affirmed the questions that offered guidance to the focus group conversations.

Reliability & Validity of Project Design

In order to ensure that the research portion of this project was effective, a number of steps were taken. Specifically, both quantitative and qualitative research tools were employed in the research. “The classic qualitative-quantitative debate has been largely resolved with recognition that a variety of methodological approaches are needed and credible, that mixed methods can be especially valuable, and that the challenge is to appropriately match methods to questions rather than some narrow methodological orthodoxy” (Patton xxii). Consequently, both methods were employed in the research for this project. Additionally, a grounded theory approach to research was employed through the use of focus group questions and a survey. Grounded theory allows for analysis of data during the research process. This approach helps yield real world/real time insights throughout the process of research. “Grounded theory is a research tool which enables you to seek out and conceptualize the latent social patterns and structures of your area of interest through the process of constant comparison” (Scott 54).

The survey portion of the research falls under the quantitative research category because members were asked to answer questions based on a number system where they rated their responses. This yielded statistical insights from among a large number of individuals. Sensing states, “Quantitative studies are designed to investigate an issue with great breadth” (Sensing 2,258).

In his book on research methods, Tim Sensing states the following regarding qualitative research, “Qualitative research is grounded in the social world of experience and seeks to make sense of lived experience” (Sensing location 1629). The focus group questions were expert reviewed for content and were effective at helping get at the “lived experience” of various participants in the life of the church in question. These conversations constituted an approach to

qualitative research and were able to mine out data that would not likely be collected through quantitative research. Furthermore, Sensing states:

This is why the semi-structured format worked so well, as Merriam describes this format as one in which " . . . either all of the questions are more flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions. Usually, specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a highly structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic. (Sensing 74).

This approach helped yield insights that were critical to helping the researcher better understand the lived experiences of various participants in the project.

Both instruments (the survey and the focus group questions) were designed in an effort to yield maximum insight from participants. The concise nature of the online survey allowed for easy access and timely completion, while the focus group conversations were limited to one hour. This attention to expediency was intended to keep the experiences from being overly time consuming on the part of the participants. The time limitation for the focus group conversations also motivated the interview/researcher to remain focused on topic. The focus group conversations were recorded so that insights could be transcribed at a later time, thus preventing the loss of valuable insight as the conversation unfolded.

The questions contained in both tools (the survey and the focus group conversations) were not specifically geared to any one particular church context. They were, rather, based on evaluating how the seven values identified in the research portion of the project might be

embodied in a church community. This assertion regarding generality has been affirmed by a number of experts in the field of church work.

Data Collection

The type of research for this project was pre-intervention; data was collected in an effort to describe the situation before any remediation was engaged.

The purpose of this project was to identify essential values of Trinity Anglican through an exploration of Acts 2, Anglicanism, and various moments in Britain's missionary history and measure the extent to which these values are being currently embodied at the church in question. This evaluation was assessed in two ways: First, through the conduction of an online survey (using survey monkey) involving members of the church in question, and, second, through conduction of two focus group interviews. The two focus group conversations explored the extent to which the church in question (Trinity Anglican) embodies the values highlighted in the literature review portion of the research.

The first step in the data collection process was the dissemination of the online survey. Sensing states, "A survey is a lengthy questionnaire that employs fixed choice responses. The purpose of a survey is to describe characteristics or understandings of a large group of people" (Sensing 2,861). An online survey (Appendix A) was sent via survey monkey on January 8, 2018 to the 850 individuals who make up the membership community at Trinity Anglican Church located in Atlanta, GA. Each member received the survey via the email address he/she had provided to the church in question. Members had the freedom to refrain from engaging in the survey should they desire to do so. Respondents were provided a two-week window of time in which to respond to the survey. At the conclusion of this two-week timeframe, the researcher enlisted the services of our administrative pastor, Matt Yoder, to run reports on the data collected

via responses to the online survey. At that time, reports were generated based on the data provided by respondents.

During this same timeframe (January 1-10), a number of individuals were invited to participate in two different focus group conversations. The first focus group (consisting of staff members) met on January 10, 2018. The second focus group (consisting of lay leaders) met on January 21, 2018. Sensing states the following of the beauty of gathering a group of people together for a directed conversation, “The synergy of the group will often provide richer data than if each person in the group had been interviewed separately” (Sensing 2,938). Sensing goes on to say, “The group responds to a series of questions that allows the researcher to quickly gather data from several points of view” (Sensing 2,946).

The first focus group was comprised of five to seven staff members. The method for inviting staff members was to randomly select seven names from the list of staff members. Each selected individual was given ample opportunity to opt out of the focus group. If fewer than five individuals affirmed their desire to participate, then one staff member would be selected (same method as with original invitees) until the desired number (minimum of five) was reached. The focus group conversation was held at Trinity Anglican and facilitated by the researcher. Participants met in an office located at the church building. A recording device was placed in the center of the circle in order to record responses. The researcher invited participants to respond to the questions devised for the focus group (document with focus group questions attached). The focus group time was limited to one hour. At the conclusion of the focus group the researcher listened to the recordings and transcribed the conversation with an eye toward identifying key themes/words that emerged from the dialogue.

The second focus group was comprised of five to seven church lay leaders. The method for inviting church members was to randomly select seven names from our leadership community database. The researcher worked with the church communications director to devise a method where names were randomly selected from our digital member database. The logic for selection was as follows: if each person selected indicated that they would like to participate, then the focus group roster would be set. However, if fewer than five individuals affirmed their desire to participate, then one church member will be chosen (same method as with original invitees) until the desired number (minimum of five) was reached. The focus group conversation was held at Trinity Anglican and facilitated by the researcher. Participants met in an office located at the church building. A recording device was placed in the center of the circle so that responses were able to be recorded. The researcher invited participants to respond to the questions devised for the focus group conversation (document with focus group questions attached). The focus group time was set to last no longer than one hour. At the conclusion of the focus group the researcher listened to the recordings and transcribed the conversation that unfolded, with an eye toward identifying key themes/words that emerged from the dialogue.

The focus groups were able to allow for space in the conversation, as the researcher made sure to leave room for respondents to offer honest and unfiltered (unprepared) feedback on questions posed. Sensing states the following concerning a benefit of pre-intervention focus group interviews, “There are no predetermined responses, and the interviewer is free to probe and explore for more depth. An interview guide ensures good use of time, makes the process more systematic and comprehensive, and keeps the interviewer focused on the purpose of the interview” (Sensing 2,704).

At the conclusion of the data collection process (January 21, 2018), the researcher worked to organize the data collected from the online survey and two focus groups. This data served as the basis for Chapters 4 and 5 of the research project.

Data Analysis

After the survey and focus group conversations were completed, the researcher compiled the data in order to analyze the results. Concerning the online survey of members, data was collected and compiled into relevant categories in an effort to identify areas of strength and weakness of the church relative to the seven values explored by the instrument. This quantitative data yielded insights into membership perceptions relative to the seven values highlighted in the survey. This data was analyzed and compiled into charts and graphs, as well as reported on in narrative form.

In an effort to ascertain the extent to which the church in question expresses each of the aforementioned values, an online survey and two focus group conversations were engaged. The online survey consisted of twenty-one questions, with three questions per value. The questions were posed to determine membership perceptions of how the church was engaging each value in question, by approaching the value from different angles. The data yield was then tallied with each cluster of three questions being lumped together to achieve a total score for each value. The online survey had four possible responses to each of the twenty-one questions. Each answer was assigned a numeric value: *Strongly agree* was allotted two points, *somewhat agree* was allotted one point, *somewhat disagree* was assigned a value of negative one point, while *strongly disagree* was assigned a numeric value of negative two points. Taken together, the answers to the questions in the online survey provided the researcher with data to assign an overall number for each value. The values were then compared to one another, thus providing insight into relative

strength of the seven values within the church in question. This data was supplemented through focus group conversations, which are a form of qualitative research. Taken together, the data yielded insights that were useful in measuring the extent to which the church in question is living into the very things it hopes to instill in future church plants.

Relating to the focus group conversations, transcripts were made from the interview recording. These transcripts were leveraged with the researcher looking for common themes/phrases/words. These qualitative conversations yielded insights into the perceptions of various leaders within the church community relative to the seven values explored in the focus groups.

CHAPTER 4 EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this project was to identify value markers that would inform planting initiatives at a church located in Atlanta's city center. These values express an Acts 2 ethos, a mere Anglicanism, and the goodness of various missionary movements in Britain's history, the land where Anglicanism was birthed. Efforts were also made to measure the extent to which these values are being currently embodied at the church in question. These efforts comprise the work of Chapter 4.

As Acts 2, Anglicanism, and Britain's missionary past were explored during the literature review portion of the project, certain themes (or patterns) emerged. Themes that emerged during the exploration of more than one research question were flagged as major findings. Throughout the reading research, seven such values emerged, having been distilled from the larger work of Chapter 2. These seven values will serve as the guiding template for evaluating and coaching new church works that emerge from the sending church in question. These seven values also comprise the major findings of the project in question.

In the pages to follow, data is shared that reflects the extent to which the church in question currently embodies the very values it seeks to instill in future church works through church planting initiatives. Data noted in this chapter comes from an online survey and two focus group conversations.

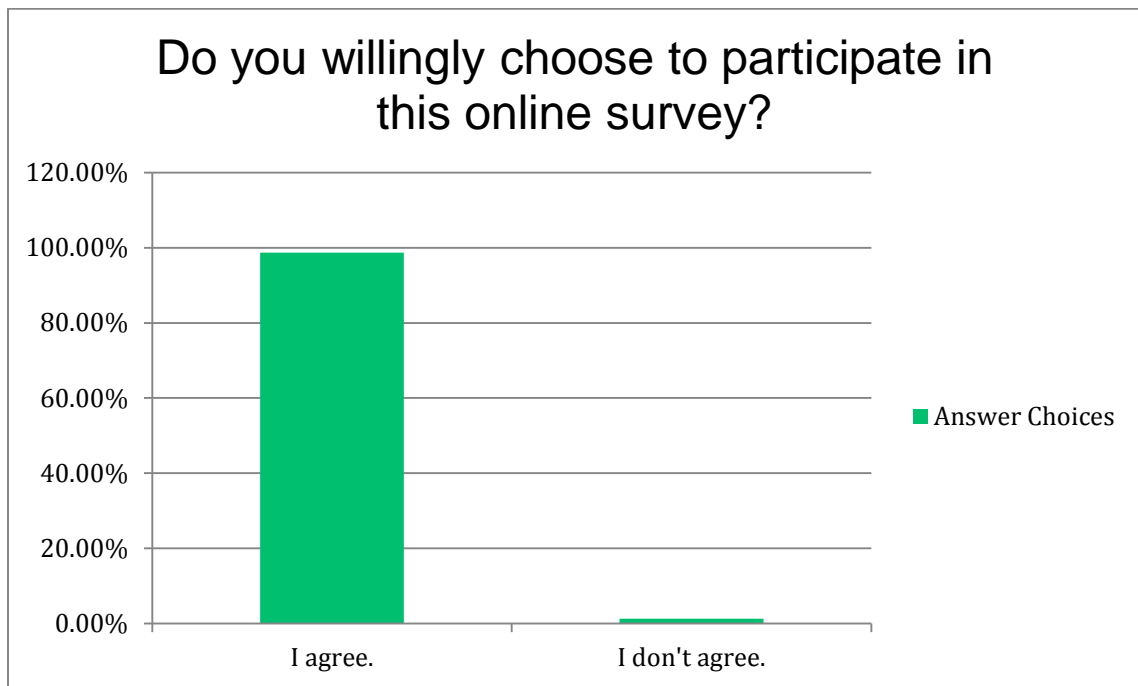
Participants

Three different groups were invited to participate in the research/evidence collection portion of the project at hand. Each group was resident within the church in question. First, the membership population of the church in question was presented with an online survey and given

a two-week window to participate. Second, a randomly selected group of five to seven staff members of the church in question was invited to participate in a focus group discussion. Third, a randomly selected group of lay leaders at the church in question was invited to participate in a focus group conversation.

Online Survey Demographic Data

Of the 850 members at the church in question, 381 individuals elected to participate in the online survey. The first question in the online survey gave people the option to opt out of the process should they so desire.



Answer Choices	Answer Choices	Answer Choices
I agree.	98.70%	381
I don't agree.	1.30%	5
Answered		386

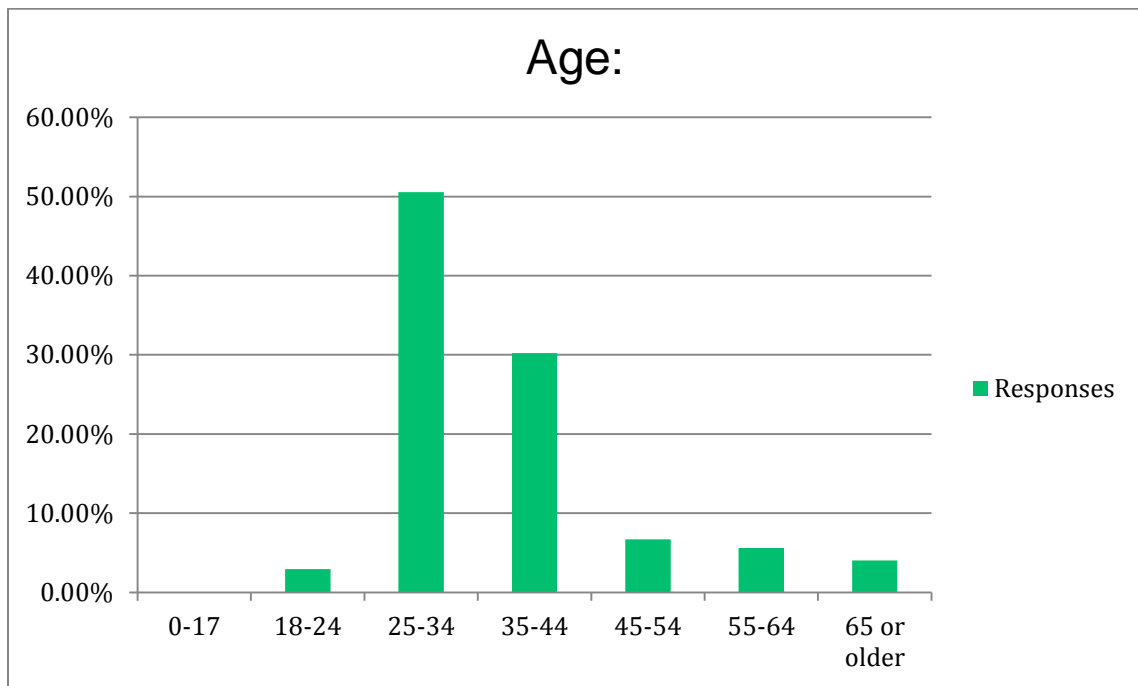
Skipped 0

Gender

The online survey button for this question was broken at the time of publishing. This technological malfunction was unknown to the researcher at the time the survey was disseminated, and there was no way to know that this was the case. This regrettable malfunction prevented us from learning the gender breakout of the respondents.

Age

The following chart describes the breakdown of participant ages:



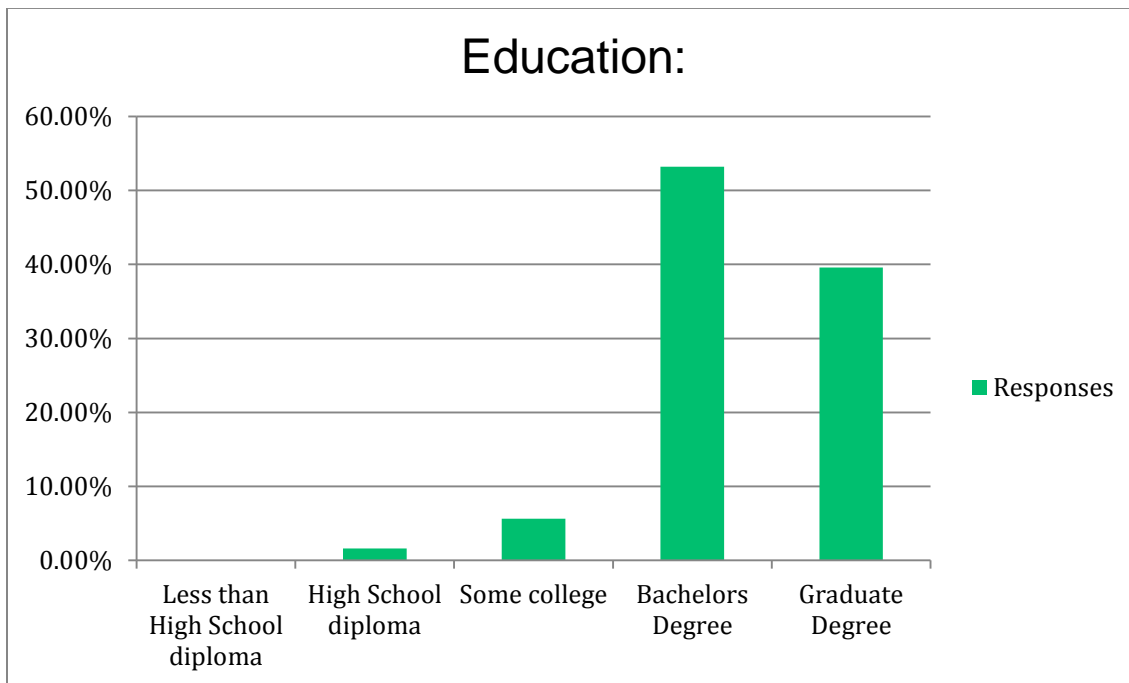
Age:

Answer	Responses
0-17	0.00% 0
18-24	2.94% 11

25-34	50.53%	189
35-44	30.21%	113
45-54	6.68%	25
55-64	5.61%	21
65 or older	4.01%	15
Answered		374
Skipped		12

Highest Level of Education Completed

Three-hundred-seventy-four individuals chose to provide an answer. The breakdown was as follows:



Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than High School diploma	0.00%	0
High School diploma	1.60%	6

Some college	5.61%	21
Bachelor's Degree	53.21%	199
Graduate Degree	39.57%	148
Answered		374
Skipped		12

The staff focus group yielded 5 participants—2 male, 3 female (ages—male 41, 41; female—32, 35, 39).

The lay leader focus group was comprised of 6 individuals—2 male, 4 female (ages—female 28, 59, 59, 30; male—44, 29).

Description of Evidence

The evidence gathered during the data collection portion of this project centers around Research Question #4 due to the fact that Research Question #4 is the measurable culmination of Research Questions #1-3. Research Question #1 is: What values of the primitive church can be identified from an examination of Acts 2? Research Question #2 is: What constitutes a “mere Anglicanism”? Research Question #3 concerns: An exploration of notable missionary movements in Britain’s Christian past. Research Question #4 is: To what extent does the church in question embody the essential values discovered through an exploration of Acts 2, a mere Anglicanism, and the missionary past of Britain? Research questions 1-3 yielded data that was distilled into seven distinct values that served as the focal point of the data collection of research Question #4. Consequently, the qualitative (focus groups) and quantitative (online survey) data collected for the project is entirely expressed through research Question #4.

Research Question #1: Description of Evidence

What Values of the Primitive Church Can Be Identified from an Examination of Acts 2?

A summary of the findings in the literature review (Chapter 2) revealed seven such values. First, the primitive church was Holy Spirit empowered. Second, the primitive church championed evangelism, mission and conversion. Third, the primitive church placed emphasis on inspired preaching and teaching. Fourth, the primitive church perceived that what God was doing in Acts 2 stood in continuity with the Old Testament. Fifth, the primitive church expressed a high Christology. Sixth, the primitive church engaged the sacraments of baptism and communion. Seventh, the primitive church honored the significance of community relationships, devotion, and spiritual formation.

Research Question #2: Description of Evidence

What Constitutes a “Mere Anglicanism”?

A summary of the findings in the literature review (Chapter 2) revealed five such values. First, Anglicans possess a broad view of the Church. Second, Anglicans celebrate two sacraments (baptism and communion). Third, Anglicans embrace the importance of effective pastors (bishops, priests and deacons) functioning alongside empowered lay people. Fourth, Anglicans are a people of devotion. Fifth, Anglicans honor the importance of mission and evangelism.

Research Question #3: Description of Evidence

An Exploration of Notable Missionary Movements in Britain’s Christian Past

A summary of the findings in the literature review revealed eight such values in the missionary history of Great Britain. First, there is evidence of an emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit. Second, there is particular emphasis placed upon team work in mission and ministry. Third, there is a focus on spiritual formation and community life among believers. Fourth, there is emphasis placed upon effective preaching. Fifth, there is evidence of a broad view of the

church. Sixth, there is evidence of emphasis placed upon helpful structures and organization for mission. Seventh, there is emphasis placed upon Christian conversion/awakening. Eighth, emphasis was placed upon accessible worship practices.

Research Question #4: Description of Evidence

To What Extent Does Trinity Church Embody the Essential Values Discovered through an Exploration of Acts 2, a “Mere Anglicanism,” and the Missionary Past of Britain?

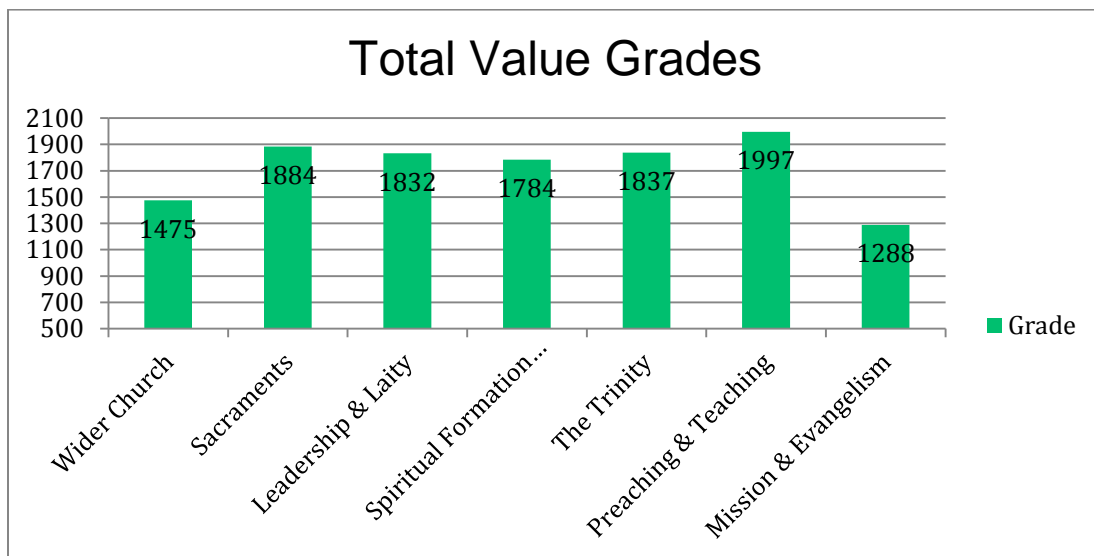
Investigation of the first three research questions yielded a number of discoveries that were then distilled into seven church values/markers. These seven values/hallmarks were then tested in the church that serves as the basis for the research project. The testing aimed to measure the extent to which the sending church in question embodies these seven values. This process of evaluation comprised the entire scope of the data collection portion of the project.

The remaining pages of Chapter 4 include data collected as the seven aforementioned values relating to mission and church life were explored. Both quantitative (survey results) and qualitative data (references and citations from focus group conversations) was collected in an effort to ascertain the extent to which the church in question is embodying the values in question.

The online survey provided three questions for each of the seven values, resulting in twenty-one questions relating to the ministry of the church. Member responses to each question were graphed (yielding twenty-one separate graphs—three per value) and are located earlier in Chapter 4. The responses to the three questions associated with a particular value were then tabulated and assigned a numeric value in an effort to create a numeric assessment for each of the seven values in the survey. Each question relating to the seven values had four possible responses, and each response was assigned a specific numeric value. **Strongly agree** was assigned a +2 value, **somewhat agree** was assigned a +1 value, **somewhat disagree** was

assigned a **-1** value, and **strongly disagree** was assigned a **-2** value. Consequently, if a survey yielded an equal number of positive and negative values, the sum total for that value would be 0.

By associating a numeric quantity with each value, the researcher was able to benchmark the values against one another. This quantifying and ranking of values has helped provide a better understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses relating to the major findings of the project in the church in question.



<u>Answer Choices</u>	<u>Grade</u>
<u>Wider Church</u>	<u>1475</u>
<u>Sacraments</u>	<u>1884</u>
<u>Leadership & Laity</u>	<u>1832</u>
<u>Spiritual Formation &</u>	
<u>Devotion</u>	<u>1784</u>
<u>The Trinity</u>	<u>1837</u>
<u>Preaching & Teaching</u>	<u>1997</u>
<u>Mission & Evangelism</u>	<u>1288</u>

Possesses a Broad View of the Church

Regarding the church's view of the wider body of Christ, a number of significant findings emerged during the research. This category ranked six out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1475. The lowest scoring for this section came on the question concerning whether the church in question is meaningfully engaged with other churches in the local area. Of the 352 respondents to this question, 263 answered: 192 said "somewhat agree" and 71 said "somewhat disagree." It was noted in the focus groups, however, that the church is respected in the city and that the church has healthy relationship with daughter congregations. This suggests a somewhat self-contained dynamic at the church in question. Finally, it was noted that the church does not always communicate the things that are happening in its midst, and that the church could benefit from celebrating the wider church in more consistent ways.

Embodies Two Visible Sacraments

Regarding the sacraments of communion and baptism, a number of significant insights emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked second out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1884.

1. First, the survey and focus group conversations confirmed that the sacrament of communion is embodied in a clear and compelling manner at the church in question, with over 93% of the 356 respondents in the survey indicated that they “strongly agree” that the sacrament of communion plays a significant and visible role in the life of the church. Furthermore, it was noted during focus group conversations that leaders employ simple and accessible language when engaging the sacraments.
2. It was noted, however, that baptism does not hold the same place of significance in the church. Regarding baptism 28.57% of the respondents ranked the church at less than “strongly agree” when asked about the visible significance of baptism in the church.
 - a. This number may not seem high, but when compared to communion (6.18 rated the church at less than “strongly agree”) it stands out as significantly lower.
 - b. A number of people pointed to the need to make baptism more visible by engaging the sacrament more often than has historically been the case (the church in question typically engages baptism once or twice per year).
3. It was also noted in focus group conversations that there may be some tension connected to baptism because of the church’s emphasis on spiritual formation as a process. Do people fail to see the “crossing the line” nature of baptism, choosing instead to always remain in “process”?

Engages in Team Ministry Comprised of Ordained and Non-Ordained Persons

Regarding team ministry comprised of episcopal leaders and empowered laity, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked fourth out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1832.

1. Concerning bishops, it was noted in focus group conversations that the church does not celebrate the goodness of the bishop relationship consistently enough.
2. Concerning the engagement of the pastoral staff, it was noted that pastors at the church in question are actively engaged, accessible, and relatable. Of the respondents in the online survey, 83.18% strongly agreed that pastors exercise healthy and effective leadership. A number of focus group participants indicated that there is a real sense of team among staff pastors at the church.
3. Concerning the empowering of lay persons, evidence suggests that there is room for growth. Of 355 respondents, 93 answered less than “strongly agree” when asked whether lay persons played a significant role in the execution of the church’s mission and ministry.

Values Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Devotion

Regarding community, spiritual formation and spiritual devotion, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked fifth out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1784.

1. Concerning relationships within the church community, the data would suggest that there is room to improve. Of the respondents, 38.3% answered lower than strongly agree to the question concerning whether the church offers ample opportunity to foster meaningful friendships.

- a. A number of focus group participants indicated that beyond community groups (which do not work for every stage of life/every schedule), there are limited opportunities for people to make lasting friendship.
 - b. Additionally, a number of focus group participants wondered whether the church's struggle in this arena (creating friendship opportunities) is connected to the fact it is a larger church (two thousand in weekly attendance at time of this writing).
2. Regarding formation, it was noted by a number of individuals in the focus group conversations this is an area of strength for the church.
 - a. It was suggested, however, that more energy could be given to capture testimonies of God at work because so much of what the LORD is doing may go unknown to the wider congregation.

Demonstrates a High View of God as Trinity in Worship and Practice

Regarding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked third out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1837.

1. It was noted by a number of focus group participants that Trinitarian language is effectively employed in preaching and singing at the church in question.
 - a. Of 354 respondents, 89.55% indicated that they "strongly agreed" that church teachers use clear and concise language regarding Persons of the Holy Trinity.
 - b. Of 354 respondents, 85.11% indicated that they "strongly agreed" that church worship leaders use clear and concise Trinitarian language in songs and liturgical practices.

2. A number of focus group participants noted that while leaders have historically focused more attention on the Father and Son, in recent years there has been increased attention given to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.
3. Despite positive data on preaching/teaching/worship leading concerning the Holy Trinity, the congregation still ranked low relative to possessing an informed understanding of the Holy Trinity. Only 59.55% of participants indicated that they “strongly agreed” when asked whether congregants possessed an informed understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Emphasizes Preaching/Teaching that Demonstrates Holistic Engagement with the Old and New Testaments

Regarding compelling preaching and teaching of the Old and New Testaments, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked first out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1997.

1. Of the 356 respondents, 92.70% indicated “strongly agreed” to the survey question stating that the church places particular emphasis on compelling Biblical preaching and teaching.
2. Participants across both focus group conversations noted the strength of the value of preaching and teaching.
 - a. It was noted that sermons and classes are accessible, authentic, and thoughtful.
3. Of the respondents, 94.10% “strongly agreed” that the church engages the New Testament in teaching and preaching.
4. Of the respondents, 82.02% “strongly agreed” that the church engages the Old Testament in teaching and preaching.

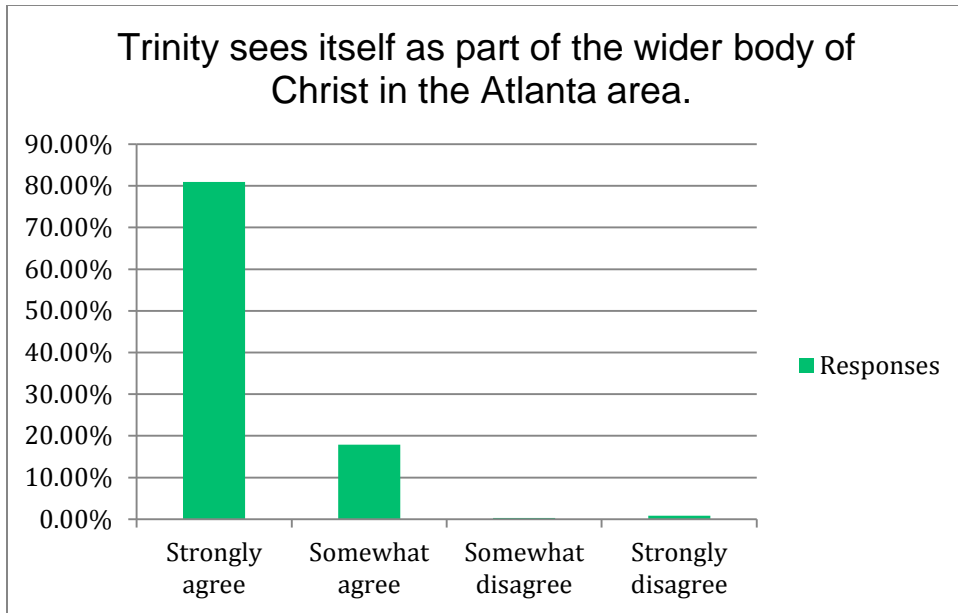
Places Importance upon Mission and Evangelism

Regarding evangelism and local mission, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked seventh out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1,288.

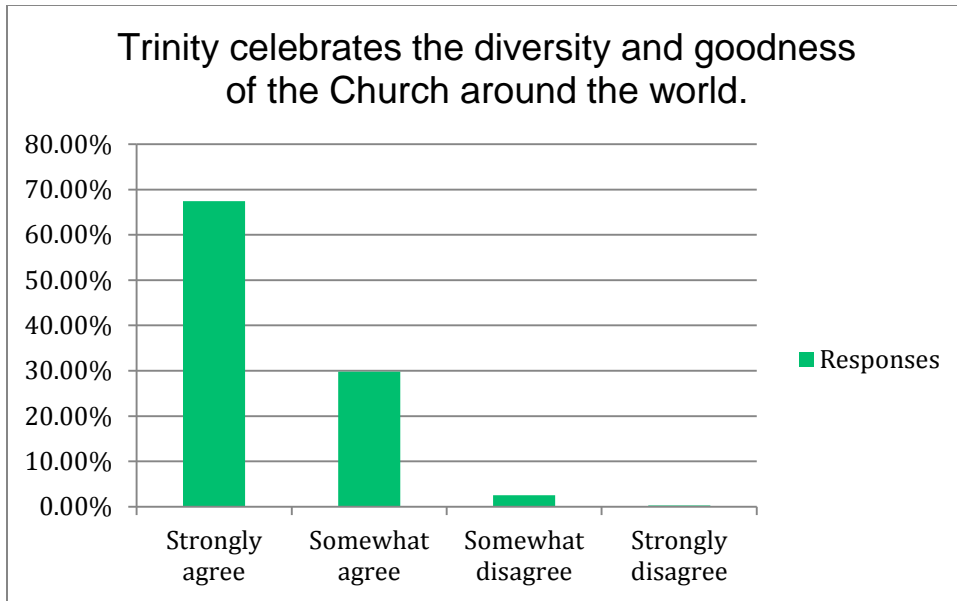
1. Only 37.36% of 356 respondents indicated “strongly agree” to the statement regarding the church placing emphasis upon Christian conversion.
 - a. This was, far and away, the lowest positive response to any single question posed during the course of the survey.
 - b. This evidence was supported in the focus group conversations as many leaders (both staff and lay persons) indicated that a value of conversion was lacking in the church.
2. More than one focus group participant wondered if the low numbers surrounding conversion as a value have something to do with the fact that the church in question is heavily invested in spiritual formation, which promotes the idea that life with God is an unfolding process. They asked whether this perspective might obscure the “moment in time” nature of how Christian conversion is often understood.
3. Regarding local missions, only 49.58% of the respondents “strongly agreed” that the church created ample opportunity for congregants to engage in local mission work.
 - a. The focus group conversations confirmed that the church struggles to provide ample opportunity for local engagement.

Possesses a Broad View of the Church

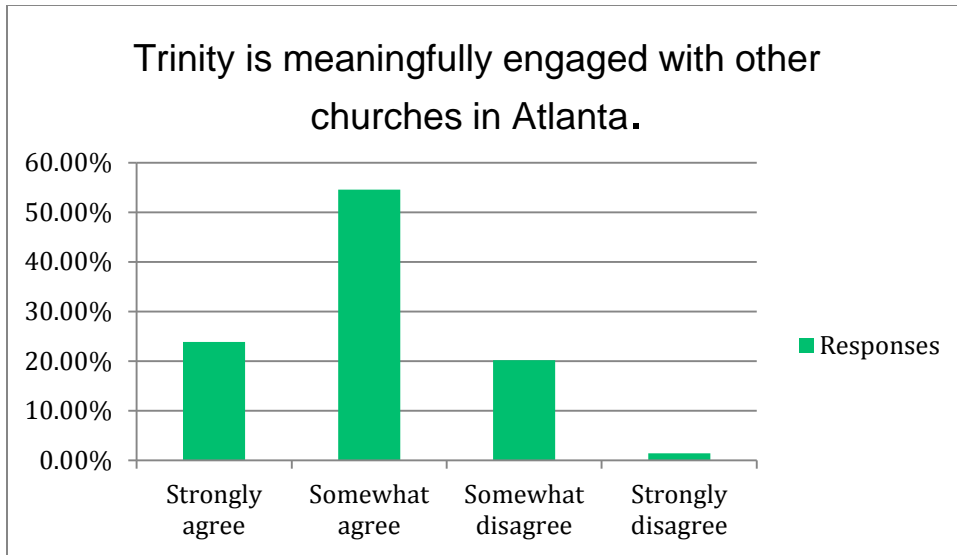
The following tables, and references to focus group conversations, demonstrate perceptions among members, lay leaders and staff relating to whether the church in question possesses a broad view of the Church.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	80.97%	285
Somewhat agree	17.90%	63
Somewhat disagree	0.28%	1
Strongly disagree	0.85%	3
Answered		352
Skipped		34



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	67.42%	238
Somewhat agree	29.75%	105
Somewhat disagree	2.55%	9
Strongly disagree	0.28%	1
Answered		353
Skipped		33



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	23.86%	84
Somewhat agree	54.55%	192
Somewhat disagree	20.17%	71
Strongly disagree	1.42%	5
Answered		352
Skipped		34

Two focus group conversations were engaged in an effort to gain qualitative insight regarding leader perceptions of the extent to which the church in question possesses a broad view of the wider church. The feedback was largely positive, albeit somewhat mixed. Leaders (both lay and paid) were selected for these focus group conversations because they are privy to a more intimate view of how the church is engaging certain values. Consequently, their insights were invaluable to the data collection/research process. The names of the respondents have been reduced to a single letter in an effort to protect their identity.

A female lay leader, H, indicated the following concerning the church's place in the city, "We hear about the city from the pulpit. Specifically, we hear about Redeemer and Eastside (two church plants from the church in question). We also hear a lot about our various ministries to the homeless in our city. Our pastors are known in the city and this is comforting. Being connected on a relational level to other ministers helps us remember that we are part of something bigger than just our church." Another leader, C, said, "A college pastor at a large church in the suburbs has heard about us through college students at local institutions in the city. He has indicated that he comes by to worship with us on a somewhat regular basis. Our church is known in the city." During that lay leader conversation, another male volunteer, T, indicated, "Trinity is known as a place where people can come and learn and grow. We seem to occupy a unique space for people in our city. Trinity is known as a safe place."

Concerning our connection to the wider Anglican world one female lay leader, P, noted, "We honor our Anglican tradition without isolating ourselves. Trinity honors the broader story of the Christian church. We do not pretend to hold an exclusive place in the wider story. This is very important and helpful for me as a member and leader in the church."

Not all the feedback concerning wider church engagement, however, was positive. A female staff pastor, M, noted, "We do a good job of engaging the big church worldwide because that is more theoretical. However, we don't engage other churches on a practical level all that well in our local area." Another pastor, B, indicated, "This church embodies a unique space in the city, and we could certainly do more to make intentional connections with other churches in our area." That same pastor went on to note that while the church does engage in a number of partnering activities with local congregations in the arena of mission and outreach, "It does not

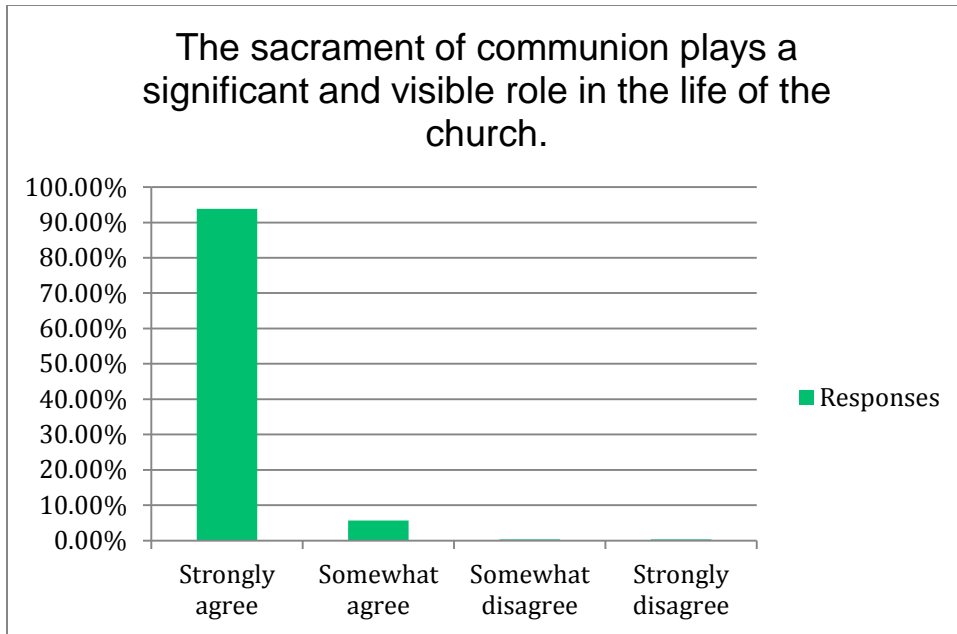
feel as if we are regularly engaged with other churches in worship, community, or sacramental life.”

Regarding church planting initiatives, one lay leader, T, indicated, “Because of our church size, we sometimes fail to recognize that we are perceived as a threat by a number of smaller churches in the community. We must be careful and thoughtful in our approach to planting because of this reality.” In a similar vein, one staff member, MY, noted, “We (the church in question) seem to initiate many of our partnerships . . . I can’t think of many examples of us joining in with something someone else is doing.”

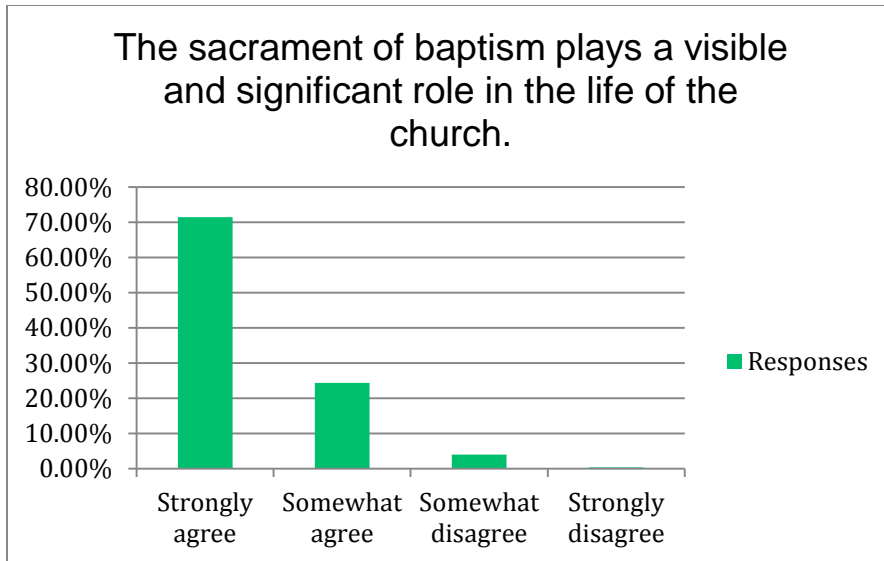
Some questions were raised during the course of the staff focus group conversation as to whether the church leadership does a thorough enough job of communicating a value of connection to the broader church. One pastor, J, noted, “I wonder whether we should talk from the pulpit more frequently about other churches—and about our partnerships with those congregations.” After stating this, he went on to wonder aloud how this would even work, and whether such sharing would seem awkward or off-putting to the wider congregation. These statements prompted another pastor, B, to state, “We don’t actively celebrate our collaboration with other churches. There may be more happening than we think.”

Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism

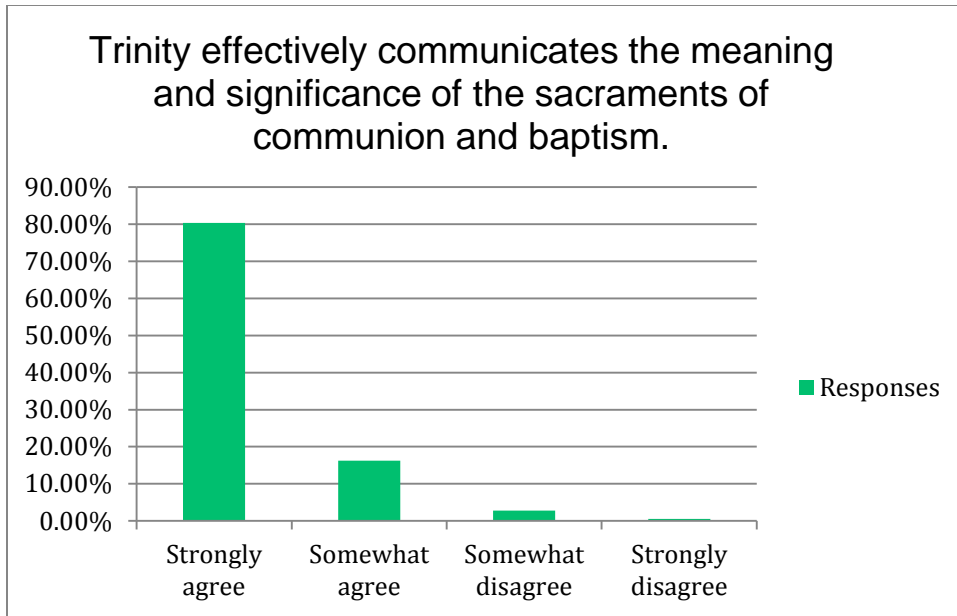
The following tables, and references to focus group conversations, demonstrate perceptions among members, lay leaders and staff relating to the value of the sacraments of baptism and communion at the church in question.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	93.82%	334
Somewhat agree	5.62%	20
Somewhat disagree	0.28%	1
Strongly disagree	0.28%	1
Answered		356
Skipped		30



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	71.43%	255
Somewhat agree	24.37%	87
Somewhat disagree	3.92%	14
Strongly disagree	0.28%	1
Answered		357
Skipped		29



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	80.39%	287
Somewhat agree	16.25%	58
Somewhat disagree	2.80%	10
Strongly disagree	0.56%	2
Answered		357
Skipped		29

Two focus group conversations were engaged in an effort to gain qualitative insight regarding leader perceptions of the extent to which the church in question values the sacraments of communion and baptism. Leaders (both lay leaders and paid employees) were selected for these focus group conversations because they are privy to a more intimate view of how the church is engaging certain values. Consequently, their insights were invaluable to the data

collection/research process. The names of the respondents have been reduced to a single letter in an effort to protect their identity.

Concerning the sacrament of communion, one lay leader, K, stated, “Coming forward to the communion table brings us together. I appreciate when the leader says ‘We are all going to come to this table together’ after a hard sermon/topic. It is a helpful reminder that we are all in this together. The church has helped me grow in my understanding and appreciation of communion.” Connected to the statement above, J noted, “Coming to the communion table has become very important to me. I don’t think I could go to a church where it was not offered each week. Also, serving communion is very powerful for me on a personal level. The privilege of looking into people’s faces as they receive communion from my hand is very emotional. It touches my heart.” Concerning the personal impact of serving communion, another female lay leader, P, chimed in, “There is something very emotional about it (serving communion to congregation). Being personal and direct with people at the table reminds me that communion is very intimate/powerful.”

One of our pastors, C, noted that there is great clarity around why we receive communion each week. She indicated that the church’s approach to the communion liturgy is accessible to others who come from different faith traditions. Another lay leader, MY, indicated that leaders do a thorough job in their attempt to articulate the ‘why behind the what’ concerning the sacraments. She expressed gratitude at how church leaders, “. . . explain things in a non-churchy way.” A lay leader, C, indicated, “Frequency of communion is now important to me—but it was weird to me at first. I have grown to love the fact that we come to the table each week. I see it differently now than I did before.”

Despite the clarity around the sacrament of communion, leaders did offer some constructive criticism. One leader indicated, “More language is needed around the medicine and power of communion.” A staff pastor, M, stated, “We used to describe the meaning behind communion more than we do now. It would do us well to remember that new people are always joining our church.” P, a lay leader, stated, “Communion cuts through all the words that can tend to fill up our worship. It’s the key point of the service—more important than the sermon. We maybe need to contextualize the holiness of communion. When I was going through a remarkably dark time in my life (death of husband) communion anchored me to the LORD.”

Concerning the sacrament of baptism, one lay leader, K, noted, “In my tradition growing up there was a huge focus on baptism and not so much on communion. I really appreciate the way communion is emphasized at Trinity. It’s not just a special meal served once or twice a year . . . It is more like daily bread! However, baptism is less of an emphasis.” A staff pastor, J, noted, “We only do baptism once or twice a year, so it is not seen as being as significant as communion.” A lay leader, J, indicated, “We need more explanation of baptism outside the Lent/Easter season. Maybe pastors/preachers could weave it into our sermons rather than simply having a class on baptism?” Concerning whether the church emphasizes baptism as much as communion, one staff member indicated, “If baptism and communion are our two sacraments—then we definitely engage communion in a stronger, clearer, way.”

Several insights were posited concerning the baptism of children. One lay leader noted how grateful he was that the church hosts prep for baptism classes for children and parents. He said, “Kids are invited to take ownership rather than parents just forcing their kids to do something.” A staff pastor, M, stated, “There is difference in perspective among parents concerning child blessings versus infant baptisms. I like the fact that our church has created

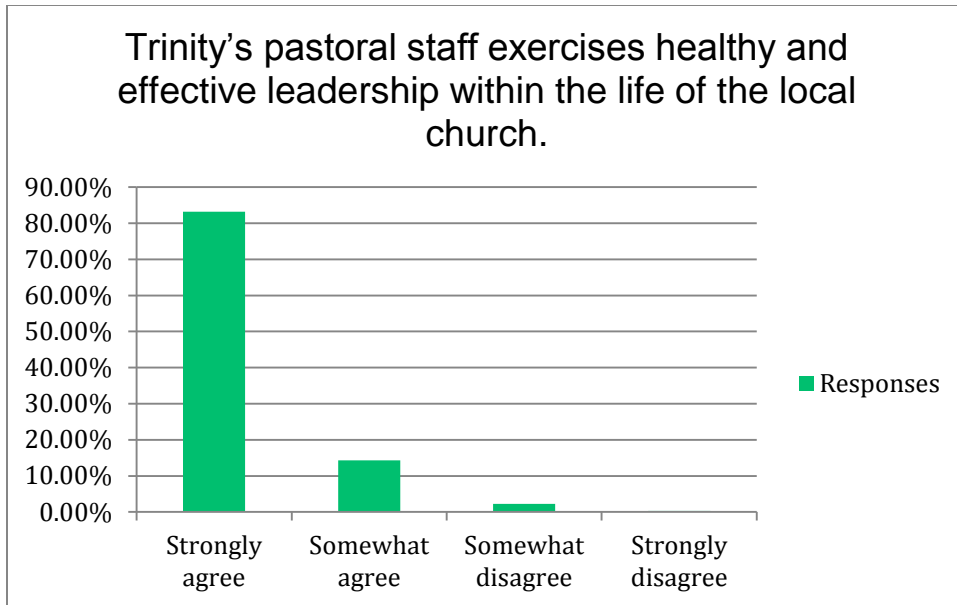
space for people to make different choices based on their worshipping tradition of origin, but this creates tension sometimes. Because of some of this tension, our communication is not always clear.” The same pastor indicated that this diverse approach to child blessings and infant baptism has allowed some confusion to exist as to when children are able/invited to receive communion.

One staff leader, MY, indicated that baptisms present the church with a powerful opportunity to share what God is doing in the congregation. She said, “Baptisms present us with prime God story moments in the life of our church, but we are limited in terms of how infrequently we do them! A lot happens in our church on baptism days. It is a very powerful time. I wonder if we could do more to capture these God moments?”

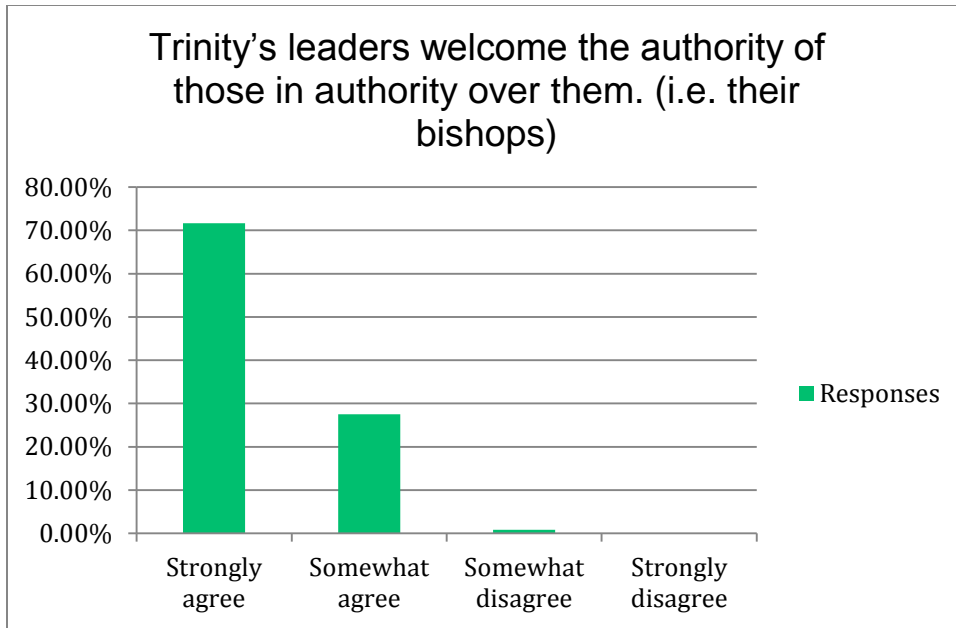
One staff pastor, B, noted, “Baptism feels complicated in a formation-oriented church because formation honors process and development over time. I am curious as to how these two important values fit together in a church like ours? Baptism tends to speak to ‘something happened’ in a moment, while formation orients around a very long story. I wonder if we are experiencing some tension in this respect?” Connected to B’s statement above, J asked, “Where does baptism fit in a person’s formation journey?”

Team Ministry Is Comprised of Ordained Leaders and Empowered Laity

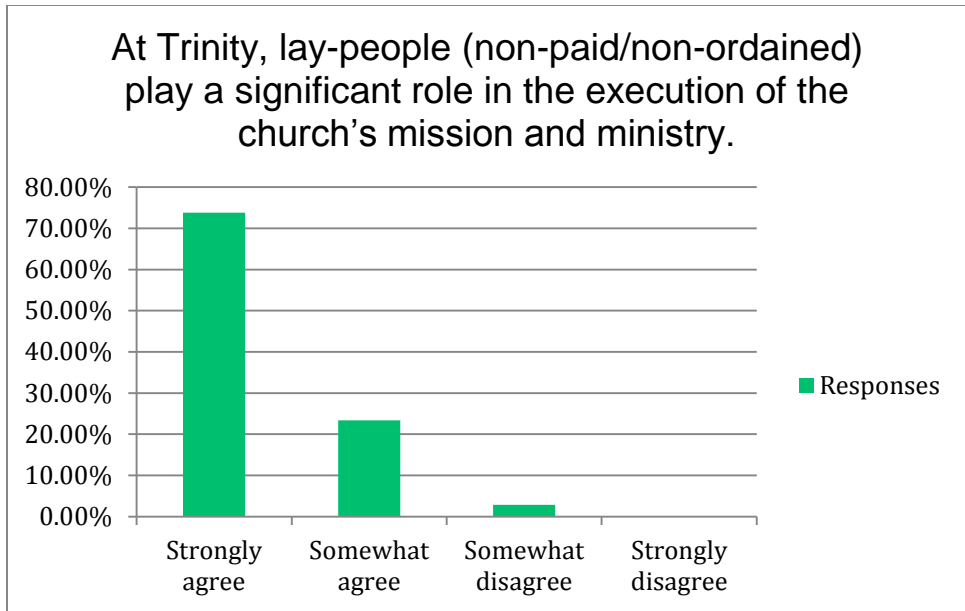
The following tables, and references to focus group conversations, demonstrate perceptions among members, lay leaders and staff relating to the value of leadership (bishops, pastors in local church, and empowered lay leadership) at the church in question.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	83.19%	297
Somewhat agree	14.29%	51
Somewhat disagree	2.24%	8
Strongly disagree	0.28%	1
Answered		357
Skipped		29



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	71.67%	253
Somewhat agree	27.48%	97
Somewhat disagree	0.85%	3
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		353
Skipped		33



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	73.80%	262
Somewhat agree	23.38%	83
Somewhat disagree	2.82%	10
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		355
Skipped		31

Two focus group conversations were engaged in an effort to gain qualitative insight regarding leader perceptions about the extent to which the church in question values team ministry comprised of ordained pastors and empowered lay persons. Leaders (both lay and paid) were selected for these focus group conversations because they are privy to a more intimate view of how the church is engaging certain values. Consequently, their insights were invaluable to the

data collection/research process. The names of the respondents have been reduced to a single letter in an effort to protect their identity.

Regarding the leadership of the pastors resident in the local church in question, one lay leader, C, indicated, “One of the things I love about the leadership at Trinity is there is a lack of ego and leaders are accessible.” Another lay leader, P, stated, “It is clear that our leaders realize that the church is growing and that they don’t have all of the answers. This is a good thing, in my view, because it communicates humility.” Yet another leader, H, said, “I am impressed with the relationships the pastors have with one another. This modeling of friendship is very encouraging and very telling. It is clear that you love one another, and that fosters confidence in you all. You (pastors) are also very approachable.” One staff member, MY, indicated that there is, “A value of accessibility and responsibility for staff leaders to take ownership over their areas of responsibility.” Pertaining to staff structures, one staff pastor, M, indicated, “On the whole, leadership and responsibility is very clear among staff members.”

Another theme that emerged during the course of the focus group conversations was connected to diversity of gender and age in our pastoral leadership team. One lay person (K) noted, “Trinity has gender diversity on the leadership team. Females model that there are voices that are being heard that are like them.” Yet there have been recent losses to the pastoral team relative to diversity. One leader, P, noted, “People really miss Gareth (an older staff member who retired in 2017). We feel the loss of having an older person on staff.” A number of the respondents in the focus group conversations also noted their desire for church leaders to continue to pay attention to diversity (ethnic, age, and gender) as future hires are considered.

Relating to laity (non-paid/non-ordained leaders in the church), J stated, “Leaders at church don’t wear out our volunteer leaders. As a lay leader, I feel very supported.” One staff

leader, C, indicated, “There has been an increased empowering of lay people in the last couple of years.” However, this statement was challenged by MY. She indicated, “We can do better with empowering lay people. We could do better about pursuing people and truly empowering them to lead without tons of staff involvement.”

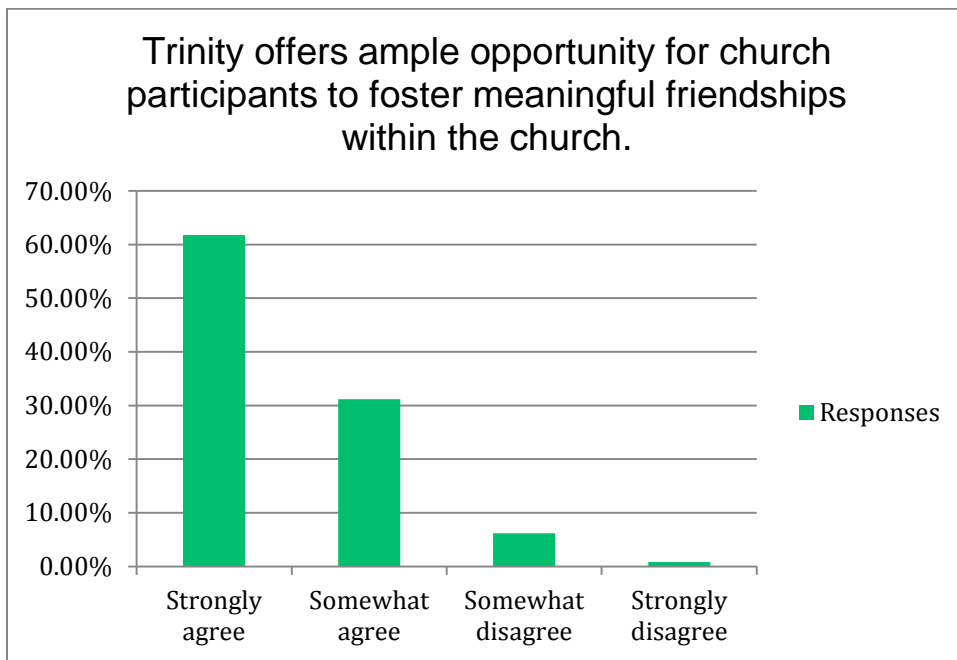
Relating to perceptions of the church’s connection to its bishops, one lay leader, T, stated, “I am not familiar with our bishops at all.” A staff member, M, stated, “As a staff person I hear about our personal relationships with bishop but I don’t know what that really looks like in terms of an official role in the church.” Another staff person, C, indicated, “We talk about our bishops and pray for our bishops in services during the prayers of the people. This makes me feel comfortable, but I have never met them.” Referencing the fact that our bishops have spent time with us at our annual Spring church-wide retreat, one leader, P, said, “I am thankful that our bishops have taught us at our retreats, but if someone misses a retreat (and, due to capacity issues, many in our church do not attend), they have no opportunity to celebrate the fact that we have such solid leadership over us.” A female lay leader, P, indicated the following of our bishops, “I am thankful that we do emphasize to our church, in a general way, that we are under our bishop’s authority.”

Regarding communication about the connections we have with our bishops, and those leaders in the Anglican world outside the local church in question, one leader, MY, said, “I sense that our leaders have a lot of involvement outside our church that our congregation and staff knows nothing about.” Several leaders, both lay and paid staff, indicated that they suspect the church leadership does not do an adequate job communicating and celebrating the ongoing relationships they have with bishops/people in leadership over them. One staff leader stated, “We were more disciplined about celebrating our bishops when we were new to Anglicanism, but less

so now that time has gone on.” To this statement, another staff pastor, B, indicated, “The great irony is that I am prouder of our bishops than I am of the Anglican denomination we’re part of. Our bishops have helped us immensely. Maybe we need more discipline in communicating these things to our leadership and wider community?”

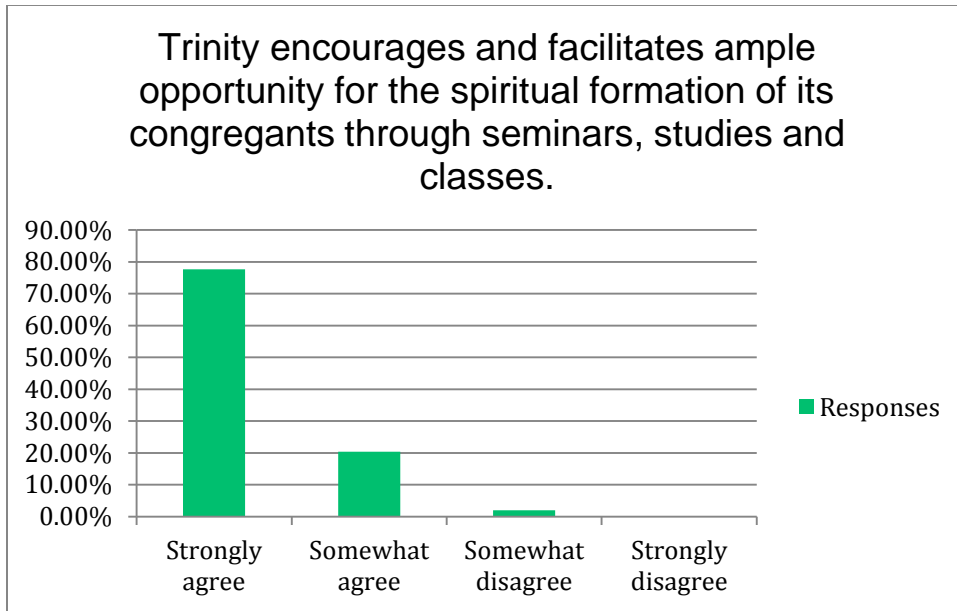
Spiritual Formation and Community Life

The following tables, and references to focus group conversations, demonstrate perceptions among members, lay leaders and staff relating to the value of spiritual formation and community life at the church in question.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	61.80%	220
Somewhat agree	31.18%	111
Somewhat disagree	6.18%	22

Strongly disagree	0.84%	3
Answered		356
Skipped		30



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	77.68%	275
Somewhat agree	20.34%	72
Somewhat disagree	1.98%	7
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		354
Skipped		32



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	84.51%	300
Somewhat agree	14.37%	51
Somewhat disagree	0.85%	3
Strongly disagree	0.28%	1
Answered		355
Skipped		31

Regarding friendships, the focus group conversations yielded several insights. The church in question seems to create space for friendship to occur organically but struggles to create clear pathways for friendships to be established. One staff member, C, stated, “We are a friendly place for people who are already rooted and established here. We are growing in helping create space for people who are seeking to root themselves.” In support of this reality, a female lay leader, H, stated, “We have deep and abiding friendships, but these have been very organic.” Another

leader, P, indicated, “Some people leave our church because they have a difficult time pushing through obstacles and barriers to meaningful relationships.” This same leader then spoke specifically about a number of her friends who have drifted away from the church community because they found relationships difficult to cultivate.

Relating to the cultivation of friendships among families with young children, one of the church’s children pastors, M, indicated, “We are doing a better job of being hospitable than we used to be, but still struggle to help people (especially young families) grow in deep connections.” Connected to the above statement, one staff member, C, made the following statement, “Being a regional church makes it difficult for us to help people make deep connections.” Relating to deeper connections, one lay leader indicated that there is not enough structure in the church beyond community group offerings. K stated, “We do a great job up until community groups and then there is not a lot past that. We must help people go deeper.” This struggle to access deeper connections was reinforced by another female lay leader. H, a mother of young children, indicated, “I desire to have a mentor—I would like for it to be an older woman at Trinity -and have not figured out how to access this.”

Multiple focus group participants from both the staff and lay leaders conversations indicated that they wondered whether the church in question was suffering from a liability of a large, commuter church dynamic. One leader, M, said, “Weeknight stuff is very difficult for people who commute and who have small children.” To this point, a male pastor, B, indicated, “The challenge is not just about creating more programming—it’s about a vibe/attitude in a large church—a commuter church.”

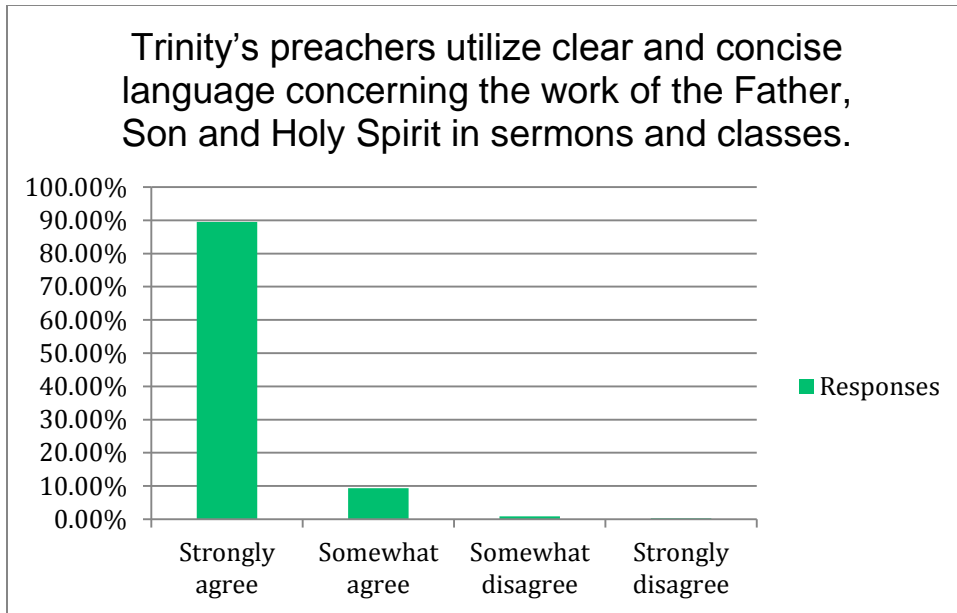
Concerning the significance of spiritual formation in the life of the church, the feedback was mostly positive. One lay leader, K, said, “Trinity creates space for me to have real

conversations around faith issues. Also, Trinity's classes cover topics that are meaningful and helpful for growth." Another leader, T, indicated, "Of all the things we've talked about, the church does this best. We offer classes, give book recommendations from the pulpit, are willing to talk about spiritual practices that help people figure out how to incorporate spiritual formation into daily life." Yet another lay leader, C, chimed in with, "Trinity reminds us of daily rhythms and practices that can shape life."

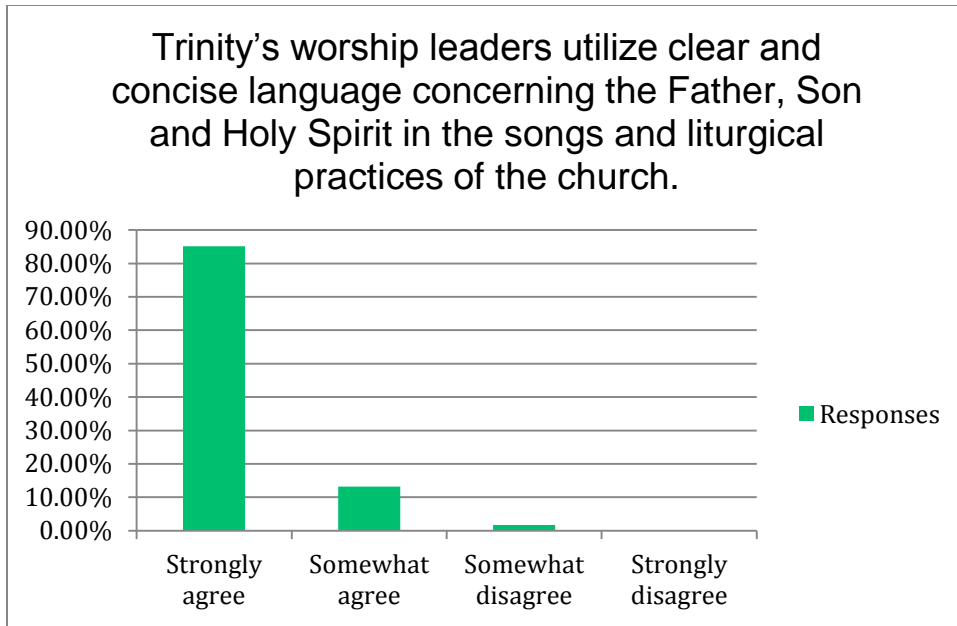
Speaking of the place of spiritual formation in the church's life and programming, one of our staff pastors, J, indicated, "We are increasingly doing a better job of giving people a road map—helping people understand what it looks like to be formed and how to engage a process of growth. We are giving people options beyond simply attending a community group. Community group is where it starts, but don't get comfortable and see that as the only way." This statement concerning a road map prompted one staff leader, C, to ask, "Maybe same gendered mentorship in smaller groups is the best way forward?"

Emphasis Is Placed upon Trinitarian Worship and Understanding

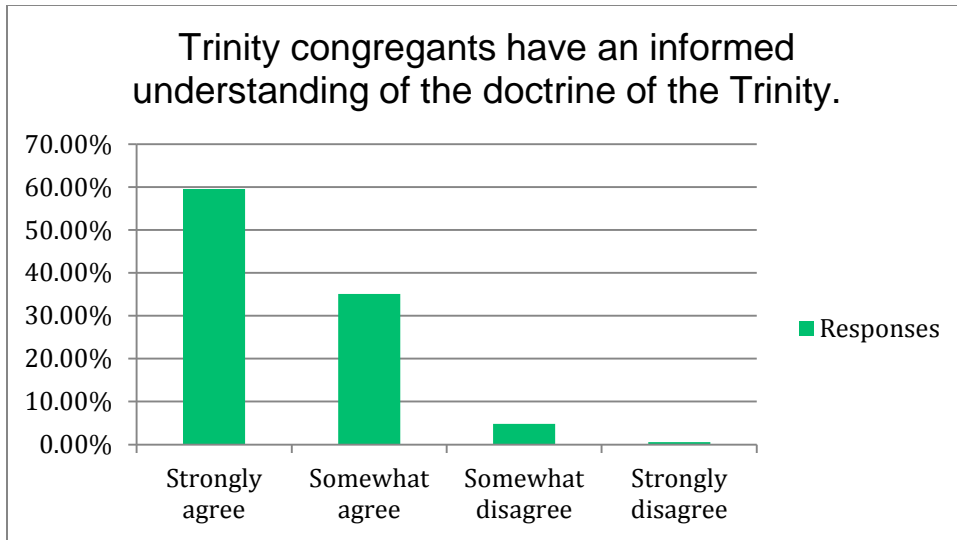
The following tables, and references to focus group conversations, demonstrate perceptions among members, lay leaders and staff relating to the value of Trinitarian worship and understanding at the church in question.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	89.55%	317
Somewhat agree	9.32%	33
Somewhat disagree	0.85%	3
Strongly disagree	0.28%	1
Answered		354
Skipped		32



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	85.11%	303
Somewhat agree	13.20%	47
Somewhat disagree	1.69%	6
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		356
Skipped		30



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	59.55%	212
Somewhat agree	35.11%	125
Somewhat disagree	4.78%	17
Strongly disagree	0.56%	2
Answered		356
Skipped		30

Concerning the church’s engagement with Trinitarian theology/practice, one staff pastor, B, stated, “This is an area of strength for us. There is clarity and consistency of communication about the reality and essence/nature of the Trinity.” One lay leader added, “Our songs are very thought provoking and intentional (and often eye opening) concerning the Trinity. The music is a very strong area of recognizing the work of the Trinity.”

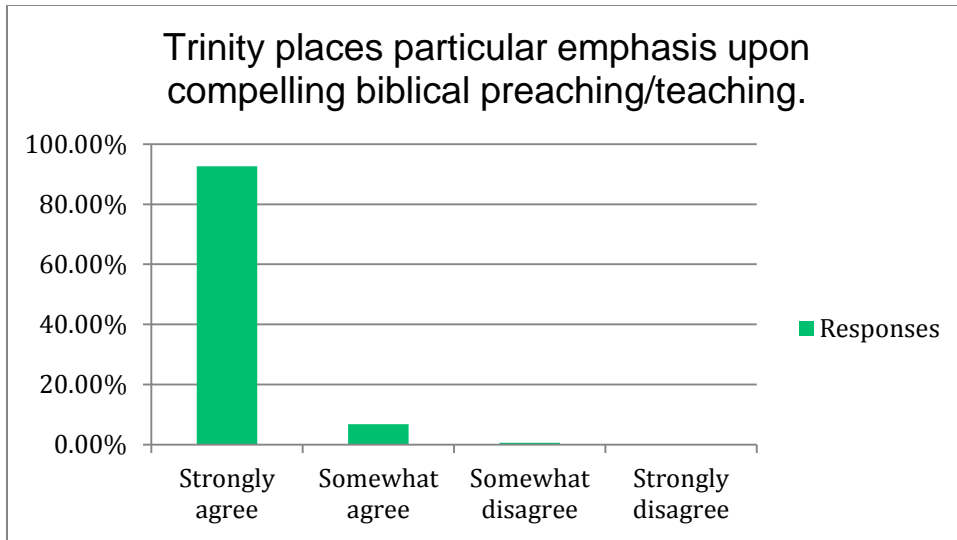
Several participants in the focus group conversations indicated that the church has historically spent more time on the Father and Son than on the Holy Spirit. These participants

each noted that significant ground has been taken in recent years with regard to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. One lay leadership participant, T, said the following regarding a recent seminar on the Holy Spirit, “Trinity talking about the person and work of the Holy Spirit was incredible! Very helpful in making me more comfortable and aware of what the Spirit does.” Connected to this, another lay leader, P, indicated, “Trinity has an ability to be normal in our approach to supernatural issues.” This same leader did go on to state that she desires for the church to be more practical in its teaching on the Spirit. She indicated, “Trinity should do more to unpack how the Holy Spirit helps us in our lives today. We do a good job in general, but maybe need to be more specific about how the Spirit practically works in areas like discernment, choices, knowing the voice of God.”

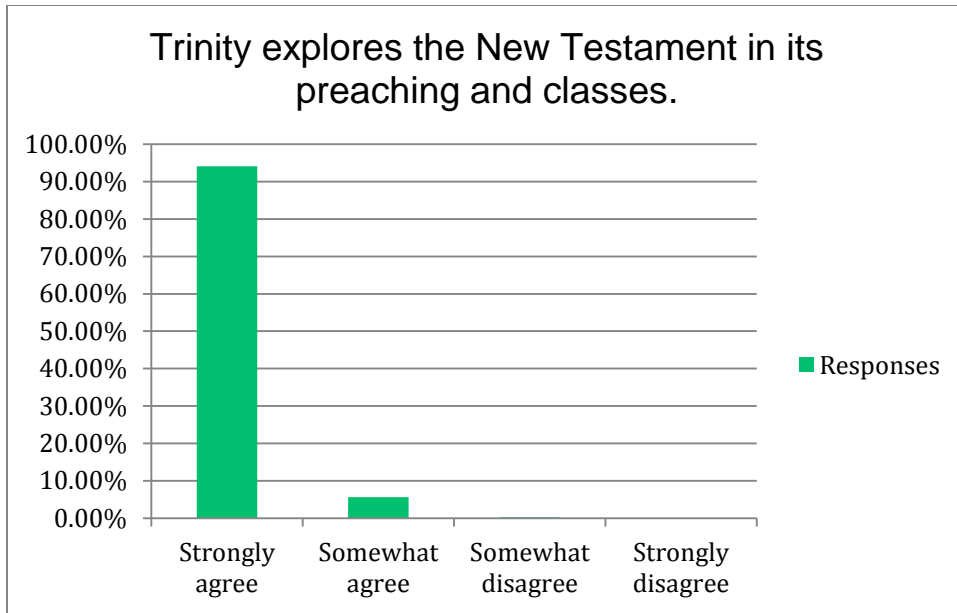
Regarding the church expanding its Trinitarian engagement, one leader, B, stated, “Preaching and teaching from various parts of the Bible seems to have opened us up to exploring the Persons of the Trinity.” Following on from this, another pastor, J, stated, “We have historically talked in theoretical terms about the Holy Spirit . . . but have recently adopted prayer ministry and this is helping us to put feet to the idea of Holy Spirit.”

Particular Emphasis Is Placed upon Compelling Preaching and Teaching of the Old and New Testaments

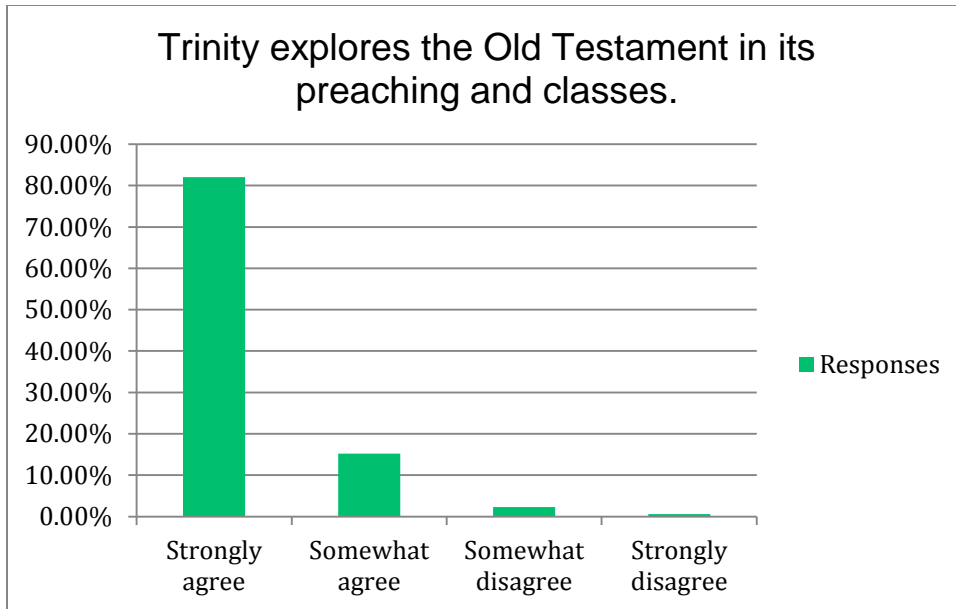
The following tables, and references to focus group conversations, demonstrate perceptions among members, lay leaders and staff relating to the value of compelling preaching and teaching of the Old and New Testaments at the church in question.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	92.70%	330
Somewhat agree	6.74%	24
Somewhat disagree	0.56%	2
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		356
Skipped		30



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	94.10%	335
Somewhat agree	5.62%	20
Somewhat disagree	0.28%	1
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Answered		356
Skipped		30



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	82.02%	292
Somewhat agree	15.17%	54
Somewhat disagree	2.25%	8
Strongly disagree	0.56%	2
Answered		356
Skipped		30

The focus group conversations yielded insight into church’s value of compelling preaching and teaching. One staff pastor, M, noted, “Our church cares about preaching. Our teachers are very skilled and care about high levels of communication. This is so strong that it could almost be too high a value. We must continue to bring in other voices so that we don’t default to too high a value of a certain kind of compelling preacher.” In affirmation of the strength of this value, every person in the lay leader conversation stated something to the effect of, “We care a great deal about preaching and teaching.” One lay leader, C, added context

concerning the tone of preaching at the church. He said, “The preaching is very conversational. It’s accessible.” To this, another leader, K, added, “However, we can tell that preachers are prepared. It seems like you put an incredible amount of time and energy into sermon preparation.”

Concerning the church’s engagement with various parts of the Bible, one leader, H, stated, “Trinity emphasizes the whole bible. I was surprised when Trinity would spend 6 weeks in the Old Testament. But it helped me see that that part of scripture was relatable and applicable to me and to my life with God.” Regarding this statement K indicated, “I love when we are in the Old Testament!” This prompted H to state, “Trinity seeks to be holistic in our approach to preaching and teaching—evidenced in the planning and in the various parts of the bible we explore.”

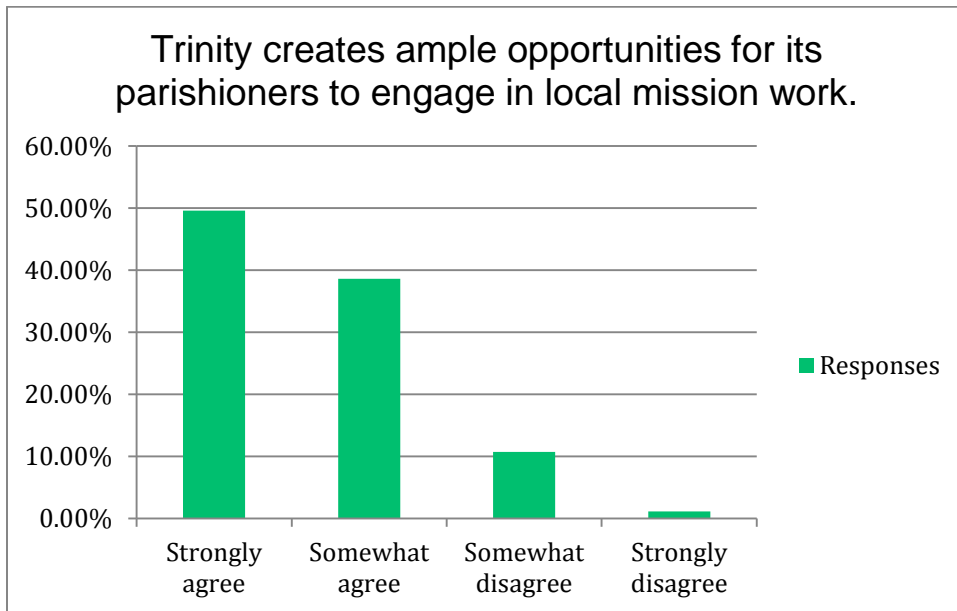
Connected to the church’s commitment to a team approach to preaching and teaching, H stated, “I like the sermon teaching rotation. It’s not just a one-voice thing. There is value in having a community of people come together to teach and hold onto value that the teachers be effective.” In the same vein of thought one staff member, C, stated, “With teaching and preaching we have brought forth a team dynamic that has helped to disperse the idea that one person is leading in isolation.” However, a number of voices stressed the importance of having a primary voice in the pulpit. M stated, “A multitude of voices is good so long as its limited. It’s important that one voice bring the bulk of the teaching.” To this, B stated, “Having a predominant voice is important, but it is also good that the pulpit does not belong to one person.” J, another staff leader, indicated that the church leadership must do the hard work of expressing why a multitude of voices in the pulpit is a value to our church. He said, “People in our church

need to know that we don't just invite other pastors to share because the primary teacher needs a break! We rotate on purpose.”

Another piece of insight that emerged was connected to the church's lack of having outside preaching voices in the pulpit. MY, a staff member, stated, “We don't have tons of outside voices because it has been weird when we have done it in the past.” B stated, “I am also not convinced that having outside speakers is a good thing. They don't have a heart for—or knowledge of—our community.” B also noted the additional challenge of having a guest speaker have to preach multiple services since the church has three services each Sunday. “It's a lot to ask,” he said.

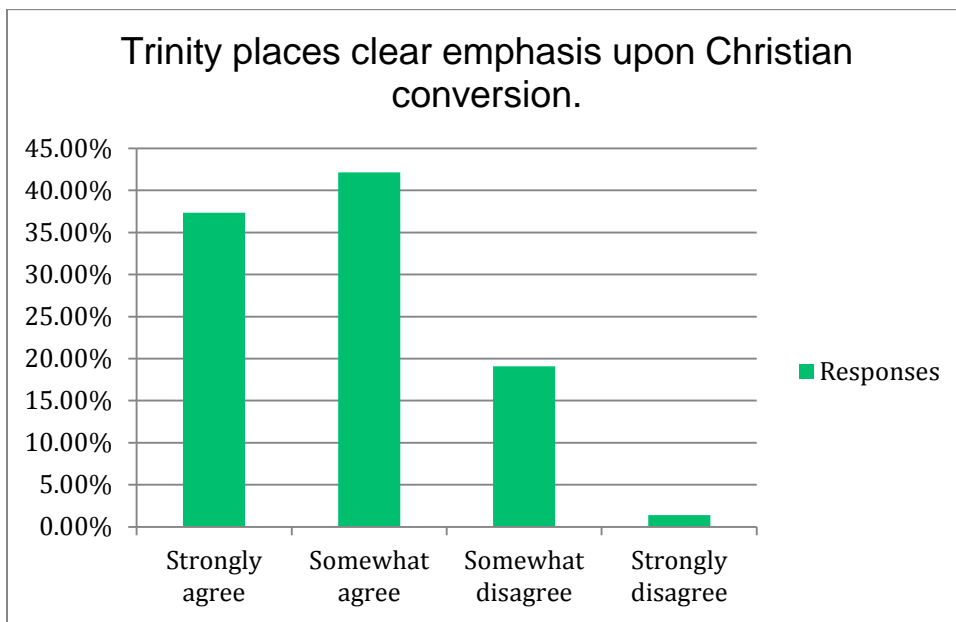
Parishioners Can Engage in Mission and Evangelism

The following tables, and references to focus group conversations, demonstrate perceptions among members, lay leaders and staff relating to the value of mission and evangelism at the church in question.



Answer Choices	Responses
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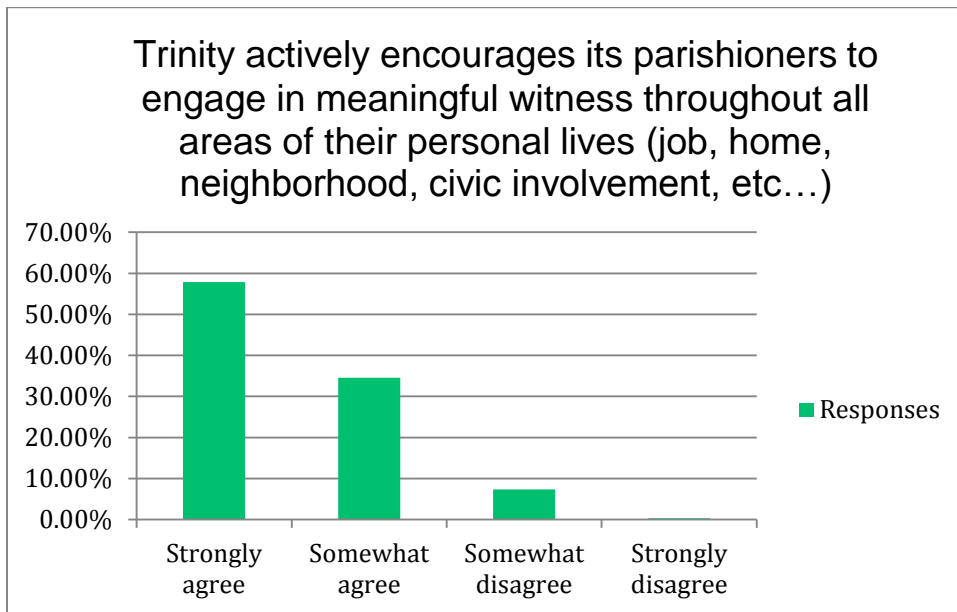
Strongly agree	49.58%	176
Somewhat agree	38.59%	137
Somewhat disagree	10.70%	38
Strongly disagree	1.13%	4
Answered		355
Skipped		31



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	37.36%	133
Somewhat agree	42.13%	150
Somewhat disagree	19.10%	68
Strongly disagree	1.40%	5
Answered		356

Skipped

30



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	57.87%	206
Somewhat agree	34.55%	123
Somewhat disagree	7.30%	26
Strongly disagree	0.28%	1
Answered		356
Skipped		30

The focus group conversations yielded a number of insights relating to church perceptions of the value of evangelism and spiritual conversion, as well as opportunities for congregants to participating in local mission work. Regarding evangelism and conversion, one staff pastor, C, noted, “If people are coming to know the LORD as savior then I do not know about it. Discerning how this would work in our culture is going to take some time and thought.”

To this statement J responded, “Discerning how evangelism works in a church culture that values spiritual formation seems like a way for us to move forward. We talk so much about salvation as a life—not just a moment of conversion. However, our honoring of process might be taking away from conversion if conversion is understood as a moment of salvation.” This led to some reflection among staff members about whether there is a residual cynicism regarding outreach. One staff member asked, “Are we cynics with regard to certain aspects of evangelism? Do we shy away from extending overt invites—or handing out flyer invites to our alpha courses?” This statement prompted another individual to ask whether the church was living between two outreach ideologies. M asked, “Are we living in-between a *believing leads to belonging* approach and a *belonging leads to believing* approach?” After articulating this question, M added, “There is a real tension here in our church. And it does cause some folks to fall through the cracks.” B responded to this statement by stating, “Maybe the LORD is inviting us to help people grow in an awareness that God is up to something . . . and that this requires a response?”

A number of participants, however, did speak to the fact that the church recognizes the fact that unbelievers are in their midst. C stated, “The fact that we acknowledge that there are unbelievers in the room—and invite them forward to receive blessing during the communion service—is a good thing.” This inclusive approach was affirmed by a lay leader, C, who said, “We don’t want to shame people by inviting them to respond publicly to an altar call. We have worked to create a welcoming environment.” But, as one leader noted, acknowledging unbelievers in the service can sometimes be awkward. M stated, “My brother-in-law (who is not a Christian) occasionally visits with us. When pastors state that communion is for those who believe he gets up to go to the rest room.”

Additionally, a significant thread of insight concerning how to equip the congregation to learn how to embody faith in a way that is authentic emerged during the course of the two focus group conversations. One pastor, B, stated, “We have less than a robust vision in our congregation for what evangelism even looks like.” Similarly, in the lay leader conversation, K shared, “I have a fairly large non-Christian community that I have built trust with. We talk about religion and God on a regular basis. I wonder if it would be helpful to have a class (similar to Alpha) on how to engage people for God/evangelism? We need some help on how to address the hard questions.” In response to the above statement, another lay leader, T, responded, “Evangelism through relationships is a great way to share Jesus with others. We must challenge folks to cultivate relationships with intentionality. This is an area where I need to grow on a personal level. I need help to push outside my comfort zone in my existing relationships.” This thread of the conversation surrounding how to share faith yielded an additional insight concerning equipping church members to better share testimony relating to God’s work in their lives. P stated, “We should give energy to equip our congregation to learn how to tell their stories. Learning to tell the story of God’s work in us would strengthen our confidence in how to talk about the work of God in our lives in a way that people can hear.”

Finally, a number of insights emerged concerning local mission opportunities. A number of the respondents indicated that they appreciated the fact that the church partners with established organizations, rather than attempting to start service opportunities from scratch. A number of participants also noted the church’s commitment to serving locally, connecting with initiatives that are meaningful to the neighborhood in which the congregation worships. However, one lay leader, H, reported a seeming lack of opportunity for young mothers to become involved in local mission. She reported, “There does not seem to be a lot going on in the

church. And if there are opportunities they do not seem to fit my stage of life.” To this, a male lay leader chimed in, “For the size of our church, it seems like we either do not have enough going on or do not talk about mission opportunities enough or in a way that people are able to hear.”

Major Findings

Not Strong in Engagement with Other Churches and Pastors

Regarding the church’s view of the wider body of Christ, a number of significant findings emerged during the research. This category ranked six out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1475. The lowest scoring for this section came on the question concerning whether the church in question is meaningfully engaged with other churches in the local area. Of the 352 respondents to this question, 263 answered: 192 said “somewhat agree” and 71 said “somewhat disagree.” It was noted in the focus groups, however, that the church is respected in the city and that the church has healthy relationship with daughter congregations. This suggests a somewhat self-contained dynamic at the church in question. Finally, it was noted that the church does not always communicate the things that are happening in its midst, and that the church could benefit from celebrating the wider church in more consistent ways.

Strong in Spiritual Formation but Weak in Authentic Relationships within the Church

Regarding community, spiritual formation and spiritual devotion, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked fifth out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1784.

Regarding formation, it was noted by a number of individuals in the focus group conversations this is an area of strength for the church. It was suggested, however, that more

energy could be given to capture testimonies of God at work because so much of what the LORD is doing may go unknown to the wider congregation.

Concerning Trinity's ability to facilitate deep relational connections among its members; the data would suggest that there is room to improve. Of the respondents, 38.3% answered lower than strongly agree to the question concerning whether the church offers ample opportunity to foster meaningful friendships. A number of focus group participants indicated that beyond community groups (which do not work for every stage of life/every schedule), there are limited opportunities for people to make lasting friendship. Additionally, a number of focus group participants wondered whether the church's struggle in this arena (creating friendship opportunities) is connected to its being a larger church (two thousand in weekly attendance at time of this writing).

High View of God and Renewed Awareness of the Holy Spirit's Work

Regarding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked third out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1837.

It was noted by a number of focus group participants that Trinitarian language is effectively employed in preaching and singing at the church in question. In excess of 89% of the 354 respondents indicated that they "strongly agreed" that church teachers use clear and concise language regarding Persons of the Holy Trinity. Roughly 85% of 354 respondents indicated that they "strongly agreed" that church worship leaders use clear and concise Trinitarian language in songs and liturgical practices.

Additionally, it was noted by number of focus group participants noted that while leaders have historically focused more attention on the Father and Son, in recent years there has been increased attention given to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, despite positive data on preaching/teaching/worship leading concerning the Holy Trinity, it would appear that congregants long for a more informed understanding of the Holy Trinity. Only 59.55% of participants indicated that they “strongly agreed” when asked whether congregants possessed an informed understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Preaching Significantly Advances Trinity’s Mission

Regarding compelling preaching and teaching of the Old and New Testaments, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked first out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1997.

Over 92% of the 356 respondents indicated “strongly agreed” to the survey question stating that the church places particular emphasis on compelling Biblical preaching and teaching. Additionally, participants in both focus group conversations noted the strength of the value of preaching and teaching. Focus group participants also noted that sermons and classes are accessible, authentic, and thoughtful.

Concerning preaching in both the Old and New Testaments, 94.10% of the respondents “strongly agreed” that the church engages the New Testament in teaching and preaching. While over 82% of the respondents “strongly agreed” that the church engages the Old Testament in teaching and preaching.

Weak in Evangelism And Outreach Initiatives

Regarding evangelism and local mission, a number of themes emerged during the course of the research. This category ranked seventh out of the seven value categories with a numeric score of 1,288.

Only 37.36% of 356 respondents indicated “strongly agree” to the statement regarding the church placing emphasis upon Christian conversion. This was, far and away, the lowest positive response to any single question posed during the course of the survey. This evidence was supported in the focus group conversations as many leaders (both staff and lay persons) indicated that a value of conversion was lacking in the church.

More than one focus group participant wondered if the low numbers surrounding conversion as a value have something to do with the fact that the church in question is heavily invested in spiritual formation, which promotes the idea that life with God is an unfolding process. They asked whether this perspective might obscure the “moment in time” nature of how Christian conversion is often understood.

Regarding local missions, only 49.58% of the respondents “strongly agreed” that the church created ample opportunity for congregants to engage in local mission work. The focus group conversations confirmed that the church struggles to provide ample opportunity for local engagement.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Text here that describes what you will address in this chapter (1-2 paragraphs), sort of like a preview of the chapter's topics. Overview includes a reiteration of the problem and purpose.

The purpose of this project was to identify core values to be embodied by church plants launched from a congregation located in Atlanta's city center, that expresses an Acts 2 ethos, a mere Anglicanism, as well as the goodness derived from an understanding of various missionary movements in Britain's history. These criteria were selected because the church in question worships in the Anglican tradition (mere Anglicanism and British missionary history) and seeks to worship in dialogue with the ethos of the early church (Acts 2).

The church that serves as the basis for this project seeks to be intentional and purposeful in its efforts to plant new church works. The leaders there have determined that it is not appropriate to simply generate new works of any kind; rather, they desire to generate new works *of a particular kind*. Consequently, a process of exploration was engaged in an effort to identify core values that are expressive of the church's worshipping tradition (Anglicanism), that are also in dialogue with the values and culture of the early church (Acts 2), while keeping in view lessons learned from the missionary past of Great Britain—the birthplace of Anglicanism.

Taken together, findings from the three sections noted in the paragraph above (Acts 2, Anglican essentials, missionary survey of Britain) could be distilled into the following seven values, which emerged as recurring themes throughout the literature view process:

1. Possesses a broad view of the church

2. Expresses two visible sacraments—communion and baptism
3. Engages in a team approach to ministry comprised of episcopal leadership (bishops, priests, deacons) and empowered laity
4. Values community, spiritual formation and spiritual devotion
5. Demonstrates a high view of God as Trinity in worship and practice
6. Emphasizes compelling preaching/teaching of the New and Old Testaments
7. Places importance upon mission and evangelism

In the following pages, the researcher will present a learning report for the project at hand. This will be accomplished through the following sections: major findings, ministry implications of the findings, limitations of the study, unexpected observations, recommendations, and a post script where the researcher will share his final thoughts on the project.

Major Findings

The research yielded five major findings. Each finding will be explored in three ways; the researcher will offer personal observations relating to the value, the value will be engaged through the lens of the literature review portion of the project, and, finally, the value will be reflected upon from a biblical framework.

Weak Engagement with Other Churches and Pastors

Personal Observation

Heading into the research portion of the project, I sensed that our church would score on the low end with regard to possessing a broad view of the church. Historically, it has been easier to occasionally speak of the efficacy of the wider body of Christ in abstract/philosophical terms than to actually cross-pollinate with other churches (or church leaders). Early on in the life of our church we learned that actually partnering with other leaders/churches was more complicated

than we had imagined. Consequently, we began to turn inward, striving to insulate our church from voices and experiences which could cause confusion and frustration. This tendency resulted in a drift away from practical, actual connections. While church leaders valued our belonging to the wider body of Christ, this value did not express itself in practical ways. In short, we became an inwardly looking church—a self-contained congregation.

Then, some eight years into our planting journey (Trinity was planted in late 2002), we entered the Anglican world. Initially, our leaders were excited to be part of a denomination that embodied much of what the LORD was doing in our local congregation. This early awareness made it easy to talk about (and celebrated) the wider church! We wanted to talk about our bishops; we were excited to celebrate them in very real and tangible ways. However, over time this excitement wore off. As time marched on, our church leaders spoke less specifically about our leaders (and our denomination). There was simply a drift in communication and celebration over time.

At the time I began the project at hand, I possessed a vague awareness of the drift noted above. However, once “a broad view of the church” emerged as a hallmark value in the literature review, it became clear that there was room for our church to take ground in this respect. In the intervening months since that discovery, there has been a marked increase in connection with my bishop. Thankfully, this emerging awareness of a need for growth has resulted in real movement with regard to cultivating certain key relationships within my own denomination.

There is, however, much work remaining as it relates to Trinity’s engagement with the broader church. Our church leaders are aware of a need to foster a deeper congregational awareness of our place in the wider body of Christ. We also are increasingly aware that actual connections must be nurtured—and then celebrated/messed to the church as a whole. We are

also aware that this historic tendency toward insular living is going to take some time to remedy. As the saying goes, “Rome was not built in a day.”

Literature Review

The literature review portion of the project (Chapter 2), yielded a number of insights regarding the significance of possessing a broad view of the church. First, Anglican tradition affirms this broad view. As stated earlier in the project:

Anglicans believe that they belong to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ. But they do not believe that they are the only ones who so belong . . . First, the canons of (The Church of England) insist that it “belongs to the true and apostolic Church of Christ.” Second, the preface to the Declaration of Assent states that the Church of England “is part of the One, Holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” . . . **Thus, Anglican churches see themselves not as the church, but a church within the one Church.**

(Avis 140-141; emphasis mine)

This affirmation clearly places churches that worship within the Anglican tradition within a wider story—a wider family. Consequently, it is imperative that Anglican churches embrace this reality and learn to live into it in real and tangible ways. In their seminal work on Anglicanism, Sykes and Booty state: “Anglicans have used . . . the terms ‘part,’ ‘portion’ or branch to describe both their own and other churches” (Sykes 165-66).

This assertion clearly reinforces the notion that we Anglicans do not possess the answer, nor are we the only ones who embody the goodness of the body of Christ. Rather, we are part of the larger story God is telling through the body of Christ.

The value of a broad view of the church can also be seen in the events of Pentecost, found in Acts 2. The simple fact that the early church leaders were empowered to speak the

wonders of God in the native tongues of visitors to Jerusalem during the Jewish feast of Pentecost speaks volumes about God's heart for Christians to possess a broad view of the church.

Acts 2:5-11 states:

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

From the very beginning, the Holy Spirit puts the whole world (and consequently, the fact that there would be Christians in these dispersed places) in view of the church. While it is tempting to look inward, the biblical text powerfully suggests that Christians look out and up, beholding the panoramic picture God paints in the wider body of Christ.

Regarding lessons learned concerning a broad view of the church from the missionary past of Great Britain, the missionary fervor of St. Patrick reminds us that the expansion of the gospel to the British Isles was, in itself, an affirmation of the broad story of the Christian church. Patrick's work brought about a deeply contextualized Irish expression of Christianity, thus affirming the kind of contextualized distinctions that make the church "broad." George Hunter states the following of Patrick's missionary approach:

He (Patrick) came to understand the Celtic people, and their language and culture, with the kind of intuitive insight that is usually possible only, as in Patrick's case, from the

underside. Miliuc's (Patrick's captor in Ireland) people knew that this slave understood them . . . In time Patrick came to love his captors, to identify with them, and to hope for their reconciliation to God. (Hunter 2)

This reconciliation to God brought about a deeply authentic, and distinct, expression of the church in Ireland. Missiology, at its best, always affirms a broad view of the church. A Celtic influenced approach to mission may very well be what is needed today, as Christians seek to plant new works that engage people where they are living.

Bible

The Bible is deeply affirmative of a broad view of the church. Early analogies of the church as a body, as a building, a household, and a worldwide movement speak to an expansive story that includes diverse and distinct members who belong to one another and are called to care for one another.

A number of New Testament passages refer to the Christian church as a body. This imagery is helpful in that it reminds readers of the diverse and expansive nature of the Christian church. Body imagery also serves to remind Christians of their responsibility/obligation to care for the whole, rather than exclusively tending to personal interests. Paul, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, states:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

Paul references the term “body” nine times in the verses above! This emphasis on integration highlights the unifying potential of Christian relationships.

In Ephesians, Paul draws further upon body imagery as he explores how Christians are meant to foster growth and health in one another. In Ephesians 4:16 Paul states: “From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Here, Paul expresses that when Christians are “joined and held together,” with “each part” functioning in a manner consistent with its purpose. The body will “grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Another image utilized in scripture to describe the broad nature of the church is that of a building and a household. Images of a physical structure, and the diverse individuals who make their residence in such a complex structure, speak to the goodness that emerges when diverse peoples belong to one another. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul writes:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and

prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Here, body imagery blends with construction imagery to create a complex picture of what it means to be part of the broad Church. Believers are members of God's household, but they are also built upon the foundation of those who have gone before in the faith. But it does not stop there—this organic structure is “joined together and grows.” Imagery depicting the church as a growing, living building (established upon the foundation of the apostles) calls to mind the expansive potential of the worldwide church.

Finally, Jesus Himself, speaking of evangelistic efforts to build the Christian church, describes a movement that will extend to the end of the earth. In Matthew 28 Jesus' final words to His disciples as He is ascending into heaven are as follows, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Strong in Spiritual Formation But Weak in Authentic Relationships within the Church

Personal Observation

Prior to the project, I felt that the data would confirm that community relationships, spiritual formation, and personal devotion among congregants was one of the strongest, if not the absolute strongest, value in the church. A major driver for the assumption relating to the strength of this value is connected to the fact that the church often engages topics relating to community, formation, and devotion, in sermons and classes/seminars. It came as somewhat of a surprise, therefore, that this value rated fifth out of seven. This low rating relative to the other value

markers does not, however, indicate a lack of overall strength, as this particular value achieved a numeric score somewhat close to the values ranked above it in the quantitative research (1784 compared to scores of 1832, 1837, 1884 and 1997 respectively).

Upon evaluating the data, my perceptions relating to the church's ability to create space for the fostering of meaningful friendships shifted significantly. The data strongly suggested that relative lack in this arena (friendships within the church) served to lower the overall score of this value. Consequently, it has become evident that despite the fact that there has been clear teaching and exhortation relating to spiritual formation and devotion, leaders must do more to help people make meaningful relational connections.

Literature Review

The literature review yielded a number of significant insights in support of the value of community, formation and devotion among Christians. First, in Acts 2:42 we see that these early Christians were fully engaged in this value of relating together as they sought to grow in faith. Acts 2:42 states, "The devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Additionally, these members of the primitive church were committed to living life together. They shared their possessions and took care of one another as they lived in harmonious relationship (Acts 2:44-47) Father Edward Steiner states the following concerning this relational dynamic:

"Luke (the author of Acts) is giving us a picture of Paradise. It is not the Eden of Genesis. It is something altogether new and better! Unity with God is a sign of the Kingdom; thus, the Church is intended to be a visible sign of the Kingdom present on earth. It is not the Kingdom in its fullness because there is still sin, but it is the visible sign of the Kingdom already present" (Steiner 1).

These early believers were committed to one another—and to the LORD! Also, there is a clear emphasis placed upon relationship, formation and devotion within Anglicanism.

Anglicanism is a movement built on prayer and spiritual devotion, with the Book of Common Prayer serving as a foundation stone. In support of this devotional reality, Paul Avis states: “Perhaps the greatest influence on Anglican spirituality is the BCP itself” (Avis 135).

Anglicans also observe a rhythm of devotion that brings people together in their worship practices. The Daily Office is comprised of a collection of Biblical texts, along with various prayers and helps, designated to aid in personal devotion. This tool has been useful in aiding and ordering the devotional life of countless Anglican Christians. Price and Weil state in their class work *Liturgy for Living*: “The Daily Offices are perhaps the most characteristic Anglican form of private devotions. And with their round of praise, instruction in the Word of God, and eloquent prayers to cover the chief concerns of human life, they commend themselves to all who seriously desire to live their lives with God in Christ” (Price 172).

In addition to the rhythm introduced by the Daily Office, Anglicans also enjoy the rhythm of the Church Calendar. The liturgical rhythms of the Church Calendar help establish routines of devotion that help foster shared experiences among Anglican Christians. The structure of the Church Year brings Christians together in their devotion, thus creating a community of worshippers. Price and Weil note the following concerning the efficacy of the Church Calendar:

The whole year from its beginning on the First Sunday in Advent . . . to its close at the end of November, has been arranged and presented to assist the worshipper to devote their attention in succession to the salient aspects of the Christian mystery: preparation, incarnation, revelation, the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, His resurrection and

ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the life of the church and Christians all over the world. (Price 226)

Consequently, aids such as the Daily Office and the Church Calendar help foster a sense of community, formation and devotion among Anglicans.

There is also ample evidence that community and devotion have factored into the missionary movements of British history. The English reformers, under the guidance of Thomas Cranmer, fostered accessible worship practices designed to aid Christians in their spiritual formation and devotion (Moorman 188-189). Additionally, John Wesley placed heavy emphasis on Christian devotion within the context of committed relationships. Wesley's introduction of *classes* created space for Christians to engage in a shared experience of God. Wesley himself states the following concerning the benefit of his classes:

Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to bear one another's burdens, and naturally to care for each other. As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with one another, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. And "speaking the truth in love, they grew up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ." (Wesley 262)

Investigation relating to each of the three research questions in the project yielded insight in support of the value of community, formation and devotion.

Bible

Acts 2:44-47 constitutes one of the clearest examples of community relationships, spiritual formation and personal devotion in the whole of the Bible:

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as

they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home* and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

These early Christians were deeply engaged with one another. They shared life together in a way that is utterly foreign to many modern Christians. However, the compelling nature of the Christian community might well have contributed to their missionary success!

Additionally, Psalm 133 speaks powerfully of the importance of unity within the context of community and spiritual devotion. Psalm 133 states:

How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the collar of his robes.
It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the LORD ordained his blessing,
life for evermore.

This Old Testament poem describes the essence of the blessing of an integrated community that is functioning as God intends. Depth of relationship is refreshing and full of blessing.

Connectedly, there is also affirmation concerning the efficacy of Christian unity in devotion. Jesus states the following in Matthew 18:19-20: “Again, truly I tell you, if two of you

agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Furthermore, the power resulting when Christians seek to spur one another on to godliness is profound. Committed relationships where believers embrace mutual responsibility for one another’s growth can be transformative. In support of this truth Hebrews 10:23-25 states: “Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

High View of God and Renewed Awareness of the Holy Spirit’s Work

Perceptions

Heading into the project, I was not quite certain as to what the research would demonstrate regarding membership perceptions of the church’s embodiment of Trinitarian theology. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity can prove elusive to many Christians, and while the research confirmed this fact it also affirmed a high Trinitarian commitment on the part of church leadership. This commitment was specifically manifested by the church’s engagement with the doctrine of the Trinity in its teaching/preaching and musical worship.

Literature Review

The literature review portion of the project offered evidence in support of Trinitarian worship and practice. In Acts 2 readers are able to see evidence of emphasis upon Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The empowering of early Christians as a consequence of the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost signaled a new day in the life of the Christian story (Acts 2:1-4). Also, we see the emergence of a coherent view of Jesus in the second chapter of Acts. Peter speaks

compellingly of Christ in his Pentecost sermon. He makes a number of statements concerning Jesus that offer insight into the Christology of the early church. First, Peter notes that Jesus is a man attested by God with deeds of power (Acts 2:22). Second, Peter states that Jesus was crucified by sinful men (Acts 2:23). Third, Peter states that God has raised Jesus up from the dead (Acts 2: 14, 32). Fourth, Peter reminds readers that Jesus is spoken of in the Old Testament (Acts 2:25-31, 34-35). And finally, Peter declares that the exalted Jesus is both LORD and Messiah (Acts 2:36). These evidences and statements concerning the Holy Spirit and Jesus, when taken together with the common Jewish understanding of God as Father, give us a glimpse of the early church's engagement with God as Holy Trinity.

Concerning the Persons of the Trinity factoring into the various missionary movements in British history, there is ample evidence. Dreams and visions given by the Holy Spirit feature heavily in the story of St. Patrick's ministry to Ireland (Freeman 2-30). Patrick also possessed a view of Christ that compelled him to call people to bend their knee to the LORD (Gougaud 44-45). Similarly, Augustine's Trinitarian worldview enabled him to walk in the supernatural as the kingdom advanced throughout the British Isles (Bede 58). And finally, the work of John Wesley reflects a high view of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Speaking of his conversion and call to ministry, Wesley stated: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt that I did trust in Christ . . . for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and then I testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart" (Overton 61).

The heart-warming power of the Holy Spirit enabled Wesley to perceive for himself the work of Jesus.

Bible

Despite the fact that the term *Trinity* does not appear within the pages of the Bible, there is ample evidence of the interplay between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In his farewell remakes to the church in Corinth, Paul states: “Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you” (2 Corinthians 13:11-13).

Here, we see Paul leverage Trinitarian language as he exhorts fellow Christians to live together in the LORD.

Additionally, Jesus’ last words in the gospel of Matthew affirm a Trinitarian engagement in the process of discipleship. Jesus states:

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

(Matthew 28:18-20)

Furthermore, we see that all three Persons of the Trinity are present at Jesus’ own baptism. “Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’” (Luke 3:21-22).

Taken together, these passages paint a compelling picture of Trinitarian engagement and worship.

Preaching Significantly Advances Trinity's Mission

Perceptions

Going into the project, I felt that this value would be the strongest for us at Trinity. This perception was confirmed during the course of the research. The researcher has long been convinced that effective preaching and teaching is essential to planting churches in an increasingly post Christian world. The research, both the quantitative data collection through the survey and the qualitative focus group conversations, confirmed that emphasis placed upon preaching and teaching is one of the true hallmarks of Trinity's DNA. Additionally, our church reported that the leaders demonstrated a clear commitment to preaching from various parts of the Bible. Engaging both the Old and New Testaments in our approach to expository sermons is intentionally engaged during the planning process for sermons.

Going forward, this research has cemented the sentiment that church planters who are launched from our church must be able to effectively verbally communicate the good news through effective preaching and teaching.

Literature Review

The literature review portion of this project confirmed that effective preaching and teaching are essential to effective mission. First, there is ample evidence that Peter's Pentecost sermon was thoughtfully crafted and expertly delivered. Additionally, we see that preaching featured heavily in various moments of British missionary history.

In Acts 2 Peter engaged his sermon with great intentionality. During the research process concerning Peter's sermon in Acts 2, a number of themes emerged. First, Peter was energized by the Holy Spirit as he declared that the work of the Spirit was the catalyst for the events of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-17). Second, Peter was able to connect emotionally with his hearers

(Witherington 138). Third, Peter demonstrated a logical progression in his sermon (Wall 63). Fourth, Peter bore witness in his Pentecost sermon (Marshall 75). And finally, Peter, as he preached, referenced a number of Old Testament passages (Joel 2, Psalm 16 and 110) as he told a cohesive story about the work of the Jesus and the Holy Spirit. These themes speak to the intentionality with which Peter engaged his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2.

Additionally, British missionary history offers a number of insights into the significance of preaching and teaching as various leaders sought to engage in effective kingdom work. St. Augustine understood the importance of a turn of phrase in his sermons (*Augustine Sermons* 40). He was known for his engaging and energetic approach to preaching God's word. Additionally, Anglican Hugh Latimer was known as a remarkably gifted preacher. His energy was matched by his ability to connect the truth of God's word with ordinary people. In his seminal work on the Christian Church in England, Moorman states the following concerning Latimer's sermons: "Racy, full of anecdote, reminiscence and humour, rich in homely English words like 'ugliness,' 'dodipoles' and 'belly-cheer,' these sermons are indications of the vigor and courage and outspokenness which belonged to the New Age" (Moorman 183).

Moorman's words regarding Latimer express the essence of a man who was committed to energetic preaching designed to connect the hearts of his hearers to the truth of God's word.

Bible

In addition to the biblical references above from Acts 2, there are a number of other scriptural passages that affirm the importance of preaching/teaching.

Romans 10:14-17 states:

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without

someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

This passage reminds the reader that the proclamation of preaching is an important part of the transformation process. God uses the declaration of the message through preaching to make known His will.

Another passage relating to the significance of preaching and teaching comes from 2 Timothy. Paul, a mentor in the faith, exhorts young Timothy to “proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching” (2 Timothy 1:2).

There is a lot of truth relating to preaching at play in this single verse! Paul reminds the young teacher that his proclamation must be persistent, regardless of the circumstances. Additionally, words like “convince, rebuke, and encourage” serve to remind the reader that preaching and teaching is multifaceted, and must be engaged with an eye toward training and maturation in the life of a believer. Finally, Paul’s exhortation that Timothy be patient is a helpful reminder that the work of instruction requires an honoring of process.

Weak in Evangelism And Outreach Opportunities

Perceptions

Prior to this project it was clear to our leadership team that values relating to evangelism were somewhat muted within our congregation. This perception was reinforced through the research process, with this value rating last of the seven. In short, our church must grow in the arena of creating opportunities to talk about conversion as well as invite unbelievers into

intentional environments where they might come to know the LORD. This realization connotes one of the biggest, if not the absolute biggest, takeaway from the entire project for our leadership team. Consequently, a number of steps have already been taken within the church to address this deficiency. First, we are publicly acknowledging that there might be folks in our services who do not know the LORD. Second, we have launched the Alpha course, which is an introduction to the Christian faith developed at an Anglican church in London (Holy Trinity Brompton). Our inaugural Alpha effort drew over thirty people. Third, we are committing to engaging in ongoing relational evangelism initiatives. While there is still much work to do in this particular arena, I feel very good about where things are heading.

Perceptions connected to local mission were more encouraging. The church does work to offer various opportunities for congregants to engage in meaningful mission that is close to home. The focus groups and survey shifted this perception a bit. While the church does create opportunities for engagement, it became apparent throughout the research that more is needed.

Literature Review

There is ample evidence in the literature review portion of the project in support of the value of mission and evangelism. The mere fact that the Holy Spirit appeared to the gathered masses visiting Jerusalem during the feast of Pentecost speaks to God's desire that people would be drawn into the kingdom (Davies 427). In Acts 2, we see clear evidence of the value of conversion. In support of this, Peter states the following in his stirring sermon:

“Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be

baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. (Acts 2:36-41)

Peter issues a clear call for repentance and conversion with these words. This commitment to Christian conversion, seen in Acts 2, proved to be essential to the mission of the early Church (Witherington 156).

Within Anglican tradition there is also evidence of strong commitment to evangelism and mission. Charles Price states: “The English Book of Common Prayer and its counterparts in many countries around the world have been an unusually effective means for proclaiming the gospel” (Price 80-81).

As one surveys the landscape of British missionary history, there is evidence in support of the significance of evangelism and mission. St. Patrick’s entire mission to Ireland was born out of a desire to see indigenous people come to faith (Gonzalez 257). Similarly, an emerging understanding that the people of Britain were ready to receive the good news of the gospel drove St. Augustine’s mission to the British Isles (Blair 47). Connected to this, Pope Gregory reflected on the power of the Holy Spirit in drawing the hearts of English heathens to saving faith (Bede 58). This statement serves to remind us that evangelism is effective when enlivened by the life of the Spirit.

Yet another evidence of the power of spiritual conversion comes from the story of John Wesley. Wesley’s own conversion resulted from an experience of God where his heart “was

strangely warmed” (Overton 61). This experience of God provided shape and energy to Wesley’s evangelistic efforts throughout the course of his lifetime. Wesley was a tireless evangelist, choosing to preach outside so as to create accessible environments (non-church) that would accommodate masses of people. He was noted to have stated that the world was his parish (Moorman 298)! The boldness and innovation evidenced in Wesley’s evangelistic program bore much fruit. It is said of Wesley that during his lifetime he rode more than 200,000 miles on horseback and preached in excess of 40,000 sermons (Moorman 298)! And the people Wesley reached were largely irreligious and un-churched. Howard Snyder, in his book *The Radical Wesley*, says the following of Wesley’s audience: “Methodism under John Wesley became a vital movement of the common people, the “disinherited masses” to whom the gospel was totally foreign” (Snyder 139).

Bible

There are many Biblical passages in support of the importance of evangelism and mission in addition to the evidence found in Acts 2. Jesus Himself modeled evangelism and mission work. Matthew 9:35 states: “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.”

Additionally, Matthew 22:8-10 provides us a glimpse into Jesus’ multifaceted approach to demonstrating the significance of extending a kingdom invitation to outsiders. “Then he said to his slaves, “The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.” Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests” (Matthew 22:8-10).

However, it is important to note that the Bible does not exhort Christians to engage in witness and mission under the steam of their own strength. Jesus, at His ascension, reminds His friends that they are not meant to witness in their own strength. He says: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight” (Acts 1:8-9).

The Holy Spirit is, for the Christian, a source of power that provides boldness for witness. This empowering is essential for sustaining believers who seek to faithfully engage the work of God in the world. Jesus Himself speaks of the urgency and immediacy of this work as He states in John 4:35-38:

But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.

This passage speaks to the cumulative nature of kingdom work. The concept of sowing and reaping, along with the reminder that no one person does all the work, serves to liberate believers from falling into the trap of thinking that the work of mission and evangelism is all about one single individual’s effort. The key is to participate!

Ministry Implications of the Findings

A number of ministry implications have emerged as a result of the findings in this research project.

Relating to the extent to which we embody a broad view of the Church, it became apparent during the data collection that we have some room to grow. Consequently, increased efforts will be made to do a better job of communicating existing partnerships with other organizations, as well as demonstrating greater intentionality in fostering new and meaningful connections to other churches. Additionally, because the project yielded insight concerning our lack of consistent communication and celebration concerning our connections to the wider Anglican world, leadership will work to be more intentional about those relationships. Specifically, the researcher will continue the recent trend of engaging in regular, ongoing phone connections with his bishop.

Relating to the church's expressing two visible sacraments (baptism and communion), it is apparent that more work needs to be done to elevate the visibility and importance of the sacrament of baptism. To this end, the church has integrated infant baptisms into our Sunday routine, whereas previously they were held on Saturday mornings. Additionally, intentional efforts are being made to better engage in evangelization (to be addressed more fully under that heading) so there will be more candidates for baptism in the future! Furthermore, greater intentionality will be engaged as we seek to tell "God stories," or testimonies, of those who have experienced life change and are pursuant of baptism.

Relating to the church's embodiment of team ministry comprised of ordained and lay persons, the church will continue to pursue an approach to collaborative ministry that involves both ordained and non-ordained persons. We will continue to monitor volunteer involvement levels within the church, with an eye toward expanding our base of participation in this arena.

Relating to community, spiritual formation and spiritual devotion, the church will work to create more intentional opportunities for congregants to grow in their connection to the LORD

and to one another. Specifically, the church's recently minted mentoring program seems well positioned to speak to these needs. The mentoring program is a one-year relational approach to spiritual formation, whereby five to six people of the same gender are selected to walk together in mutual accountability. This initiative, while in the early stages of beta testing, appears to be meeting a bridge building need relating to community and spiritual formation.

Relating to the church's engagement with the Holy Trinity, we will continue to lean into the work of the Holy Spirit during prayer ministry times after church services, as well as in other church environments (such as during our monthly Worship and Prayer service). Additionally, exploring the power that is available to Christians as they learn to walk in step with the Holy Spirit will be another priority. This exploration of the work of the Spirit has already begun to emerge in sermons, classes/retreats, and in prayer ministry training environments. Additionally, the researcher will consider implementing a class on the Holy Trinity, including an exploration of the persons of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) as well as imagery/themes associated with the Trinity. This course would be a way of responding to the data that suggested that congregants/members lack confidence in articulating the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

Relating to the church's embodiment of compelling preaching/teaching of the Old and New Testaments, my intention is to simply steward this value within our congregation, while looking to generate church plants that also embrace the importance of compelling preaching and teaching of the whole bible. This value was, far and away, the strongest in the study. In light of this, my mentoring of young preachers/teachers will likely take on new life. The feedback we received on preaching and teaching has bolstered some confidence relating to potential coaching/mentoring relationships. Additionally, this aspect of coaching will emerge as an

opportunity for interns to explore should they desire to do so (Trinity hosts a number of interns throughout the year).

Relating to the church's engagement with mission and evangelism, there is much work to be done. This value scored the lowest of the seven values explored throughout the course of the research. In the short term, the church has launched the Alpha Course, which provides participants with an opportunity to explore questions of faith in a relational, non-pressurized environment. Additionally, church leaders have already begun implementing certain measures in our Sunday services that are designed to honor the participation of those who are outside the Christian faith. Already, we are experiencing good fruit from having invited non-believers to participate in the Eucharist service through the reception of a blessing. A large number of individuals report that this step toward inclusion has made a difference in their lives. Furthermore, the church is determined to make baptisms more visible (incorporating infant baptism into Sunday services) as well as more frequent (previously, adult baptism has only occurred once per year). Finally, church leaders have determined to tell more "God stories." Sharing testimonies of God at work, according to the feedback received, could help others to expect (and experience) God's work in their own lives.

Limitations of the Study

There were certain limitations in this study. First, the data collection portion of this project was limited to one church, located in Atlanta, Ga. Second, the online survey that comprised the quantitative research for the project was not distributed to everyone who worships at Trinity Anglican. Rather, the researcher elected to engage individuals who had gone through the membership process at the church in question. Consequently, a large number of individuals connected to Trinity (roughly 1000 people) were not asked to share their perceptions of the

church's embodiment of certain values. Additionally, not every member who was invited to participate in the online survey chose to participate. Of roughly 880 church members, 381 individuals chose to participate in the twenty-one-question survey that was disseminated on January 8, 2018.

Another limitation concerning the online survey is connected to the fact that the question concerning the gender of the respondents was broken at the time of the survey. This digital malfunction, unknown at the time of the survey's dissemination, prevented the researcher from being able to chart the gender of the respondents.

Additionally, a number of focus group participants elected not to participate. Five lay leaders were unable to participate when invited to take part in the focus group conversation held on January 21, 2018. Their lack of ability to participate simply meant that other lay leaders were invited to take part in the conversation.

Finally, only staff members and lay leaders were invited to participate in the two focus group conversations. Consequently, church attenders who are not serving in a leadership capacity were not invited to participate in the focus groups.

Unexpected Observations

The project yielded a number of unexpected observations. First, and maybe most significantly, an awareness emerged relating to the tension created by being a formation-oriented church that desires to grow in evangelism. Second, strength relating to the importance of preaching and teaching emerged as an unexpected finding. Third, the significance of the and work of the Holy Spirit in the execution of the church's mission stood out in unexpected ways—both in the literature review and in congregational data collection. Fourth, there was a realization that the church is more inward looking that we should be. Finally, the significance of team

collaboration as an essential component of leadership among ordained and non-ordained persons emerged in unexpected ways.

Tensions surrounding the church's dual commitment to formation, which often honors long processes, and evangelism/salvation constitute the most surprising finding of the project. For years, we have struggled with how to engage decision-based evangelism (i.e. praying a prayer of salvation in a particular moment), feeling that the pressure created by inviting people to make a commitment to Jesus in a particular moment did not fit well with our church's commitment to expressing life with God as an ever-unfolding process. However, our desire to see people come to know God—and then grow throughout their lives—remained intact. These two desires have created a tension that is difficult to resolve. One of our leaders described this tension in the focus group conversation for staff members. He said, "I wonder if our commitment to spiritual formation has led us to become the kind of church where belonging leads to believing, rather than the other way around?" This statement helped the researcher understand that we may need to expand our understanding of evangelism to involve more of a process, rather than simply being a one-time decision for a person. In response to this realization, efforts have been made to create an approach to evangelism that honors process by fostering hospitable environments where people are invited to ask questions without the pressure of "making a decision for Christ." We have adapted the Alpha Course, which is an evangelistic program developed in England that places particular value upon hospitality and conversation. I am happy to report that the early returns on the church's inaugural Alpha course have been encouraging. Participants have enjoyed the hospitable environment created by Alpha and have reported that having a safe place to ask questions without the pressure of instant conversion has been helpful in moving them closer to becoming Christians. This is an answer to prayer, and the leadership

looks forward to what will emerge as we create space for people to explore faith in non-pressurized environments.

Another surprising insight that came as a result of this study is connected to our strength regarding preaching and teaching from the Old and New Testaments. While we value rigorous engagement with the Bible in our preaching and teaching, prior to this project we did not see this value as being critical to our mission. This lack of expressing preaching as a critical value was, in part, born out of a concern that we not unnecessarily elevate the place of preaching for future church planters just because it happens to be a natural strength at Trinity. However, as I progressed through the literature review portion of this project, the efficacy of compelling preaching and teaching became apparent. From Peter's expertly crafted sermon in Acts 2, to the value of preaching held by various players in British missionary history, there is strong evidence to suggest that compelling communication is a critical component for healthy mission. Furthermore, the qualitative and quantitative data collected in the research portion of the project offered emphatic confirmation that preaching is held in high regard within our particular church community. Consequently, as a result of this study, the leaders of the church feel released to insist on effective preaching in future church plants. Thankfully, as a result of this study, this value is no longer taken for granted at Trinity, and no longer muted in terms of our expectations for future church leaders.

The third surprise that has emerged during the course of the project is connected to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. Despite the fact that Trinity refers to herself as a three-stream congregation—embracing charismatic, evangelical and liturgical traditions within the wider Church—it has historically lacked a vibrant experience of the Holy Spirit. This lack emerged because the leadership felt it necessary to protect the congregation from some of the

perceived excesses that stemmed from the charismatic stream—many of which were experienced during our early days as a part of the Vineyard denomination. Recently, the church has reintroduced prayer and ministry time at the end of church services. Leaders have been surprised at the volume of participation from members during these prayer times, with men and women coming forward to receive prayer in greater numbers than was expected. These regular ministry experiences, which occur after each Sunday worship service, are working to elevate an awareness of the work of the Spirit among worshippers at Trinity. Additionally, Trinity's monthly Worship and Prayer Service is yet another environment where special attention is given to the work of the Holy Spirit. This contemplative service, with extended musical worship and space given for prayer ministry, attracts people from the church as well as others from various parts of the city.

The fourth surprise that emerged during the course of the research project is connected to the realization that Trinity is more inwardly focused than we believed—and certainly more inwardly focused than we should be! During the course of the qualitative and quantitative data collection it became apparent that the church was experiencing lack in a number of areas. First, there has been lack regarding viable evangelistic outreach initiatives. Second, meaningful connections between Trinity and other local church congregations have been lacking. Third, there have been too few opportunities for congregants to serve on mission in their local community (i.e. outside the walls of the church in a non-Trinity ministry). And finally, Trinity has not done a good enough job in telling the story of her connections within the wider Anglican world. It was determined that while some of these areas of lack are due to gaps in our communications strategy, it became apparent that Trinity Anglican must be more intentional with regard to cultivating an outward looking posture. Connected to this realization, leaders

discerned that the larger (and more established) a congregation becomes, the temptation to simply service the inward workings of the church becomes increasingly difficult to resist. But resist, we must!

Finally, it was surprising to note that the collaborative team dynamic among Trinity's leaders is perceived in such a positive light. While the leaders have long enjoyed the depth of their relational connection to one another, it was somewhat surprising to see the extent to which members of the congregation celebrate this. Consequently, the value of team has emerged as a significant finding in the project. This value of mutuality undermines the "lone ranger" tendencies embodied by so many church planters (and churches in general, for that matter). Trinity's emphasis on collaborative leadership has also helped undermine tendencies relating to congregants placing too much emphasis on one leader. Additionally, the fact that church leaders do enjoy a healthy relationship with our bishop was seen as a real strength, despite the fact that feedback was given stating that this connection is not celebrated regularly enough. Steps will be taken to communicate and celebrate Trinity's connection with our bishop more regularly.

Recommendations

Going forward, additional research on how to specifically gauge church health will be engaged. Historically, our church leaders have been reticent to survey members, fearing that such efforts would be perceived in a negative light. The quantitative data collection portion of this project confirmed that this fear is unwarranted, as hundreds of members willingly participated in the online survey. Similarly, qualitative insights derived from focus group conversations have encouraged leaders to engage in similar forms of research in the future. Insights gathered as a result of intentionally inquiring of our members and leaders have helped clarify areas of relative strength and weakness in our mission. Particularly, I envision our church engaging surveys and

focus group conversations that are aimed at discerning the extent to which members are engaging in various devotion practices. Insights in this arena would help inform future ministry initiatives in the church. Ongoing data collection will help church leaders better understand what is actually happening within the hearts/lives of congregants.

Additionally, this project has created a deep desire on my part to explore the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, if I do end up writing a book, it will focus on how a recovering charismatic church planter is learning to make room for the work of the Holy Spirit in life and ministry! Thinking and reflecting on the significance of the work of the Spirit has been one of the most joyful takeaways of the project.

Evangelism constitutes an area where significant changes in practice will be experienced in the life of the church. Our church has experienced a renewed commitment to evangelism as a result of this project. This will, by the grace of God, result in ongoing, sustained efforts at creating relational environments that are conducive to drawing people into a life changing relationship with the LORD. Learning to do evangelism in a manner that is consistent with the ethos of our church is going to take time and intention, but I suspect it will be worth the work.

Postscript

This project has been life changing. I will be eternally grateful for the grit I have acquired along the way as I engaged various parts of the writing and research. There were times where I felt so overwhelmed at the magnitude of the project that I felt like giving up. But I did not give up. I kept putting one foot in front of another. I plan on carrying this fortitude with me into future endeavors. Connectedly, learning to overcome the resistance/roadblocks inherent within the creative process has been yet another gift derived from the work.

Today, the day I pen these concluding words, is Good Friday. How fitting! The fact that this project has come to its conclusion during Holy Week is significant for me on a personal level. Holy Week is the darkest week of the year. Christians all over the world have been journeying through the Lenten season, learning to follow God into uncertain (and sometimes uncomfortable) places. Certainly, I have been both uncertain and uncomfortable at many junctures throughout this process! I will be the first to admit that I do not handle uncertainty all that well. I crave clarity. I desire to be competent. I want to know that everything is going to work out. Mostly, I fear failure. And there have been more than a few moments in this process where I feared that failure was close at hand.

And yet, Christians are invited to move forward—to progress- even as they experience fear. On Good Friday, in the hours before His crucifixion, Jesus is so severely mistreated that He is unable to make this journey unaided. Consequently, a bystander named Simon is pulled from the crowd and forced to carry the cross. Putting myself in his shoes, I try to imagine what this experience would have been like for poor Simon. He goes from bystander to participant by no choice of his own. And in the process, the sufferings of Jesus become an intimate part of his story. There is blood on the cross, blood from Jesus' own wounds. There is the weight of the cross, bearing down on his shoulders. There is the crowd noise, which now seems directed at him.

What if Simon faltered at some point as he walked toward the cross? For him (and for us), standing close to Jesus means experiencing some of the things Jesus experiences. This I know—If Simon fell, he fell forward. If he faltered along the way, he got up and continued on toward the darkest place. As we travel down uncertain roads—roads fraught with difficulty—we will inevitably falter. It is what happens after our faltering that makes all the difference. Jesus

knows that we will stumble as we seek to follow Him. The question is whether we will admit our faltering and move forward so we can be where Jesus is, skinned knees and all.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A—online survey consisting of 21 questions

Survey: Please circle one answer per question.

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Kris McDaniel from Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because you are a member at Trinity Anglican Church, located in Atlanta, GA.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in an online survey. The online survey consists of 21 questions and should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Your answers will be completely confidential. There is no compensation for participation.

Your name and personal information will not be shared at any time by any one. Should your comments be mentioned in the research, your identity will be protected as you will be assigned set of initials and identified in that manner rather than having your name attached to your comments.

If any part of this process makes you feel uncomfortable while you are in the study, please tell the researcher or email his overseer, Dr. Bryan Collier bryan.collier@asburyseminary.edu. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you desire.

You can ask Kris McDaniel questions any time about anything related to this study. Kris can be reached via email @ kris.mcdaniel@asburyseminary.edu or by phone @ 404.545.4886.

Being in the study is completely voluntary.

Do you willingly choose to participate in this online survey?

I agree (if chosen the participant moves onto the rest of the survey)

I don't agree (if chosen the participant is moved out of the survey)

Demographic information:

Gender:

Male

Female

Age:

0-17

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65 or older

Education:

Less than High School diploma

High School diploma

Some college

Bachelor's Degree

Graduate Degree

Household income:

\$0-\$24,999

\$25,000-\$49,999

\$50,000-\$74,999

\$75,000-\$99,999

\$100,000-\$149,999

\$150,000 or more

Survey Questions surrounding 7 essential values at Trinity:

Possesses a broad view of the church

1. Trinity sees itself as being part of the larger body of Christ in Atlanta.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

2. Trinity celebrates the diversity and goodness of the wider Church.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

3. Trinity is meaningfully engaged with other churches in Atlanta.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

Sacramental

4. The sacrament of communion clearly plays a significant role in the life of the church.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

5. The sacrament of baptism plays a visible and significant role in the life of the church.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

6. Trinity effectively communicates the meaning and significance of the sacraments of communion and baptism.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

Pastoral leadership, pastoral oversight and empowered laity.

7. Trinity's pastoral staff exercises healthy and effective leadership within the life of the local church.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

8. Trinity's leaders welcome the authority of those in authority over them. i.e. their bishops Todd Hunter, TJ Johnston and Foley Beach.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

9. At Trinity, lay-people (non-paid/non-ordained) play a significant role in the execution of the church's mission and ministry.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

A community of people that value spiritual formation and Spiritual devotion.

10. Trinity offers ample opportunity for church participants to foster meaningful friendships within the church.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

11. Trinity encourages and facilitates ample opportunity for the spiritual formation of its congregants through seminars, studies and classes.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

12. Trinity's leaders regularly invite congregants to take personal responsibility for their own spiritual formation (spiritual practices/disciplines).

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

Demonstrates a high view God (of the holy Trinity) in their worship and practice.

13. Trinity's preachers utilize clear and concise language concerning the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in sermons and classes.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

14. Trinity's worship leaders utilize clear and concise language concerning the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the songs and liturgical practices of the church.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

15. Trinity congregants have an informed understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

An emphasis on preaching that embodies a holistic view of scripture—Old Testament and New Testament.

16. Trinity places particular emphasis upon compelling biblical preaching/teaching.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

17. Trinity explores the New Testament in its preaching and classes.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

18. Trinity explores the Old Testament in its preaching and classes.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

Significance is placed upon mission and evangelism.

19. Trinity creates ample opportunities for its parishioners to engage in local mission work.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

20. Trinity places clear emphasis upon Christian conversion.

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

21. Trinity actively encourages its parishioners to engage in meaningful witness throughout all areas of their personal lives (job, home, neighborhood, civic involvement, etc. . . .)

Strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree

Appendix B—focus group questions

A broad view of the body of Christ:

- To what extent does Trinity celebrate and engage the larger body of Christ in Atlanta?
- To what extent does Trinity engage with the wider Anglican Church?
- To what extent does Trinity engage with the body of Christ at large?

Sacraments:

- Describe the ways in which Trinity expresses and engages the sacraments of baptism and communion?
- Please describe areas where these sacraments could be more fully celebrated.
- Does the church effectively communicate the meaning and significance of communion and baptism? (Give room for discussion here)

Leadership:

- Discuss the extent to which Trinity's pastoral leadership team exercise healthy and effective leadership in the local church.
- Discuss perceptions of Trinity's engagement with its bishop, Todd Hunter.
- To what extent do lay people (non-paid/non-ordained) play a role in the execution of the church's mission and ministry?

Spiritual formation and Spiritual devotion:

- To what extent does Trinity offer ample opportunity for church participants to foster meaningful friendships within the church?
- To what extent does Trinity encourage and facilitate opportunities for the spiritual formation of its congregants through seminars, studies and classes?
- To what extent do Trinity's leaders invite congregants to take personal responsibility for their own spiritual formation (spiritual practices/disciplines)?

Demonstrates a high view of God in worship and practice:

- To what extent do Trinity's preachers utilize clear and concise language concerning the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in sermons and classes?
- To what extent does Trinity's musical worship leaders utilize clear and concise language concerning the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the songs and liturgical practices of the church?
- To what extent do Trinity congregants possess an informed understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity?

An emphasis on preaching/teaching:

- To what extent does Trinity place particular emphasis upon compelling biblical preaching/teaching?
- To what extent does Trinity explore the New Testament in its preaching and classes?
- To what extent does Trinity explore the Old Testament in its preaching and classes?

Significance is placed upon mission and evangelism.

- To what extent does Trinity create opportunities for its parishioners to engage in local mission work?
- To what extent does Trinity place clear emphasis upon Christian conversion?
- To what extent does Trinity encourage its parishioners to engage in meaningful witness throughout all areas of their personal lives (job, home, neighborhood, civic involvement, etc. . . .)?

Appendix C—Membership info flier

TRINITY'S MISSION IS TO BE A PEOPLE GROWING INTO CHRIST'S LIKENESS.

MEMBERSHIP

We believe membership is a commitment to participate in the life and mission of the church. At Trinity, our aim is to be people who increasingly resemble Jesus in the way we worship, in our relationships, in our learning and in the way we engage our world.

Worship—We are created to worship. Whether we are engaging in personal devotion, or in a corporate worship gathering our greater purpose is to glorify God. At Trinity, we wish to create opportunities for corporate worship in the following ways: our Sunday services, the sacraments of baptism and communion, and various worship services throughout the church year, as well as our monthly Worship and Prayer Nights. We also provide the following resources for personal worship: The Daily Office, books, and music recordings.

Influence—We are called to participate with God in the influence of culture. It is our conviction that this influence, which is inherently charitable and creative, ought to be leveraged both inside and outside the church. At Trinity, we encourage the church to leverage influence in the following ways: through community, at work, in Volunteer Service, and through Missions in our city and beyond.

Community—We are made in the image of the triune God and are, therefore, built for & grow best when in harmonious and integrated relationship. At Trinity, we create opportunities for our church to grow in community in the following ways: Community Groups & Gatherings, Retreats, periodic Men & Women Events, and Service Groups such as a mission trip or local outreach opportunity.

Formation—We are formed into Christ's likeness by steps, not leaps and bounds. Spiritual

growth and maturity take place over time and require intentionality. At Trinity opportunities to participate in the process of formation occur in multiple ways, including classes, workshops, and mentoring relationships.

WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR MEMBERSHIP?

-Christian Faith (as outlined in the historic creeds) -Baptism -Resonance with the mission and work of the church

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MEMBER?

-Participation in the life of the church through attendance and service -Financial giving -A life that is moving toward Jesus as the center -Faithfulness with respect to work, relationships, and appetites

OUR GOVERNING STRUCTURES

Senior Leadership Team—Our Leadership Team members collaborate to govern and guide the strategic direction of Trinity.

Kris McDaniel—Lead Pastor Marty Reardon—Worship Pastor Matt Yoder—Administrative Pastor Ashley Mathews—Parish Pastor Brad Mauldin—Community Pastor

Staff—Our staff is comprised of adult, youth, and kids’ pastors, as well as administrative support roles, which work together to care for the church membership and steward church resources.

Lay Council—Our Lay Council is a group of advisors selected from the member community to provide feedback and support to the Senior Leadership Team

Finance Team—Our Finance Team is a group of advisors selected from the membership community to monitor Trinity’s allocation of funds.

404.367.6500

WELCOME TTY



BROCHURE FO



MEMBER COMMITMENT CARD

I have prayerfully considered becoming a member at Trinity and would like to partner with the church in working to fulfill its purpose. I understand that membership at Trinity requires the following:

Participation in the life of the church through active engagement with these four essential components: worship, community, formation, and influence. Affirmation of The Nicene Creed, The Apostles' Creed, and The Athanasius Creed.

A lifestyle that is in keeping with the beliefs and ethos of this church. Water baptism.

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____

_____ Street Address: _____

_____ City: _____ Zip _____

Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

You can either fill this out and mail it to the church office or drop it in the offering basket

next time you are at Trinity.

Appendix D—informed consent letter for online survey and focus group conversations

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Kris McDaniel from Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because you are a member at Trinity Anglican Church, located in Atlanta, GA.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in an online survey or focus group conversation. The online survey consists of 21 questions and should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Your answers will be completely confidential.

The focus group will be conducted by Kris McDaniel and will consist of questions regarding Trinity's embodiment of certain key values. The duration of the focus group will be between 60 and 90 minutes. The focus group conversations will be recorded, and after dissertation writing complete the recordings will be erased. Although confidentiality will be encouraged during the focus groups, it cannot be guaranteed. There is no compensation for participation.

Your name and personal information will not be shared at any time by any one. Should your comments be mentioned in the research, your identity will be protected as you will be assigned set of initials and identified in that manner rather than having your name attached to your comments.

If any part of this process makes you feel uncomfortable while you are in the study, please tell the researcher or email his overseer, Dr. Bryan Collier bryan.collier@asburyseminary.edu. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you desire.

You can ask Kris McDaniel questions any time about anything related to this study. Kris can be reached via email @ kris.mcdaniel@asburyseminary.edu or by phone @ 404.545.4886.

Signing this letter means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you wish to participate in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is completely voluntary. Signing indicates that you agree that you have been told about this study, why it is being conducted, and how you will participate.

Signature of Person Agreeing to Participate in the Study

Date Signed

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