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Fullness of Christ Ministries: Spiritual Formation of Emerging Adults at Woodmen Valley Chapel Through Mentoring

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Fullness of Christ Ministries:

Spiritual Formation of Emerging Adults at Woodmen Valley Chapel Through Mentoring

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CMI 421: Philosophy and Strategies for Ministry

Dr. Hank Voss

16 May 2023

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Introduction

The American Church has an epidemic effecting its emerging adults right now, and the question is, what can we do about it? According to the Survey Center for American Life, of all generations, Generation Z is the least affiliated with the Christian Church with up to 41% of them claiming no Christian affiliation.¹ This is a major drop in affiliation from generations past, even the Millennials a generation prior were only 33% unaffiliated.² The harrowing news doesn't stop there. These numbers aren't just a reflection of the church's failure to bring in new believers, but of their failure to raise up and keep their own.

An article by Barna revealed that approximately 64% of 18–29-year-olds who grew up in the Church have completely dropped out of the Church during that span.³ The Church is failing to raise up its emerging adults to “the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). There is a mass exodus of emerging adults leaving the American Church rather than running to the American Church. So, the question remains, what can we do about it? This paper seeks to answer that question by providing a philosophy and strategy of ministry for the spiritual formation of emerging adults at Woodmen Valley Chapel through mentoring. This introductory section will present *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, the social and cultural setting in which it takes place, an example of an individual in the ministry, my personal investment, and introduce the reader to the model being used to guide the philosophy and strategy being designed.

¹ Cox, “Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America.”

² Cox.

³ “Church Dropouts Have Risen to 64%—But What About Those Who Stay?”

Fullness of Christ Ministries Ministry Description

Fullness of Christ Ministries finds its Biblical Grounding in Ephesians 4:11-16 which reads,

And He (Jesus) gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, 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.

Fullness of Christ Ministries seeks to see the emerging adults of Woodmen Valley Chapel attain “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” This is done by taking 3-5 emerging adults (18–29-year-olds) and connecting them with a mentor in a further stage of life who will do life with them for three years meeting with them regularly as a group. This is called “one-to-many group mentoring”.⁴ While there is an abundance of research on mentoring, the research on group mentoring is fairly new but growing.⁵ In this group not only will emerging adults build relationships with each other and their mentor, they will also be equipped to understand and live out their faith in three areas of the head, heart, and hands. The first year there is a focus on studying Scripture/Biblical literacy and theology and doctrine to target the head.

⁴ Huizing, “Mentoring Together,” 28.

⁵ Huizing, 27–28.

The second year is a move to spiritual disciplines and relationships to target the heart. The last year is a specialized year of equipping mentees to target the hands.

When looking at the numbers it should be of not surprise that ‘Biblical Literacy’ and ‘Theology and Doctrine’ are the first areas emerging adults will be led through. While Church activities are great, research has shown that they do not “predict long term spiritual growth,” but rather personal habits such as “prayer and Bible reading, have far more influence later in the spiritual journey.”⁶ Of these possible habits, “nothing has a greater impact on spiritual growth than reflection on Scripture,” yet, only 1 of 5 church congregants read Scripture every day.⁷ It’s not surprising then, when Ed Stetzer of Lifeway Research, informs us that there is a lack of ability among Christian adults to identify common Bible stories and articulate Biblical doctrine.⁸ These first two sections set the foundation of the Christian faith for emerging adults on the word of God. That foundation will prove to be essential for the important work that will take place in emerging adult’s hearts and hands over the two years of focus, eventually leading them to a place where they can mentor a group themselves.

Social and Cultural Setting

Richard Dunn, in his book with Jana Sundene, writes that “the road to adult maturity is paved with hard choices (the road to immaturity on the other hand, offers an enticing alternative: the path of least resistance).”⁹ According to Dunn and Sundene, the current crisis of emerging adults leaving the Church is the result of a failure to disciple them relationally, and, if continued will lead to even greater consequences.¹⁰ Again, to echo what has already been stated, as great as

⁶ Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 18–19.

⁷ Hawkins and Parkinson, 19.

⁸ Stetzer, “The Epidemic of Bible Illiteracy in Our Churches.”

⁹ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 15.

¹⁰ Dunn, 19.

Sunday services and Church activities are, something more is needed to bring young adults to maturity. Dunn writes, that in his years of working with emerging adults, “shaping the next generation through disciple making remains by far the most powerful strategy Christ has given us for shaping the Church and changing the world.”¹¹

So yes, the road to adult maturity is much harder than the road to adult immaturity.¹² However, for the Christian, immaturity is not an option, and for the Church, leaving emerging adults to immaturity should not be an option either. Dunn provides us with two important pieces of rationale regarding the current landscape of emerging adults. First, regardless of the context, young adults wrestle with questions that deal with identity, faith, morality, and intimacy.¹³ Second, “connection to a vibrant relational spiritual community is *atypical* for young adult’s” around the world.¹⁴ These two pieces reveal a troubling picture: emerging adults are wrestling with important life questions that will define their life but have nowhere to go for help processing them.

Emerging adults wrestle with these questions in a landscape that causes them to experience more unease as culture changes and their generation tends to stay in school later, get married and start families later, and have less job security than previous generations.¹⁵ Older generations often view these things as laziness, but, perhaps rather than calling them lazy they should walk alongside emerging adults in this different and rough landscape of life, discipling them as they go.¹⁶ The truth is that “the majority of [emerging] adults still desire adult things – to own a home, get married, have children – but they don’t feel as ready for them as other

¹¹ Dunn, 21.

¹² Dunn, 15.

¹³ Dunn and Sundene, *Shaping the Journey of Emerging Adults*, 16–17.

¹⁴ Dunn and Sundene, 18.

¹⁵ Dunn and Sundene, 28.

¹⁶ Dunn and Sundene, 28.

generations did.”¹⁷ Who will help them move to a place of readiness? A place of readiness founded on identity in Christ and a relationship to His Church. The hard reality for emerging adults is that “supportive life-stage programming is lacking in Churches, beyond age-targeted social events.”¹⁸ The Church needs to step up and be the spiritual fathers and mothers they are called to be.

As emerging adulthood continues to be more confusing today than ever before and emerging adults experience less structure, and career, relational and physical instability, they need mentors who can disciple them in their faith and in their life.¹⁹ In a society that presents truth as subjective they need a Church that can point them to the absolute truth found in the Bible.²⁰ Furthermore, emerging adults desire mentorship in faith and life. They are just struggling to find it. Dunn writes that “emerging adults long for mentors who will provide navigational guidance as they face a changing societal landscape where values and markers are no longer clear.”²¹ There is a need for established adults to mentor the next generation, and it could bear great fruit. These mentors don’t need to be anyone special, God delights in using the ordinary. In fact, effectiveness in discipling emerging adults has much less to do with certain “external markers of success” and more to do with a willingness to submit to Christ and invest in the lives of emerging adults.²² Furthermore, the benefit of mentorship extends not only to emerging adults but to the mentors as well. “For established and seasoned adults, one of the greatest areas of potential for hope and possibilities is choosing to invest in disciple making relationships with emerging adults.”²³

¹⁷ Dunn and Sundene, 28.

¹⁸ Dunn and Sundene, 29.

¹⁹ Dunn and Sundene, 30–33.

²⁰ Dunn and Sundene, 34.

²¹ Dunn and Sundene, 25.

²² Dunn and Sundene, 18.

²³ Dunn and Sundene, 18.

Meet August Sparks

August Sparks is a 25-year-old male who has graduated college and now works in the public relations department of a business. He attends Woodmen Valley Chapel, a Church in Colorado Springs, CO. He currently lives at home with his parents but is hoping to move out soon and is also pondering whether or not he should start discussing the possibility of marriage with his girlfriend. He feels like it's the right time to get engaged and pursue marriage, however, he isn't sure if he is ready to give himself to that commitment. Woodmen Valley Chapel, which August attends, is a large multi-campus church with roughly 5,000 attendees each Sunday. While he attends Church on Sunday and the occasional social event that their 20's ministry runs, he is longing for friends to discuss life with and a mentor to guide him into the depths of the Christian faith and through the life decisions he is making. He is starting to wonder if he can find that at Woodmen Valley Chapel.

A psychologist, Erik Erikson, sheds some light on August Sparks. Erikson focused his research on how humans develop their identity over the course of their lives.²⁴ He created a model that revealed the eight stages humans experience throughout their lives in forming their identity. In each stage there is a positive and negative pole in which either a strength can be achieved, or a failure will result in further difficulty navigating the successive stages of development.²⁵ Erikson noted that individuals came to their values and identity through social interaction, hence, August's desire for close friends and a mentor to help him navigate life's questions.²⁶

²⁴ Yount, *Created to Learn*, 2010, 57.

²⁵ Barr Jr., "A Speculative Model of Christian Growth: A Melding of Matthew and Erik Erikson," May 18, 1984, 105–6.

²⁶ Barr Jr., 112.

The primary stage for emerging adults is the 6th stage of Erikson’s model known as “Intimacy – Isolation” in which emerging adults desire intimacy and a need to give themselves over to others.²⁷ This intimacy is sought in both romantic relationships and deep friendships.²⁸ It is no wonder, then, that August is considering marriage and seeking deeper friendships. However, intimacy is found in the giving of oneself to another, in order to do that, one has to know oneself, that is, have an identity.²⁹ Identity is formed in the stage preceding “Intimacy – Isolation” which is known as “Identity – Role Confusion.”³⁰ In this stage one seeks to align all they have experienced in the past, present, and all they hope to experience in the future, into an identity.³¹ Individuals form their identity both individually and collectively among core groups.³² All stages, these included, tend to have some overlap, meaning someone could be experiencing both stages at the same time.³³ Given the current landscape of emerging adulthood, with its delays in establishing oneself, it only makes sense that most emerging adults will be wrestling with identity alongside their battle for intimacy. August is feeling this tension as he is wondering if he can find the mentorship and friendship, he needs at Woodmen Valley Chapel and if he is ready for marriage. He is still forming his individual identity with Christ and collective identity with the Church which is making it hard for him to give himself to the idea of marriage without a fully formed identity.

As August wrestles with his identity, his relationships, both romantic and platonic, and his faith, he needs and longs for a mentor and friends to walk alongside him. This is where *Fullness of Christ Ministries* comes in. As Woodmen Valley Chapel launches *Fullness of Christ*

²⁷ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 1993, 261.

²⁸ Erikson, 264.

²⁹ Erikson, “Notes on the Life Cycle,” 1971, 264.

³⁰ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 1993, 261–62.

³¹ Erikson, 261–62.

³² Erikson, 261.

³³ Capps, *Life Cycle Theory and Pastoral Care*, 2002, 19–21.

Ministries at their church August is now invited to participate in a group where he will develop friends and be mentored in the six areas mentioned earlier. Over the course of the three years his identity will be forged, relationships will be formed, his faith will grow and mature, and he will be equipped to one day mentor others.

Personal Relevance

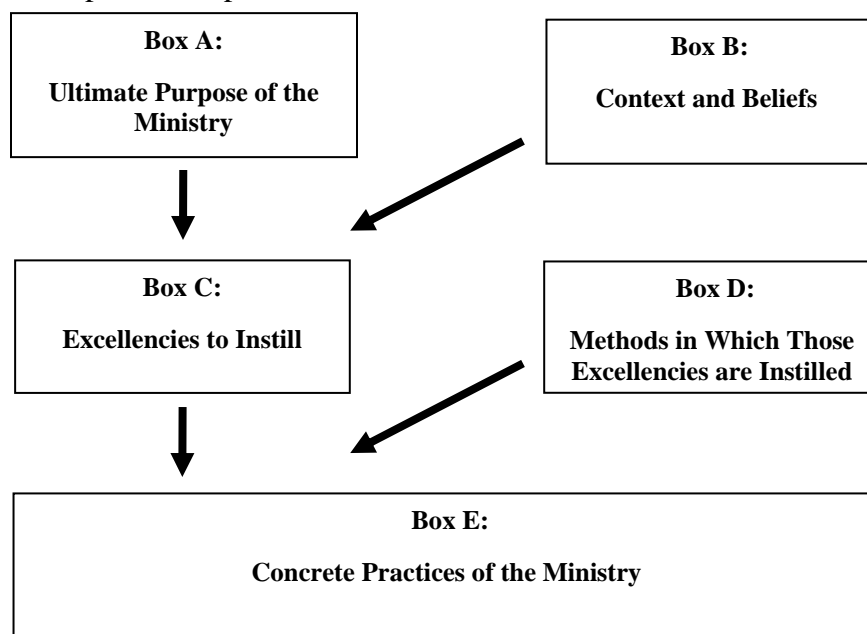
I have personal investment in this ministry because I myself am an emerging adult. I have experienced the effects of wrestling through this time in my life with and without mentors. The time I spent without mentors was deeply challenging for me and for my faith, I found myself floundering often. By the grace of God, mentors entered into my life to help me navigate my identity, faith, relationships, and other decisions. It has been more formative for me than I could ever express. During this time, I have also witnessed the exodus of emerging adults leaving the Church firsthand as many classmates I had in high school are no longer walking with the Lord. My heart aches as I watch this happen. I long to see the Church do something about it. I want to see the American Church come to life, and I believe a large part of that is through the discipleship of emerging adults. The hope is that the discipleship of emerging adults will yield laborers for the harvest, leaders who will stand firm in truth, know their faith and how to live it out, and will bring the Church to a place of abundance rather than famine.

Introducing the Frankena Model

While understanding all the prior information is crucial, it is also important to understand how the model being presented is set up. The model this paper will use is adapted from William Frankena, a moral and educational philosopher who developed a model that can be used to develop a philosophy and strategy for education.³⁴ The model consists of five boxes. Box A

³⁴ Stevens, "Frankena, William Klaus," 302.

contains the ultimate purpose of one's ministry.³⁵ This section seeks to provide the "why" that drives everything the ministry will do. In Box B the beliefs about the world and context in which the ministry serves is described.³⁶ Box A and Box B then flow into Box C which consists of the excellencies the ministry will seek to instill.³⁷ In this box the mission, vision, and values of the ministry are established as the practitioner describes the hopeful outcome for an individual who goes through their ministry.³⁸ Then, in Box D, the methods in which those excellencies are best instilled are discussed and described.³⁹ From there, Box C and Box D flow into Box E which is the concrete practices of the ministry, the "what."⁴⁰ Below is an image depicting the model this paper will be taking the reader through as a philosophy and strategy for *Fullness of Christ Ministries* is developed and explained.



³⁵ Frankena, *Philosophy of Education*, 1965, 8.

³⁶ Frankena, 8.

³⁷ Frankena, 8.

³⁸ Frankena, 8.

³⁹ Frankena, 7.

⁴⁰ Frankena, 7.

Conclusion

The landscape of emerging adults today is continuing to change. The challenges they face are different than those of previous generations and they face much more instability than those who went before them. The questions they are wrestling with will define their lives. Questions relating to identity, relationships, faith, careers, and more. These emerging adults are longing for mentors and community but can't find them. The church is primed to raise up disciples of this generation, in fact Jesus has called the Church to make disciples (Matt. 28:16-20). Yet, the Church has failed to disciple this generation of emerging adults and it is yielding a mass exodus away from the Church. The Church has the opportunity to step up and provide discipleship, community, and support to emerging adults. *Fullness of Christ Ministries* at Woodmen Valley Chapel in Colorado Springs, CO seeks to meet this need and raise up believers from these emerging adults who will stand firm in the faith and disciple others. Throughout this paper the philosophy and strategy of *Fullness of Christ Ministries* will be explored as it pertains to the spiritual formation of emerging adults at Woodmen Valley Chapel through mentoring.

Box A: Ultimate Purpose

Picture an old beat-up car that someone is restoring. It's not pretty and needs to be thoroughly cleaned, the engine needs a complete overhaul, it needs a new radio, etc. Before someone begins to fix it up they have to figure out what they want it to do, that is, what is the car's purpose. Once they have settled on the purpose, for instance, to get from one point to another in a certain amount of time while being roadworthy, then they can begin to work towards that purpose. Purpose is needed for any sort of project to move in the direction it hopes to go. Without a purpose, at some point, either the project will descend into chaos or come to a crashing halt. The same is the case for any ministry. If a ministry is not driven by a strong "why," an ultimate purpose that will ground it and direct it at all times, it is bound to fail. In designing a ministry of spiritual formation, then, we must ask ourselves two questions. What is the purpose of humanity? And what is the purpose of this ministry? In William Frankena's model for developing a philosophy of education, Box A seeks to answer this question by discussing the ultimate purpose of one's ministry.⁴¹ In this box the big question is, "what is the chief end of man?"⁴² The answer to this question naturally informs the ultimate purpose of the ministry being designed. This section will discuss the ultimate purpose of humanity and consequently the ultimate purpose of *Fullness of Christ Ministries*.

The Ultimate Purpose of Humanity

According to both the Westminster Shorter Catechism and the Baptist Catechism of 1693 the chief end of humanity is to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever."⁴³ Wayne Grudem writes that "we were created for God's glory, our ultimate goal in life should be to live for His glory.

⁴¹ Frankena, 8.

⁴² Stevens, "Frankena, William Klaus," 302.

⁴³ Westminster Assembly, "Shorter Catechism"; Smith, "Baptist Catechism, 1693," 39.

Giving God glory will give our lives purpose and meaning.”⁴⁴ Colossians 1:16 corroborates creation being made for God, namely, the person of Jesus. If this is indeed the purpose of humanity, it must inform everything one does. Grenz, in his work *Theology for the Community of God*, writes that “the ultimate motivation for all Church planning, goals, and actions must center solely on our desire to bring glory to God. We must direct all we say and do as the eschatological covenant community towards this ultimate purpose, namely, that God be glorified through us.”⁴⁵ However, the question arises, what does it mean to glorify God?

“Glorifying God” has become a “christianese” phrase thrown around to describe man’s purpose with very few being able to define what that actually means. To get at what “glorifying God” means, one must understand the biblical concept of glory. The word for glory in the Bible carries the idea of being heavy or having weight.⁴⁶ This brings with it “connotations of importance and worth, the splendor manifested by things of such nature, and the honor due them.”⁴⁷ One that has glory is one with “riches, power, position, and so forth.”⁴⁸ What this means is that God, being most glorious in His high position, great riches, and unfathomable power, is worthy of our praise, our reverence, our weight. “To give God glory,” Grudem writes, “means to give Him great honor and praise.”⁴⁹ It is important though, to know what it looks like to give God weight. The primary way in which we do this is heeding His commandments.

Jesus tells us that if we love Him, we will obey His commandments (John 14:15). The Bible is full of commandments, how could that possibly be encapsulated in such a short section as this one here? Thankfully, Scot McKnight points us to what he calls “The Jesus Creed” which

⁴⁴ Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, 58.

⁴⁵ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 2000, 488.

⁴⁶ Harrison, “Glory,” 341.

⁴⁷ Lyra Pitstick, “The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology,” 197.

⁴⁸ Harrison, “Glory,” 341.

⁴⁹ Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, 58.

is Jesus' own words on the greatest commandments. The words from Jesus in "The Jesus Creed" are at the core of Jesus' beliefs on humanities purpose and spiritual formation.⁵⁰ "The Jesus Creed" is found in Mark 12:28-33 and reads,

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that He answered them well, asked Him, "which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "the most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

So then, if at the core of glorifying God is obeying His commandments, and at the core of His commandments is love for God and love for others, one must ask, "what does love mean?"

Today's culture is saturated with different views of love. Most prominent is Hollywood's emotional and passionate love which seems to be a strong undeniable feeling one has for another romantically. However, while that is an aspect of love, the Bible paints a much bigger picture of love. The most common word for love in the New Testament is *Agape*.⁵¹ In fact, this is the word used for love in Jesus' words taken from Mark above. *Agape* is "unmerited, self-giving love."⁵² This kind of love always "seeks the highest good in the beloved, although that one may be undeserving."⁵³ This is the love God has for humanity, it is the standard. Man is called to this kind of love and fails daily. Humanity is utterly undeserving of love, yet because it is the very

⁵⁰ McKnight, *The Jesus Creed*, 8.

⁵¹ Hoehner, "Love," 506.

⁵² Hoehner, 506.

⁵³ Hoehner, 506.

nature of *Agape*, God loves humanity anyways. It is the kind of love that loves its enemies, the very love Jesus called His followers to (Matt. 5:43-44).

Scripture, then, points us to this: the ultimate purpose of humanity is to glorify God by loving God and loving others. Ecclesiastes 12:13 reads, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” This idea of fearing God coincides with glorifying God. To fear God, after all, is to honor Him with great reverence. Yet, man’s duty is not just to “fear God,” but also to “keep His commandments.” Love of God and love of others encapsulates all of God’s commandments (Matt. 22:36-40). Jesus commands us to love in yet another place, saying, “this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12-13). The love man is called to has a standard, and that standard is Jesus. So, then humanity’s purpose is to glorify God and to love Him and love others. The only way that is done is by becoming like Jesus, He is the standard of love, which is why He commands His followers to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:13). Then, in glorifying God by loving God and loving others man find itself being conformed into the image of Christ as they grow up in Him “until we attain to... the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). Humanity lives out its purpose in glorifying God by loving Him and loving others. In doing so each individual becomes more like Christ.

The Ultimate Purpose of *Fullness of Christ Ministries*

In John 15:8 Jesus declares, “by this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” *Fullness of Christ Ministries* seeks to glorify God by bearing much fruit, by obeying His commandments, namely, by loving God and loving others. We are well aware that we cannot bear fruit apart from Jesus (John 15:4). We must abide in Jesus, loving

Him, our God, and from Him we learn to love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Then, loving others, fruit is born as disciples are made and the great commission is fulfilled (Matt. 28:16-20). In the making of disciples, the Father is thus glorified (John 15:8). The ultimate purpose of *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, then, is to glorify God by loving God and loving others in making disciples. As this is done the great commission is fulfilled, the saints are equipped for the work of ministry, and the body is raised up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Conclusion

Every ministry needs a purpose that drives and directs it. Without an ultimate purpose the ministry is doomed to fall into chaos and come to a screeching halt. An ultimate purpose helps keep a ministry grounded and focused on what really matters. When things get hard, as they always do in ministry, this purpose is the rock which the ministry stands on knowing the “why” behind all their striving. The ultimate purpose of a ministry ought to be derived from the ultimate purpose of all humanity. This section explored the ultimate purpose of humanity and concluded that Scripture and Church tradition points to humanity finding its ultimate purpose in glorifying God by loving God and loving others. To glorify God was defined as giving God “great honor and praise.”⁵⁴ The major way in which one does this is to give heed to God’s commandments which are summed up in love for God and love for others.⁵⁵ As one grows in this they become more like Christ. *Fullness of Christ Ministries* find its ultimate purpose derived from this stating that it exists to glorify God by loving God and loving others in making disciples.

⁵⁴ Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, 58.

⁵⁵ McKnight, *The Jesus Creed*, 8.

Box B: Premises

Having defined the ultimate purpose of humanity, and thus of *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, in Box A, there is now a move to Box B, where the context and beliefs of the ministry will be discussed in five premises. In Box A, the final product is what was described rather than the old messy car just mentioned. The ultimate purpose is the car depicted as it is supposed to be: fully functioning, sun beaming off of fresh paint, with a beautiful purring engine, and of course, able to get from one point to another in a certain amount of time. In Box B, a look is given to things as they are. What is the actual state of the car? What needs to be done to help it achieve its purpose? Is there a guide to restoring the car? All these things are foundational to achieving the vision of the restored, properly functioning car, the vision laid out in Box A. Thus, if *Fullness of Christ Ministries* seeks to glorify God by loving God and loving others in making disciples, we must articulate our beliefs and assumptions about the context of our ministry. It is through that lens that the car can be restored, that *Fullness of Christ Ministries* can make strides towards fulfilling its ultimate purpose.

Box B contains the “empirical and other premises about human nature, life, and the world.”⁵⁶ These five premises provide the lens through which we aim at hitting the target purpose outlined in Box A; Boxes A and B are complimentary to each other so that one cannot be sacrificed without sacrificing the others.⁵⁷ The premises that will be outlined provide the reason why the excellencies which will be discussed in Box C are necessary for living out the purpose discussed in Box A.⁵⁸ The premises will be grounded in the real world, that is, in scientific studies and religious beliefs that reveal our assumptions about life, the world, and the

⁵⁶ Frankena, *Philosophy of Education*, 1965, 8.

⁵⁷ Habermas, *Teaching for Reconciliation*, 8.

⁵⁸ Stevens, “Frankena, William Klaus,” 302.

context of *Fullness of Christ Ministries*.⁵⁹ These premises cover a variety of areas ranging from the nature of persons, to the nature of God, to the nature of Scripture, to the nature of the Church, and to the nature of culture. These premises could be theological, philosophical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, or educational. The following premises will be discussed in this section: (1) Scripture is an authoritative and sufficient guide for life and ministry; (2) Humans are created in such a way that they live and grow best in a relational context; (3) The primary tool God has given us for growing the church is discipleship-oriented mentoring; (4) The landscape of emerging adults presents a need for mentors that the Church is primed to meet; and (5) Identity and Intimacy play a key role in the development of emerging adults. These premises will be discussed below.

Premise 1: Scripture is an authoritative and sufficient guide for life and ministry (Nature of Scripture; Nature of God; Theological)

At *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, Scripture is the foundation for all we teach and do. It informs the topics discussed, the practices we have, how we mentor and disciple, and even our other premises. Every building has a foundation which without it would crumble. For *Fullness of Christ Ministries* Scripture is that foundation, and on it rests the practices of the ministry. Scripture speaks for itself in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

In this we see the function of Scripture and part of the basis for Scripture being authoritative. Scripture is authoritative in that it speaks the final verdict on issues regarding life, morality, and how we are to live. Scripture is “the word of God” which is “living and active,

⁵⁹ Habermas, *Teaching for Reconciliation*, 8.

sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). Scripture then, penetrates our hearts and convicts us authoritatively in every aspect of our lives. It is “profitable,” as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 noted above, “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” In all of these areas it is completely authoritative for life and ministry.

Why do we believe that it is authoritative? Well, the Bible isn’t just like any other book written by man, rather, it is “breathed out by God” (2 Timothy 3:16). It is God’s very word. He is the ultimate authority on Heaven and on Earth. Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Barrett provides us with a helpful definition of what it means that Scripture is “inspired by the Spirit.”

The inspiration of Scripture refers to the act whereby the Holy Spirit came upon the authors of Scripture, causing them to write exactly what God intended, while simultaneously preserving each author’s writing style and personality. This supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon the human authors means that the authors words are God’s words and therefore reliable, trustworthy, and authoritative.⁶⁰

Harrison comments: “God has ‘breathed out’ Scripture as a function of His creative activity, making this revealed Word authoritative for human salvation and instruction in divine truth.”⁶¹

The Bible, then, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, is also both infallible and inerrant. Infallible means that the writings in Scripture are “not liable to deceive. Because the Spirit moved in the lives of the authors, the product can be trusted.”⁶² For Scripture to be inerrant means that it is without error making it completely trustworthy, some understand this as inerrant

⁶⁰ Barrett, *God’s Word Alone-- the Authority of Scripture*, 229.

⁶¹ Harrison, “Scripture,” 790.

⁶² Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 2000, 398.

in every way, others understand it to mean it is inerrant so much as it speaks God, humanity, and morality.⁶³ Either way, the Bible is thus “reliable, trustworthy, and authoritative.”⁶⁴

Why bring the Holy Spirit into a premise about Scripture? If we are to claim Scripture to be authoritative and sufficient, we can only do so on the basis of Scripture being God’s own word as He is the creator and sustainer of the universe. Grenz notes that our view of Scripture must be formed within the context of pneumatology, that is, the theology of the Holy Spirit who inspired the writing of Scripture.⁶⁵ Grenz comments further,

As Christians we are a ‘people of the book.’ We declare that the Bible is the foundation of our faith and the source of guidance for our lives. This declaration, however, requires a theological formulation which articulates the intimate relationship between Scripture and the Spirit. In acknowledging the Bible, we are actually looking to the Holy Spirit who addresses us through its pages.⁶⁶

The Spirit brings regeneration to believer and the renewal of life; as a believer reads Scripture the Spirit illuminates Scripture to the believer, authoritatively and sufficiently bearing “witness to Jesus Christ, [guiding] the lives of believers, and [exercising] authority in the Church.”⁶⁷

So then, Scripture is not only authoritative, but also sufficient. It is sufficient in that it is able to fill and grow us by the power of the Holy Spirit’s illumination and it is complete, not needing, in fact, prohibiting any addition to itself. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 stating to the Devil that, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from

⁶³ Grenz, 398–400.

⁶⁴ Barrett, *God’s Word Alone-- the Authority of Scripture*, 229.

⁶⁵ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 2000, 379.

⁶⁶ Grenz, 380.

⁶⁷ Grenz, 379–83.

the mouth of God.” This reveals to us that Scripture is sustenance for us in the fullest sense as it nourishes and addresses our spiritual needs.⁶⁸

When it comes to Scripture being complete and not needing, in fact, prohibiting addition, we turn to Revelation 22:18 which reads, “I warn everyone who hears the words of prophecy in this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to Him the plagues described in this book.”

Perhaps, however, this verse is speaking solely to the book of Revelation. In that case we turn to the great tradition of the Church. Grenz writes,

A council meeting in Carthage in A.D. 397 asserted that nothing should be read in the Church as divine Scripture except the twenty-seven books of our New Testament (in addition to the Old Testament writings). In effect the council declared the Bible as complete. Since then, Christians have agreed that the canon is closed. We do not, nor will we at any future time, deem any other documents to be on par with the books in our Bible.⁶⁹

So then, Scripture is an authoritative and sufficient guide for life and ministry. This means that as our friend, August Sparks, he journeys through *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, will be taught to regard Scripture highly and hold it as authoritative and sufficient. He will read through the Bible and learn how its sets the foundation for what He believes and how He lives while watching a mentor who lives a life shaped by this high view of Scripture.

Premise 2: Humans are created in such a way that they live and grow best in a relational context (Nature of Persons; Sociological)

All Christians are constantly growing in knowledge of God and in the living out their faith. The question is, in what context does growth best take place? Scripture paints a clear

⁶⁸ Grenz, 388.

⁶⁹ Grenz, 380–81.

picture of community as the primary context of human life, growth, and flourishing. Growth in one's faith must be considered within the context of community as it lies at the heart of the Biblical vision espoused through Scripture.⁷⁰ In Genesis God proclaims, "it is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Humans are creatures made in the image of God, who has lived in a relational context for eternity as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit interact. Being made in God's image then we are also made for community, "for 'in Him we live and move and have our being'" (Acts 17:28). For those in Christ, that community has been provided for us in His bride and His body, the Church.

The Church is made up of people in a covenant community that foreshadows the coming new creation. "The fellowship of believers seek to reflect for all creation the nature of the triune God Himself, namely the love between the Father and the son which is the Holy Spirit. In short, the Church is the eschatological covenant community of love."⁷¹ The Church paints for us the picture of humanity's ideal created context. That context is a relational one, it is community, and it is in this relational context that faith and lives are nurtured and grown by the community of faith.⁷² In the church we grow by a corporate focus on God and a bringing of Christ's love to the center.⁷³

It is in this relational context of the covenant community, the Church, that believers see and attest to God's power exhibited in their relationships and thus grow and live out their faith.⁷⁴ The Church is rightly referred to as body throughout the New Testament. Each individual plays a role in the Church and thus the Church grows together the same way the whole body

⁷⁰ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, xxxi.

⁷¹ Grenz, 486.

⁷² Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, xxxii.

⁷³ Strukova, "Community," 199.

⁷⁴ Strukova, 200.

grows up in all its parts. However, if an arm is cut off from the body it ceases to grow and eventually dies if not reattached. It is the same for individual humans who are made for a relational context. When we begin to live outside of community our growth slows and eventually stops as relationships are the context in which we are formed, grow, live out our faith, and flourish.

Let's return to August Sparks. As August seeks to grow through *Fullness of Christ Ministries* he is welcomed into the broader community of the local church at Woodmen Valley Chapel. Moreover, he is also intentionally placed into a smaller community of 3-5 emerging adults and a mentor in which he will build relationships and grow. It is in this context that he will be able to best grow and live out his faith as he pursues and is ushered into maturity in Christ.

Premise 3: The primary tool God has given us for growing the church is discipleship/mentorship (Nature of the Church; Theological; Sociological)

In the introduction to this paper, we quoted Dunn, who wrote that “shaping the next generation through disciple making remains by far the most powerful strategy Christ has given us for shaping the Church and changing the world.”⁷⁵ Scripture attests to this statement. The whole ministry of Jesus centered around discipleship and prior to His ascension He gave us a charge: “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. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). Throughout Scripture we see mentoring and discipleship exhibited. In the Old Testament Moses mentors Joshua, Elijah mentors Elisha, and in the New Testament Jesus raises up disciples and charges them to make more, Paul mentors Timothy, the twelve mentor the early church, and so on

⁷⁵ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 21.

throughout church history as well. Clearly, discipleship is central to the growth of the church. We would be fools not to use this tool God has given us.

Sanders, in His book *The Power of Mentoring*, notes that as he started in ministry “the philosophy [he] espoused then was simply this: ‘Discipleship is the ministry under which the entire Church is to function!’”⁷⁶ As he began setting up mentoring programs and discipling other his ministry experienced success and he was often called in to other churches to help build these programs. But what happens if we do not mentor and disciple those under us? Well, the impact is extremely negative, Dunn even refers to it as apocalyptic.⁷⁷ The negative impact that occurs “when mature Christian adults fail to care well for the spiritual and moral health of the next generation” is catastrophic.⁷⁸

Sanders writes that the “two key indicators that seem to point people to a successful end in the development of life, faithfulness, and effectiveness are: 1) the lifelong pursuit of character formation throughout the various stages of life; and 2) the presence of a mentor(s) to guide them.”⁷⁹ Through mentoring individuals are conformed into the image of Jesus Christ, and being conformed, they then model Jesus Christ, who glorified God by loving God and loving others perfectly and making disciples.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, xiii.

⁷⁷ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 13–14.

⁷⁸ Dunn, 13.

⁷⁹ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, 2009, 9.

⁸⁰ Sanders, 1.

Some seem to think that between all the fads and trends that come through North America, and consequently the North American Church, that mentoring is just one among many that will pass through. Sanders addresses this,

Mentoring... is not simply the most recent trend to emerge on the North American church scene. The concept of mentoring is rooted in our past, and it is at the very core of how the next generation of leaders is developed. As focus is given to the intentional development of purposeful relationships between emerging leaders and established leaders, the developmental interactions that take place bring greater effectiveness to both groups of individuals. In many ways, the future health of the Church depends upon these mentoring relationships.⁸¹

Indeed, the future health of the Church depends on mentoring or discipling which for the purpose of this paper are going to be used interchangeably. There is a constant need for leadership in the Church.⁸² Through mentoring and discipling emerging adult leaders are raised up both in the lay congregation and clergy who will continue to grow the Church. Sanders reminds us that a reality for life and those in the Christian faith is that one generation must pass on leadership to the next.⁸³ “Intentionally mentoring the next generation,” Sanders writes, “will ensure that the work of God that began in us – the work of His kingdom – will continue past our own lifetime.”⁸⁴

Through *Fullness of Christ Ministries* August sparks is intentionally disciplined and mentored by an established adult in life and faith. Through this mentorship August will grow into a mature disciple of Christ and be equipped to mentor others so that the discipleship process continues. Think of this process of mentoring/discipleship as a tree. The tree (established

⁸¹ Sanders, 13.

⁸² Sanders, 55.

⁸³ Sanders, 13–14.

⁸⁴ Sanders, 16.

Christian adult) grows up and bears fruit (emerging adults grown to maturity). These fruits contain seeds which eventually sprout into another tree which in turn will eventually bear fruit which will do the same. The process continues from tree to sapling to tree to sapling. So also, this process of discipleship continues from generation to generation to generation to generation as the church multiplies through discipleship-oriented mentoring. August and his friends will be mentored and eventually each will mentor 3-5 more emerging adults after them who will then continue the same process.

Premise 4: The landscape of emerging adults presents a need for mentors that the Church is primed to meet (Nature of Culture; Nature of the Church; Sociological)

The Church, as discussed, is charged to make disciples and the primary tool for that is discipleship-oriented mentoring. It's no secret that the landscape of culture has changed over the last few decades.⁸⁵ Sanders writes, "I am often asked by older leaders, 'Why do younger leaders feel such a need to be mentored? No one mentored us, and we did fine. Didn't we?'"⁸⁶ He goes on to note that the emerging adults of today "grew up in a uniquely different context than leaders who are in their fifties and sixties."⁸⁷ The landscape has changed, the context is different, and while the Church should be discipling and mentoring their next generations at all times, a look at this landscape will provide an understanding of the unique need for mentoring this generation has and how the Church is primed to meet it.

Emerging adults experience continued discomfort and unease as their landscape changes with the culture around them. Their generation stays in school later, gets married and starts families later, and has less job security than in the past.⁸⁸ This discomfort, unease, and resulting

⁸⁵ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 28.

⁸⁶ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, 2009, 17.

⁸⁷ Sanders, 19.

⁸⁸ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 28.

hesitancy that emerging adults have in this stage of life is often interpreted by those older than them as laziness.⁸⁹ Though established adults will acknowledge the changing landscape, most do not take the necessary time to consider and think through how “all of these changes have created very different kinds of people with uniquely different needs and perspectives” than those that they had.⁹⁰ Perhaps, if the older generation will pause to consider the changes happening deeply, they will not just consider the emerging adults of today lazy, but can walk alongside them in their unique needs as the mentors and disciple-makers the church has called them to be.

Sanders identifies five factors that “contribute in some way to the rising need for intentional mentoring within our current cultural context.”⁹¹ The first of these is a “loss of heroes.” He notes that “throughout the last decade or more, nearly every major periodical in the United States and Canada has done a cover story on the absence of heroes and role models and the impact that it has on society in general and on the emerging generations in particular.”⁹² The emerging adults of today need mentors who they can look up to. The second factor is a “loss of ‘common sense.’” There is a lack of shared values and common knowledge that previous generations enjoyed which dictates how people live and why things are the way they are.⁹³ In a postmodern world truth is seen as subjective which makes the world much more confusing as there isn’t a clear standard of right and wrong.⁹⁴ Due to this, when it comes to religion, many emerging adults personalize religion rather than embracing a single religion as objectively true.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Dunn, 28.

⁹⁰ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, 2009, 17.

⁹¹ Sanders, 17.

⁹² Sanders, 17.

⁹³ Sanders, 17–18.

⁹⁴ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 34.

⁹⁵ Dunn, 36.

The third factor Sanders mentions is “societal mobility.”⁹⁶ More now than ever, emerging adults have the freedom to move anywhere. Societal mobility also leads to instability in many areas for emerging adults in their careers, relationships, and health.⁹⁷ The societal mobility and following instability in the landscape of emerging adults necessitates mentors that can come walk alongside emerging adults as they navigate the ever-changing landscape of emerging adulthood. The fourth factor introduced by Sanders is “visual orientation; show me how.” Today’s society is saturated with visual material from pictures to videos. There are TV shows, movies, social media pictures, tik-tok’s to watch, YouTube videos, and more. Sanders writes that “because the images have already been provided for that person, it is challenging for him or her to reflect very deeply – or at all – on his or her life.”⁹⁸ Mentors who come alongside emerging adults can help them learn to reflect deeply on their lives and faith where they may otherwise not. The last factor introduced by Sanders is “postponed maturity.”⁹⁹ Emerging adults are in school later, get married later, and start families later.¹⁰⁰ However, this isn’t for a lack of desire for these things, in fact, “the majority of young adults still desire adult things – to own a home, get married, have children – but they don’t feel ready for them as soon as other generations did.”¹⁰¹ Emerging adults need mentors that can come alongside them and help them to mature and become more ready for these things which they desire. To help them become more independent yet also grow in their dependence on Christ and the Church.

This is the landscape of emerging adults. As they face the challenges that come with their life stage and this landscape “they will be presented with the all-important tasks of learning

⁹⁶ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, 2009, 18.

⁹⁷ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 33–35.

⁹⁸ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, 2009, 19.

⁹⁹ Sanders, 19.

¹⁰⁰ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 28.

¹⁰¹ Dunn, 28.

dependence on the Father’s wisdom and interdependence in the body of Christ.”¹⁰² The Church is primed to meet them in this need. The Church has been given the charge to make disciples, to mentor the next generation, and the power of the Holy Spirit is with them as they do this.

However, we still find that “for eighteen- to thirty-year-olds... supportive life-stage programming is lacking in churches, beyond age-targeted social events.”¹⁰³ Sanders asks, “What will it take for the churches who clearly long to follow the teachings of Jesus to implement His mission to make more disciples?”¹⁰⁴

We return to the two pieces of rationale provided by Dunn discussed in the introduction to this paper. (1) Regardless of the context, emerging adults consistently wrestle with questions that deal with identity, faith, morality, and intimacy.¹⁰⁵ And (2) “Connection to a “vibrant relational spiritual community is *atypical* for young adult’s” around the world.¹⁰⁶ This landscape has left emerging adults longing for mentors from established and seasoned adults “who will provide navigational guidance as they face a changing societal landscape where values and markers are no longer clear.”¹⁰⁷

The soil is fertile with emerging adults that the Church can mentor and disciple. We think of Jesus’ words, “the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Matthew 9:37). Dunn writes that “for established and seasoned adults, one of the areas of greatest potential for hope and possibilities is choosing to invest in disciple-making relationships with emerging adults.”¹⁰⁸

Fullness of Christ Ministries seeks to send out laborers into the harvest. We mobilize mentors who will mentor people like August Sparks who is going through the challenges of the emerging

¹⁰² Dunn, 40.

¹⁰³ Dunn, 29.

¹⁰⁴ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, xv.

¹⁰⁵ Dunn, *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students*, 2001, 16–17.

¹⁰⁶ Dunn, 18.

¹⁰⁷ Dunn, 25.

¹⁰⁸ Dunn, 18.

adult landscape as he navigates life's questions, relationship and career markers, and the development of his faith.

**Premise 5: Identity and Intimacy play a key role in the development of emerging adults
(Nature of Persons; Psychological)**

For this premise we return to the psychologist, Erik Erikson, discussed in the introduction to this paper. Erikson was primarily concerned with how humans' identities develop over the course of their lives.¹⁰⁹ He would eventually publish his Life Cycle theory which has become well known and respected. It is outlined in "The Eight Stages of Man" in chapter eight of his book *Childhood and Society*.¹¹⁰ The publishing of this theory marked a massive step forward in the developmental field of psychology and still impacts our understanding of identity development today.¹¹¹ In his theory Erikson provides a "cognitive map" comprised of eight stages that humans will go through over the course of their lives; in each stage there is a positive or negative possibility in which that person either continues to develop well or experiences a hindrance to their development.¹¹²

The eight stages occur in the same order and at relatively the same ages for all, however, some stages overlap, and all are connected as each succeeding stage builds on the previous stage, meaning, failure to develop in one stage will hinder the ability to develop in the next.¹¹³ There are two stages that are relevant to emerging adults. The stages, as labeled by Erikson, are "Identity-Role Confusion" and "Intimacy-Isolation."¹¹⁴ As we move forward it is important to

¹⁰⁹ Yount, *Created to Learn*, 2010, 57.

¹¹⁰ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 1993.

¹¹¹ Barr Jr., "A Speculative Model of Christian Growth: A Melding of Matthew and Erik Erikson," May 18, 1984, 101.

¹¹² Barr Jr., 105–6.

¹¹³ Capps, *Life Cycle Theory and Pastoral Care*, 2002, 19–21.

¹¹⁴ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 1993, 273.

note that Erikson theorized that identity formation takes place in a social context and that humans are social creatures so much that identity cannot be forged apart from others.¹¹⁵

The first stage relevant to our demographic is “Identity-Role Confusion.” This stage revolves around youth but often extends into one’s twenties.¹¹⁶ This information alongside the postponed maturity in emerging adults previously discussed make the stage of “Identity-Role Confusion” relevant to emerging adults. In this stage one is searching for their identity. They are asking themselves “who am I?” Success in this stage is the formation of an identity whereas failure to develop would leave one confused about their role in society.¹¹⁷ Identity, as aforementioned, is formed in a social context as an individual tries to bring into alignment their past experiences, view of self, their present events, others view of them, and their future hopes into one unified identity.¹¹⁸

This stage then flows into and overlaps with “Intimacy-Isolation.” In this stage, having formed an identity, the emerging adult seeks to experience intimacy, which is to merge his or her identity with the identity of others.¹¹⁹ To be successful in this stage is to experience intimacy, whereas, to fail, would leave one feeling isolated from those around them. Intimacy is found not only in romantic relationships but in deep friendships as well.¹²⁰ Intimacy is accomplished through the giving of oneself to another and the receiving of that other. This happens through the giving of identity between persons to result in a collective identity between the two.¹²¹ Here lies the tie between the two stages. In order for one to experience intimacy they must first have an

¹¹⁵ Barr Jr., “A Speculative Model of Christian Growth: A Melding of Matthew and Erik Erikson,” May 18, 1984, 112.

¹¹⁶ Yount, *Created to Learn*, 2010, 61.

¹¹⁷ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 1993, 261–63.

¹¹⁸ Erikson, 261–62.

¹¹⁹ Erikson, 263.

¹²⁰ Erikson, “Notes on the Life Cycle,” 1971.

¹²¹ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 1993, 263–64.

identity formed which they can give. To fail to develop an identity makes it essentially impossible to experience intimacy.

As August is mentored through *Fullness of Christ Ministries* he is learning in community of peers, and with his mentor, to put his identity first and foremost in Christ, to found his life on Scripture, and let it inform other pieces of his identity relating to relationships, career, and hobbies. As he develops an identity it will reinforce intimacy with his pursued significant other as he begins to have a cohesive identity which he can give to her. As identity is developed, him and his peers, as well as their mentor, will experience intimacy as they explore, solidify, and share their identities with one another. Most potent, of course, will be their collective identity in Christ and their joining to Him by which they experience true friendship and intimacy that can only be found in Christ and His bride, His body, the Church.

Conclusion

These five premises reveal the context in which *Fullness of Christ Ministries* functions, and the beliefs we have about the world. These premises provide the lens through which we must look if we are to hit our target of glorifying God and others in making disciples as outlined in Box A. The premises discussed were (1) Scripture is an authoritative and sufficient guide for life and ministry; (2) Humans are created in such a way that they live and grow best in a relational context; (3) The primary tool God has given us for growing the church is discipleship-oriented mentoring; (4) The landscape of emerging adults presents a need for mentors that the Church is primed to meet; and (5) Identity and Intimacy play a key role in the development of emerging adults. The premises discussed are founded on real world principles such as scientific studies and religious beliefs and cover a wide range of areas and disciplines. These premises will inform the

excellencies *Fullness of Christ Ministries* seeks to instill in disciples which will be discussed in the following section, Box C.

Box C: Excellencies

As we move into Box C let's return to the image of restoring a car. In Box A we outlined the ultimate purpose, what the car is supposed to do, that is, get us from one location to another in a certain amount of time. In Box B we evaluated the current state of the car, how messy it is, is there a guide we have to restoring it, and what is the state of the engine? Now, in Box C, we will look at what parts we need for the car to be road worthy and to get us to the point of being able to live out the goal of Box A. What kind of engine do we need? Do we need new headlights? What paint job? Do we need certain tires? All of these things add up to make one functioning car that fulfills its purpose of being roadworthy and getting from one location to another in a certain amount of time. Similarly, at *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, if we want those in our ministry to glorify God by loving God and loving others in disciple making, we must ask what "excellencies" or "characteristics" they must have to fulfill that goal.

Box C, then, "represents the excellencies (abilities, traits, etc.) that are the outcomes of an educational endeavor."¹²² Excellencies are the characteristics that an individual, such as August Sparks, who goes through *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, will exhibit after completion of their time in the ministry. In order to carry out the purpose of Box A in the setting of Box B, *Fullness of Christ Ministries* must cultivate the excellencies which will be listed in Box C.¹²³ In this section the excellencies for reaching the ultimate goal in Box A will be outlined.¹²⁴ The following excellencies will be discussed: (1) Grounded in Scripture, (2) Christ-Centered Identity, (3) Love, (4) Spiritual Habits, and (5) Fruitfulness.

¹²² Stevens, "Frankena, William Klaus," 302.

¹²³ Frankena, *Philosophy of Education*, 1965, 8.

¹²⁴ Habermas, *Teaching for Reconciliation*, 8.

Grounded in Scripture

The characteristic of being Grounded in Scripture has much to do with the belief of *Fullness in Christ Ministries* that Scripture is an authoritative and sufficient guide for life and ministry. If “all Scripture” is indeed “breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17), then a mature believer must let Scripture be the foundation of their life. Scripture being the foundation of their life, they will turn to it for issues regarding relationships, how the Church functions, ethical dilemmas of any sort, and more.

Think of Barrett’s definition of the inspiration of Scripture in Box B:

The inspiration of Scripture refers to the act whereby the Holy Spirit came upon the authors of Scripture, causing them to write exactly what God intended, while simultaneously preserving each author’s writing style and personality. This supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon the human authors means that the authors words are God’s words and therefore reliable, trustworthy, and authoritative.¹²⁵

Believing that Scripture is indeed the word of God, someone who has gone through *Fullness of Christ Ministries* will turn to it again and again. They will be well studied in its story and context, familiar with it as an everyday devotion, and holding it as a light to their lives on how to live out their faith.

August, having gone through *Fullness of Christ Ministries* will understand that as a Christian he belongs to a “people of the book.”¹²⁶ This will mean that he declares the Bible as the foundation of His faith and a source of guidance for his life, and, as he looks to it,

¹²⁵ Barrett, *God’s Word Alone-- the Authority of Scripture*, 229.

¹²⁶ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 2000, 380.

acknowledges that the Spirit addresses him through its pages.¹²⁷ Scripture for him is God’s very word and is “authoritative for human salvation and instruction in divine truth.”¹²⁸ Thus, as the Spirit speaks to August when he reads the Bible, the words of Scripture pierce his heart as a “two-edged sword... discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). From the guidance of Scripture August lives out his life thus being Scripturally grounded. He not only knows the whole Bible story and how Scripture informs his beliefs, but lets it speak to the everyday issues of his life such as his relationship with his girlfriend, his career, and his community.

Christ-Centered Identity

In Galatians 2:20, Paul writes to us, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” In fact, not just himself, but all Christians are new in Christ, for, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). One who has been a part of *Fullness of Christ Ministries* will exhibit this sort of identification with Christ. What does this identification look like? There are two key aspects that will be explored here: (1) a vertical relationship with God the Father through identification with Jesus Christ and (2) a horizontal relationship with the Church family through identification with Christ.

In *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer writes, “What is a Christian? The question can be answered in many ways, but the richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God as Father.”¹²⁹ Central to our identity in Christ is knowing that by faith in Him we are adopted into the family of God and have God as Father. Packer asserts that “our understanding of Christianity cannot be

¹²⁷ Grenz, 380.

¹²⁸ Harrison, “Scripture,” 790.

¹²⁹ Packer, *Knowing God*, 200.

better than our grasp of adoption.”¹³⁰ It is from adoption that “the entire Christian life has to be understood.”¹³¹

All who receive Christ have been given “the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). Christ came that we might receive adoption as sons (Galatians 4:5). Being sons and daughters, we “did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but [we] have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Romans 8:15). With this knowledge, and an identity in Christ, the Christian enjoys a loving relationship with the Father and can shout with John “Oh what love the Father has lavished upon us that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1). We pray as Jesus taught “Our Father who art in Heaven” (Matt. 6:9-13).

Furthermore, we not only have God as a loving Father in Christ, but also a whole family which we now belong to.¹³² An individual identified with Christ not only understand his or her adoption, but also is a participating member of the church family. In Christ we are members of “the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). So then, “Christ grounds the fellowship of believers in His love and transforms human relationships into a life of togetherness.”¹³³ In Christ the believer is brought into the family of God. Thus, the mature believer participates in the Church “speaking the truth in love” as each is “to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph. 4:15). Being identified with Christ means having a vertical relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ and having a horizontal relationship with the Church, our family and Christ’s body. August then, being identified with Christ, will understand that it is no longer him

¹³⁰ Packer, 201.

¹³¹ Packer, 206–9.

¹³² Packer, 203.

¹³³ Strukova, “Community,” 199–200.

who lives but Christ who live in him. He will live out of a loving relationship with His heavenly Father and will be a participating member of the Church family because of his identity in Christ.

Love

Central to the Biblical narrative is love. Jesus exhorts us to “love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (John 13:34). When asked what the greatest commandment is Jesus says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 22:37-40). This love is not your typical love either, it is a love that knows no bounds. It is *Agape*, “unmerited, self-giving love” which “seeks the highest good in the beloved, although that one may be undeserving.”¹³⁴ The beloved is not just those whom we naturally love either, we are called to love all, even our enemies. Jesus paints it clearly commanding us to love our enemies, to always hold others higher than ourselves, saying to us,

If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same... But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful (Luke 6:32-36).

The standard is high, and we cannot meet it apart from Christ in us, but if one is to be His disciple, they must make every effort to love in this way, being identified with Him.

¹³⁴ Hoehner, “Love,” 506.

Jesus told His disciples, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). We are to love as Christ loved us, laying down our lives for others. Francis Schaeffer remarks on John 13:35 that it is clear that the mark of a Christian is love.¹³⁵ We are to love all Christians, indeed, all persons, as neighbors.¹³⁶ This love, this unconditional way of treating others, “should be the attitude that governs our outward observable actions.”¹³⁷ “God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). We are to love all in such a way. “The love [Christ] exhibited then and exhibits now is to be our standard. We dare have no lesser standard.”¹³⁸

August, through his time at *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, will be raised up in love. He will exhibit the characteristics of love, for, “love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:4-7). This is the kind of person August will become, a loving one. He will seek to live out the standard outlined for him by Jesus, in doing this he begins to live out the ultimate purpose of glorifying God by loving God and loving others.

Spiritual Habits

Someone who has been a part of this ministry will have formed spiritual habits. *Fullness of Christ Ministries* desires to raise up mature Christians through discipleship-oriented mentoring. Maturity in Christ requires being deep. Depth of relationship with Christ is cultivated in the emerging adults that come through the ministry through mentoring groups. Part of this mentoring group will be the cultivation of Spiritual Habits, or Spiritual Disciplines. We use the

¹³⁵ Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian*, 14–15.

¹³⁶ Schaeffer, 15–16.

¹³⁷ Schaeffer, 17.

¹³⁸ Schaeffer, 21.

word habits instead of disciplines to capture the need for a regular pattern of engaging in the disciplines as Jesus often went to the wilderness to pray. These habits go beyond mere study of the Bible. Different spiritual habits include scripture engagement, solitude, silence, fasting, service, corporate worship, and much more. Each person will likely engage better with different disciplines that connect them to God best. The disciplines which they engage in will also likely shift throughout different seasons of their lives.

It is in the Spiritual Disciplines that we cultivate and grow in our love for God and our love for others. Foster, in his book *The Celebration of Discipline* writes that “the classical Disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depths. They invite us to explore the inner caverns of the spiritual realm.”¹³⁹ Jesus clearly was engaged in spiritual habits Himself. Central to His regular disciplines was prayer. Luke 12 informs us that “He went out to the mountain to pray, and all night He continued in prayer to God.” If Jesus Himself was engaged in spiritual habits and is to be our example, so also should the mature believer be engaged in spiritual habits. The mature believer will “delight [themselves] in the Lord” through spiritual habits (Psalm 37:4).

It is tempting to think that spiritual habits are simply for the greats of the faith. However, that is far from the truth, “God intends for the Disciplines of the spiritual life to be for ordinary human beings: people who have jobs, who care for children, who wash dishes and mow lawns.”¹⁴⁰ These disciplines draw us deeper into God. They draw us out of our ignorance of the spiritual and away from our hyperattention to the material.¹⁴¹ These spiritual habits help believers to open up and receive God, allowing themselves to be transformed by Him.¹⁴² A

¹³⁹ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Foster, 1.

¹⁴¹ Foster, 2–3.

¹⁴² Foster, 6–7.

person such as August who goes through *Fullness of Christ Ministries* will be familiar with a variety of spiritual habits and will regular engage in them as a way of letting God cultivate His heart to greater love for God and for others.

Fruitfulness

Lastly, but not least, the individual who has participated in *Fullness of Christ Ministries* will be fruitful. Their fruitfulness will be seen in both quality and quantity. The fruits of the mature believer are seen in the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 which states that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” These fruits are glorifying to God and lived out in community. Jesus warns believers that they “will recognize [false prophets] by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16). The fruit of the false prophets is rotten, but the fruit of the followers of Jesus is to be good and abundant. Jesus states that if we abide in Him we will bear fruit (John 15:5). Thus, August, having gone through *Fullness of Christ Ministries*, will exhibit the fruits of the Spirit in his life having abided in Christ through practices such as the spiritual habits.

Furthermore, the mature believer will produce fruit in abundant quantity in making disciples. Jesus charged believers to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). With *Fullness of Christ’s Ministries’* focus on discipleship, we look at discipleship-oriented mentoring as the primary way in which this abundant quantity of fruit is produced. We return to Sanders definition of disciple-making: “discipling others is the process by which a Christian with a life worth emulating commits himself for an extended period of time to a few individuals who have been won to Christ, the purpose being to aid and guide their growth to maturity and equip them to reproduce themselves in a third spiritual generation.”¹⁴³ The key is in

¹⁴³ Sanders and Ford, *The Power of Mentoring*, 75.

that last part, disciples reproduce themselves to a next spiritual generation. August, will be fruitful not only in the quality of fruit he produces, such as the fruits of the Spirit, but he will also be equipped to one day mentor a group of his own who will be disciples of that third spiritual generation. In this he also bears an abundant quantity of fruit.

Conclusion

In this section the excellencies that will help one move from the reality of Box B to the purpose of Box A have been discussed. In order to glorify God by loving God and loving others in a context painted by the premises in box B, these excellencies are cultivated to bring the believer closer to that goal. Through his mentoring group August will have these excellencies cultivated in his life. The excellencies that *Fullness of Christ Ministries* seeks to instill in persons such as August are: (1) Grounded in Scripture, (2) Christ-Centered Identity, (3) Love, (4) Spiritual Habits, and (5) Fruitfulness.

Box D: Methods

As we continue to restore our car, Box A is the ultimate purpose, what the car is supposed to do, Box B is the actual state of the car, and Box C outlines the parts needed for the car to be roadworthy and accomplish the ultimate purpose set out in Box A. Box D, then, represents the tools we need in order to put those parts in place so as to have a fully functioning car. Do we need a wrench? A ratchet and socket set? A trolley jack? These are the tools needed to install the parts of the car outlined in Box C that will help it function as it is should. So also, *Fullness of Christ Ministries* has certain tools, or methods, that we use to instill the excellencies outlined in Box C.

Frankena defines Box D as “the empirical or scientific knowledge about how to produce” the excellencies outlined in Box C.¹⁴⁴ This section represents “facts of psychology, sociology, and the science of education that shows what means should be used too produce the excellencies in [Box] C.”¹⁴⁵ *Fullness of Christ Ministries* focuses on spiritual formation and this section also includes theories on how persons are spiritually formed. In this section Dallas Willards theory of spiritual formation known as VIM, Lev Vygotsky’s learning theory of Scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development, and lastly, we will explore the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching and ministry.

Before moving on to the methods and the Holy Spirit, *Fullness of Christ’s Ministries* understanding of learning must be stated. As mentioned in the introduction we use a 3-year curriculum that targets the head, heart, and hands. We believe learning is a holistic endeavor and that one must develop in the cognitive (head), affective (heart), and behavioral (hands). This

¹⁴⁴ Frankena, *Philosophy of Education*, 1965, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Stevens, “Frankena, William Klaus,” 302.

starts with the right understanding (head) in the first year, which as cultivated leads to right feeling (heart), which then, when properly cared for, leads to right actions (hands). This is how learning is understood at *Fullness of Christ Ministries*.

VIM – Dallas Willard

Dallas Willard is one of the most influential Christian thinkers of our day. He believed that spiritual formation, while it must be done by God in one's heart, required intention and effort on the side of the individual.¹⁴⁶ While it is God whose presence transforms one's life, humans have the responsibility and privilege to orient themselves towards God that they might be changed.¹⁴⁷ This belief is clearly seen in his theory of spiritual formation, VIM, Vision, Intention, and Means.¹⁴⁸ As one gains a vision of the kingdom, intends to live it out, and does so by the proper means, they partner with God's divine grace by their initiative and are transformed inwardly by God into Christlikeness.¹⁴⁹

Vision. Willard writes, "if we are concerned about our own spiritual formation or that of others, [the] vision of the kingdom is the place we must start."¹⁵⁰ The kingdom of God refers to "the range of God's effective will, where what God wants done is done."¹⁵¹ It seems that, for now, Earth is the only place that God has permitted His will not to be done, hence, Jesus' direction in prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done" (Matt. 6:10).¹⁵² The vision of the kingdom that is central to spiritual formation into the image of Christ is the vision that desires to live life now in the range of God's effective will, participating in His kingdom, and eagerly awaiting the return of Christ when all of Earth is once again fully under God's kingdom as it is

¹⁴⁶ Yount, "The Mind," 53.

¹⁴⁷ Porter, "The Willardian Corpus," 249.

¹⁴⁸ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 85.

¹⁴⁹ Willard, 85.

¹⁵⁰ Willard, 86.

¹⁵¹ Willard, 86.

¹⁵² Willard, 86.

inaugurated by Jesus.¹⁵³ “What we are aiming for in this vision,” Willard writes, “is to live fully in the kingdom of God as fully as possible *now* and *here*, not just hereafter.”¹⁵⁴ This vision is one that has been given to humanity by God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁵ Part of this vision is trusting Jesus and the vision He laid out, that He indeed is the way, the truth, and the life, and thus, trusting Him, we intend to live according to the vision of the kingdom.¹⁵⁶

Intention. The vision of the kingdom by trust in Jesus “makes it possible for us to intend to live in the kingdom as He did. We can actually *decide to do it*.”¹⁵⁷ Intending to live in the kingdom means to intend to obey Jesus’s example and teachings, this is what trust in Him looks like.¹⁵⁸ To trust is more than just mere belief, it is intending to obey Jesus, one may know the right answers and way of living, but if they do not lead to changed lives, an intention and effort to live out that way of life and those commandments, then the belief and trust is not true.¹⁵⁹

So then, to intend to live out the vision is to obey the commandments and teachings of Jesus.¹⁶⁰ This intention is “brought to completion only by a decision to fulfill or carry through with the intention.”¹⁶¹ Thus, intention must lead to action. This intention and decision, Willard argues, will only be carried out if founded on the proper vision, and then, if belief and trust in Christ is true, people will live out what they say they believe.¹⁶²

Means. This intention is lived out by applying the proper means to be transformed inwardly into the character of Christ so as to obey His commands.¹⁶³ These means primarily take

¹⁵³ Willard, 87.

¹⁵⁴ Willard, 87.

¹⁵⁵ Willard, 87.

¹⁵⁶ Willard, 87.

¹⁵⁷ Willard, 87.

¹⁵⁸ Willard, 87.

¹⁵⁹ Willard, 87.

¹⁶⁰ Willard, 88.

¹⁶¹ Willard, 88.

¹⁶² Willard, 89.

¹⁶³ Willard, 89.

form in the land of spiritual disciplines.¹⁶⁴ Think for a second about a situation in which someone has wronged you greatly and you have the opportunity to forgive, reconcile, and even bless them as Christ would. Naturally this is not our given response. Unless one is conformed into the image of Christ it is not plausible for this response to happen. So then, we must be conformed into His image “off the spot,” our hearts must be transformed, through the spiritual disciplines so that when those moments arise, we are of the character to live out the kingdom vision as we intend to.¹⁶⁵ Thus, the means of spiritual formation are the disciplines, understanding the heart condition of humanity, one takes the practices intentional where God can meet them and seeks God. Primarily this is meditation on the person of Jesus and His word.¹⁶⁶ One deeply reflects on Scripture and turns their hearts towards Christ. The other disciplines aid as well, such as silence, solitude, prayer, corporate worship, etc. These disciplines are the means by which someone’s character and heart are transformed by God and thus is changed to live out the vision of the kingdom they have intended to live.

So then, someone such as August Sparks will be presented with the kingdom vision of Jesus Christ in the Gospel throughout his time with *Fullness of Christ Ministries*. Not only will the vision become one he embraces but also one he intends to live out. As August meets with his mentoring group he will be conformed into the image of Christ and be taught the other disciplines that will become a place of spiritual formation, transformation into the image of Christ. In doing this he will be met by God and changed so that he may glorify God by loving God and loving others in his daily life.

¹⁶⁴ Porter, “The Willardian Corpus,” 249–50.

¹⁶⁵ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 89–90.

¹⁶⁶ Willard, 90.

Scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development – Lev Vygotsky

Lev Vygotsky was a soviet educational psychologist who had his work banned in the former Soviet Union because of his association with western psychologists such as Jean Piaget.¹⁶⁷ His work became known later due to its ban and has had a great influence on the world of educational psychology. Vygotsky considered socially shared activities to be essential to cognitive development.¹⁶⁸ Specifically it is social interaction with those more knowledgeable or capable than oneself that are at the core of cognitive development, this social interaction is the core.¹⁶⁹

Scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development are the primary ideas taken from his work. Scaffolding has to do with controlling pieces of a task beyond a student's actual development.¹⁷⁰ Actual development is "the level of development of a [student's] mental functions that has been established as a result of certain already completed developmental cycles."¹⁷¹ Actual development then, is the level of thinking or problem solving that students can do on their own without any help. In controlling the tasks beyond a student's development, that is assisting the student, they are able to solve problems or grow into areas beyond their current development, that is, their potential development.¹⁷² In providing this assistance one provides scaffolding, like the scaffolding built around a construction site until the building is finished and can stand on its own.¹⁷³ The point of the scaffolding is that it supports the building until it is complete, but eventually it is supposed to be taken away. Similarly, the assistance is not

¹⁶⁷ Yount, *Created to Learn*, 2012, 117.

¹⁶⁸ Yount, 117.

¹⁶⁹ Yount, 118.

¹⁷⁰ Nordlof, "Vygotsky, Scaffolding, and the Role of Theory in Writing Center Work," 56.

¹⁷¹ Vygotskiĭ and Cole, *Mind in Society*, 85.

¹⁷² Vygotskiĭ and Cole, 86–87.

¹⁷³ Yount, *Created to Learn*, 2012, 124.

supposed to remain forever, but to provide a stable structure for the student to work in until they are able to do the tasks on their own.

The Zone of Proximal Development has to do with actual development and potential development as discussed above. It is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.”¹⁷⁴ So then, in the area one is growing in, assistance is provided by one more capable than the student until it is no longer needed as if it is scaffolding of a building, and this assistance is provided within the Zone of Proximal development.¹⁷⁵ Thus, development of students takes place best alongside the assistance of adults and peers.¹⁷⁶ Alongside this assistance an individual first acquires knowledge until they begin to acquire it individually.¹⁷⁷

August and his peers are in a mentoring group in which their mentor is more knowledgeable than them and some peers are more capable than others. This provides the scaffolding needed for each of them to grow in knowledge and capabilities. Eventually, as August grows, he will no longer need the assistance to study the Bible, engage in disciplines, and grow in knowledge and understanding, but will be able to grow on his own. Furthermore, he will not only be equipped to grow without the support of the scaffolding of his mentor and peers but will be able to also mentor those below him.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Teaching and Ministry

It is important to note the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching and ministry lest we begin to think it is all about our efforts and our work leading us to pride in success and despair in failure.

¹⁷⁴ Vygotskiĭ and Cole, *Mind in Society*, 86.

¹⁷⁵ Gillen, “Versions of Vygotsky,” 192.

¹⁷⁶ Agra Junker, “Encyclopedia of Christian Education,” 1368–69.

¹⁷⁷ Agra Junker, 1369.

Changing students is not totally up to us, it is God's role.¹⁷⁸ Lambert writes that "while God has clearly chosen to use people to teach, it is the role of the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of believers to give that teaching impact."¹⁷⁹ It is the Spirit who brings truth, works in hearts and minds, and transforms the disciples, not the teacher. However, this is not to dismiss nor be a reason for mentors, teachers, and ministers to be unprepared. While the Holy Spirit is the one who does the work, we are commanded to be good stewards as the Holy Spirit works through broken individuals like us.¹⁸⁰ This means that we must prepare to teach and not use the Spirit's role as a reason to move us to the sin of sloth. Rather, teachers, mentors of people such as August Sparks, will prepare diligently for their meetings trusting that the Holy Spirit will bless their preparation and see it to fruition.¹⁸¹ The mentor will trust that it is not all up to the teacher themselves, but that they are reliant on the Spirit to bring about heart change in the student such as August as the mentor prayerfully asks the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of his mentees.¹⁸²

Conclusion

Like the tools used by a mechanic, Box D, the methods by which the excellencies *Fullness of Christ Ministries* seeks to instill in its disciples have been explored as well as the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching and ministry. The methods included Dallas Willard's VIM (Vision, Intention, Means) theory of spiritual formation and Lev Vygotsky's Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development. These theories are founded on best practice, knowledge passed down by disciple makers, and psychological research. These two methods are one's *Fullness of Christ*

¹⁷⁸ Lambert, *Teaching That Makes a Difference*, 32.

¹⁷⁹ Lambert, 32.

¹⁸⁰ Lambert, 33.

¹⁸¹ Lambert, 34.

¹⁸² Lambert, 34.

Ministries applies to their ministry practices as we participate in the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of students such as August Sparks.

Box E: Practices

The last piece of restoring a car is making that the right tools are put to the right use. If one has all the right tools to restore a car but doesn't implement them well, they're pretty useless, aren't they? If I try to use a hammer to tighten a screw it wouldn't do me much good. However, if it was a screwdriver, I would be in a good position. As the various tools are put to good use equipping the car with the parts it needs to function, it should be moving us from one location to another soon enough. Similarly, in ministry, the tools a ministry purposes to use must be put to practical and good use to equip those that flow through their ministry.

Box E is the last section of the Frankena Model. In Box E the "concrete conclusions about what to do, when [to do it], and how [to do it]" are discussed.¹⁸³ Based on all that has been discussed before, this section will present the reader with the specific practices of *Fullness of Christ Ministries*. These are the practical ways in which the characteristics of Box C are produced while using the methods outlined in Box D.¹⁸⁴ Each of the practices presented seeks to bring about those characteristics in Box C in the individual that they may fulfill the ultimate purpose of Box A to glorify God by loving God and loving others. The practices which will be discussed are (1) One-to-many group mentoring, (2) fellowship over a meal, (3) studying Scripture, (4) practicing spiritual habits, and (5) equipping mentees to lead and live out their faith. Each of these practices will also be connected to August, a mentee who is part of *Fullness of Christ Ministries*.

Group Mentoring

The most essential practice to *Fullness of Christ Ministries* is mentoring, or discipleship. The specific form, or model of mentoring that *Fullness of Christ Ministries* uses is, as Sanders

¹⁸³ Frankena, *Philosophy of Education*, 1965, 7.

¹⁸⁴ Stevens, "Frankena, William Klaus," 302.

calls it, “the group mentoring model: The Twelve Disciples.”¹⁸⁵ It is in this context that all the other practices of *Fullness of Christ Ministries* take place. In group mentoring, one older, more mature or capable individual disciples a group of younger, less mature individuals. This more mature individual is able to guide those less capable than him/herself and provide a scaffolding for which the less mature individual can learn, such is Vygotsky’s theory of Scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development (Box D).¹⁸⁶ It is also likely that certain individuals will be more capable or mature in some areas than others allowing for a collaborative atmosphere in which they can grow together.

This practice will take place in a meeting at least once per week where all members will gather together as each individual develops a vision of kingdom life, intends to live as Jesus directs, and finds different means to live out the kingdom vision (Box D).¹⁸⁷ The mentor will guide the mentees through the curriculum which starts with a cognitive focus on Scripture and doctrine seeking to ground the mentees in Scripture (Box C). As they study Scripture and live life together as part of the Church each week they will develop a Christ-centered identity (Box C). In the group mentoring model there are, of course, going to be challenges. Not everyone will click perfectly, the disciples sure did not.¹⁸⁸ However in a context such as this the students will learn to love as Christ loved under the guidance of a more mature mentor (Box C). Students also, by watching their mentor and engaging with one another, grow into individuals who lead public lives of faith and can one day mentor another group as their mentor mentored them (Box C).

As August meets weekly with his mentor and peers he will be able to join in a community that meets together grounded in Scripture in pursuit of living out the kingdom life presented by

¹⁸⁵ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, 2009, 46.

¹⁸⁶ Yount, *Created to Learn*, 2010, 118.

¹⁸⁷ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 85.

¹⁸⁸ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, 2009, 46.

Jesus Christ in the Gospel accounts. He will have different reading or practices to engage in each week which they will discuss as a group as he grows more and more into a man of God. In the group there will likely be times he is challenged and learns to love as Christ loved. Through all the challenges that emerging adulthood presents though, August will have a place where he is mentored and poured into by peers as he processes and grows and has the opportunity to walk alongside others as well. Of course, all this fruit borne in August is primarily a result of the Holy Spirit's work in him through his mentor and peers (Box D).

Fellowship Over a Meal

Each weekly gathering of the mentoring group will begin with fellowship over a meal. Throughout Christian history sharing meals has been a central practice Christians engaged in together.¹⁸⁹ Throughout the Old Testament feasts were a time of communion with one another and drawing near to God, there are spiritual moments often shared around a table as “food was an essential form of repentance, celebration, and connection.”¹⁹⁰ This continues in the New Testament as Jesus turns water into wine, eats with sinners, and institutes the Lord's supper. In fact it is as Jesus breaks bread with the two disciples reader meet on the road to Emmaus that they realize who He is and how their hearts burned.¹⁹¹ Christians have long found transcendence at the table, love and belonging, as they engage in fellowship with Christ and one another.¹⁹²

The early Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:46). When early Christians would meet the meal was no small event, it was a joyous time of “grand fellowship bathed in prayer.”¹⁹³ This fellowship is a

¹⁸⁹ Hurlow, *Transcendence at the Table*, x.

¹⁹⁰ Hurlow, 4–5.

¹⁹¹ Hurlow, 4–5.

¹⁹² Hurlow, 1–6.

¹⁹³ Hurlow, *Transcendence at the Table*, x.

place where believers engage in community and can experience spontaneous moments of the Holy Spirit as He works in and how He will (Box D). It is often the conversations at a table with no guidance or study guide that most influence one in their walk with Christ. Furthermore, as a student like August engages in such meals the community and deep knowing of others and being known will cultivate in him a love for others that he may grow in love (Box C). A deep love for fellow believers especially, as well as all humanity, is indeed what Francis Schaeffer called “the mark of the Christian.”¹⁹⁴ Gathering with believers is also a means of anticipating the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 9, which is a fully realized vision of the kingdom that August can hope for with joy as he lives in the now but not yet sharing a meal with his mentor and peers (Box D).

Studying Scripture

As previously mentioned, part of the curriculum the mentor will guide the mentees through is a studying of Scripture, which is one form of Scripture engagement they will participate in during the course of their time with *Fullness of Christ Ministries*. This aspect directly relates to their being grounded in Scripture as the student’s study and discussion of Scripture will give them strong Scriptural roots (Box C). The curriculum will begin with an introduction on how to study the Bible using *Living by the Book* by Hendricks and Hendricks.¹⁹⁵ As students journey through this book they will be taught the essentials of inductive Bible study and put it into practice regularly. As they journey together early on the book and mentor provide a scaffolding to help them learn until they can eventually do the study on their own (Box D). Though the first year of *Fullness of Christ Ministries* gives special attention to Scripture and Doctrine, the study of Scripture is an essential part of all three years of the ministry.

¹⁹⁴ Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian*, 14–15.

¹⁹⁵ Hendricks and Hendricks, *Living by the Book*.

August early on will learn the three steps of inductive Bible's study which are observation, interpretation, and application.¹⁹⁶ August will learn to observe what is actually said in each passage of Scripture, the context, the atmosphere literary form, etc.¹⁹⁷ As he learns application he will begin to learn how to discern what a passage means through asking various questions.¹⁹⁸ Lastly, he will learn how to apply each specific passage to his life here on earth over 2000 years removed from the original writing of the text.¹⁹⁹ The studying of Scripture is among the essential means described by Dallas Willard in his VIM (Box D). Furthermore, as August studies Scripture alone before meetings and with others in their gatherings, his identity in Christ will be affirmed as the Holy Spirit matures Him through the reading of Scripture (Box C and Box D).

Practicing Spiritual Habits

Spiritual habits was one of the characteristics listed in Box C (Box C). At *Fullness of Christ Ministries* we desire that the mentees that participate in our program will discover a variety of spiritual disciplines and engage in them throughout their life. Among the regular spiritual habits practiced during the mentoring time are: studying Scripture, prayer, and spiritual friendship.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, the second year of *Fullness of Christ Ministries*' curriculum is heart oriented with a large part focused on spiritual habits. During this section the mentor will lead mentees through the *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Calhoun which covers over 60 spiritual disciplines.²⁰¹ This handbook is easy for small group sessions such as the one-to-many group mentoring model.²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Hendricks and Hendricks, 35.

¹⁹⁷ Hendricks and Hendricks, 35–38.

¹⁹⁸ Hendricks and Hendricks, 39–41.

¹⁹⁹ Hendricks and Hendricks, 35–36.

²⁰⁰ Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship*.

²⁰¹ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*.

²⁰² Calhoun, 267.

Each week August, his peers, and his mentor will spend time in the discipline assigned for that week.²⁰³ In the mentoring session August's mentoring group will discuss reflection having engaged with the discipline through the different spiritual exercises given as a way of entering each discipline.²⁰⁴ In their meetings they will discuss the disciplines and the accountability provided will be a sort of scaffolding as they learn to engage in spiritual habits and see the benefits of them (Box D). August and his peers' regular practice of the spiritual disciplines will be a means by which he lives out the kingdom vision he has intended to live as a follower of Christ (Box D). Furthermore, by these means August will find the Spirit working in him and his peers to bring about quality fruit in their lives making him fruitful (Box C and Box D).

Equipping Mentees to Lead and Live Out Their Faith

The last of our practices takes place over a mentees' full three years they are here as they watch their mentor lead and learn from them so that one day, they can lead a group themselves. In this way they will exhibit fruitfulness in the making of more disciples (Box C). The last year of the curriculum of *Fullness of Christ Ministries* focuses more intensely on equipping as it is a year focused on skills. A disciple is ultimately one who lives out the Christian faith and reproduces to another spiritual generation.²⁰⁵ Part of the vision of the kingdom is to be fruitful and multiply, to fulfill the great commission in Matthew 28 by making disciples, as August is equipped and begins making disciples himself, he will be living out the kingdom vision (Box D).

During the last year of the curriculum the mentor will have been with his/her mentees for two years. He will know them well and be able to decide what specific areas of leadership, personal development, and disciple making they need to grow in and lead them in that direction. For

²⁰³ Calhoun, 267.

²⁰⁴ Calhoun, 267.

²⁰⁵ Sanders, *The Power of Mentoring*, 2009, 75.

instance, August's group really has a desire to go deeper into the Gospel and its implications as well as how to share it with others. August's mentor has decided to lead them through a study through the book of Romans. However, rather than the mentor leading every session a different person will lead each time so that they can practice exercising leadership. The book of Romans was chosen because of its clear outline of the Gospel and its implications which will bring them deeper into the Gospel and help them articulate it in evangelism.

Three-Year Curriculum

Year	Domain	Focus	Resource
1	Head	Understanding Scripture and Doctrine Through Inductive Bible Study	<i>Living by the Book</i> by Howard Hendricks and William Hendricks
2	Heart	Intimacy with God and Others Through Spiritual Disciplines	<i>Spiritual Disciplines Handbook</i> by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun
3	Hands	Multiplication and Learning to Lead a Group	Romans Study

Conclusion

Throughout Box E the concrete practices of *Fullness of Christ Ministries* have been presented in an effort to give a clear picture of what the ministry looks like. These practices are informed by the ultimate purpose of Box A and premises of Box B while directly relating to Box C and Box D. With these practices in place the car that is *Fullness of Christ Ministries* will find itself beginning to run. These practices of one-to-many group mentoring, fellowship over a meal, studying Scripture, practicing spiritual habits, and equipping mentees to lead and live out their faith implement the methods of Box D in an effort to produce the characteristics of grounded in Scripture, Christ-centered identity, love, spiritual habits, and fruitfulness in the mentees. As

August engages in these practices he will be vaulted into living out his faith for the glory of God by loving God and loving others.

Conclusion

In this paper I have sought to provide a philosophy and strategy of the spiritual formation of emerging adults in the local church through mentoring. Specifically, *Fullness of Christ Ministries* exists at Woodmen Valley Chapel in Colorado Springs, CO. With the mass exodus of emerging adults leaving the Church there is a need for such a ministry that will meet a need in emerging adults' lives and equip the saints for ministry.

Fullness of Christ Ministries utilizes a group ministry model as it mentors 18-29-year-olds seeking to equip them for the work of ministry that they may attain to “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-16). As a mentee goes through their time at *Fullness of Christ Ministries* they will develop the characteristics of: grounded in Scripture, Christ-centered identity, love, spiritual habits, and fruitfulness. These empower them as they seek to live out their ultimate purpose of glorifying God by loving God and loving others. Methods used by fullness of Christ ministries such as Dallas Willards VIM and Lev Vygotsky's ZPD and Scaffolding seek to instill such characteristics in mentees such as August Sparks by creating a space for the Holy Spirit to work in him.

As August engages in group mentoring, fellowship over a meal, studying Scripture, practicing spiritual habits, and being equipped he will grow more and more into a man of God. There are many emerging adults in this world who need a ministry such as *Fullness of Christ Ministries*. Could this be a type of ministry applied in your setting and context? Imagine the growth the Church could see if individual local churches would take the discipleship of their emerging adults seriously. What steps can you take to be a part of this?

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