

Ministry Project Proposal:  
Spiritual Centres for Spiritual Explorers

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## Prologue:

My spiritual quest for the truth began when I was a teenager. The baby blue felt board on which I learned Bible stories throughout my childhood could not hold up against a world where I had much to learn about Katy Perry, crystals, Ramadan, rum, and rules. Questions started to come up in me that no one could answer. Why is church so boring? Why do I have to come every Friday night? Why is my youth pastor rude? I started to get a hunch that there was more to Christianity than what I was taught in church. If Christianity was real and true, then I wanted the freedom and love it spoke of, and if it was false, then I was wasting my time. In either case, there had to be more to this religion.

What I needed was a place where my concerns were addressed honestly. Although my life was saturated with church events, I didn't have space to air my critical questions — not at youth group, Sunday school or Sunday service. Church became a place where I had to hide my longing for truth. It was no longer a safe space where I could grow in my relationship with God because I could not receive sound, thorough answers with integrity. Thus, I concluded, God must not be interested in answering my questions. By the time I was in 17, my feelings of anger, disappointment and loneliness hardened into wholehearted rejection of God. I no longer wanted anything to do with God. I would find the real Truth once I was old enough to get out of my parent's house.

Little did I know that I would spend most of the next decade looking for a place to ask spiritual questions, a place to feel safe in the world, a place to belong. At age 20, I embarked on my first solo trip and discovered a world of people who seemed accepting, carefree and welcoming. For the following six years, I would travel off and on, throughout Southeast Asia, East Africa and Europe. As I was welcomed into the homes of new friends around the world, I started to open to the idea of a good and loving God.

# I. The Opportunity

## The Need

The United Nations World Tourism Organization reports that “Youth travel (ages 15-29) has become one of the fastest growing segments of international tourism, representing more than 23% of the over one billion tourists travelling internationally each year.”<sup>1</sup> That is 230 million young people each year, who are all leaving home in search of something: freedom, love, work, money, belonging — all things that only God can provide.

Within the global travel community, there are millions of spiritually-thirsty people and few spaces for them to explore their yearning for truth, meaning and purpose within Christianity. These “spiritual explorers” often drift between hostel to hostel, city to city, country to country, as their souls quest for a home, a place of belonging and security that can only be found in God. Spiritual explorers often come from post-Christian cultures, where they may have acquired some ideas about God, but have never had an authentic encounter with the love and goodness of God. (See Appendix 1)

I am someone intimately familiar with the psychographics of traveling “spiritual explorers,” having worked, lived, studied and traveled in 37 countries between the age of 17 to 29. Travelers often consider themselves “religious nones,” agnostic, or simply “spiritual, but not religious.” I can attest that most travellers will reach a point where they realize they are searching for something that cannot be found on another action-packed adventure, at which point they turn to yoga, meditation, and other Eastern religions and philosophies. Spiritual explorers have a set of highly fluid spiritual beliefs, which are usually an amalgamation of several religious, philosophical and spiritual leanings, and evolve frequently based on their life experience and new learnings.

Travel-inclined spiritual explorers exist far outside the reach of the contemporary church. On Sunday mornings, they can be found practicing yoga on the beach in Thailand, boarding a train in Italy, checking out of a hostel in Dubai. Spiritual explorers often enjoy going to spiritual events, listening to spiritual music and having conversations with spiritually-aware people. All three of these could happen regularly at churches, but explorers may have little desire to venture into a church building, especially if they come from a post-Christian culture. (See Appendix 1).

The need that I feel God calling me to meet is to build **spiritual centres**: spaces where **spiritual explorers feel safe and encouraged to ask spiritual questions and discover God.**

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<sup>1</sup> “Facts and Stats,” WYSE Travel Confederation, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.wysetc.org/about-us/facts-and-stats/>.

## The Solution: Spiritual Centers

The solution to that God has placed in my heart is to build and cultivate spiritual centers for spiritual explorers. The centers will host a unique combination of programs including schools, accelerators, incubators, healing centers, retreats, workshops, residencies and farms. They will be located physically beautiful, unconventional spaces, surrounded by gardens and open land, where people can come and encounter God's everlasting love and infinite goodness in a wide variety of ways: through our unique culture, people, ecology, procedures and spiritual practices. The spiritual centers will be spaces where people are invited into our Christ-shaped culture and experience the radical generosity and hospitality of the Father.

Guests can participate in a variety of ways, each designed to meet different budgets and needs, including volunteering, completing a work exchange, spending a sabbatical, attending a formal program, or becoming a leader or staff member. Each of the levels of participation for guests will develop slowly, organically and conscientiously as I follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. What Alpha has done extremely well for people living in urban environments—providing a space for communal meals, spiritual teaching and authentic spiritual conversation—the spiritual centers will do for people who have a nomadic, traveller lifestyle.

These spiritual centers provide a safe space for the seeker to probe deeper into his or her spiritual beliefs and, at the same time, they act as an open invitation to become a disciple Jesus. What starts out as a desire to travel and seek pleasure eventually turns into a deeper spiritual for truth and the centres are places for travelers to engage with that spiritual longing in a welcoming environment. In other words, there are spaces for someone to move along the Engel scale on their spiritual search (See Appendix 2). The transformation, or movement along the Engel scale happens as seekers live in community, participate in our ecclesial practices, share communal meals with believers and experience Christ-formed culture. Immersed in this new environment, spiritual explorers are given a chance to reflect on how much of this lifestyle and belief system they want to adopt.

From experience, I know that spiritual explorers can be found all along the traveler route, and especially in spiritually significant locations such as ancient ruins or ecological sanctuaries. The centres will be built wherever God opens doors, and since I am currently located in Ontario, over the next few years, I will discern if God directs me to establish the first permanent location here (see Part IV: Strategy for Implementation). In addition to building a unique modality of Christian spiritual center, I will establish a spiritual center network, connecting our global locations as well as other Christian retreat centers who wish to collaborate. My target age group is people aged 18-40, as they are less likely to be anchored by bills and more spiritually fluid. However, most programs will not be age specific and the centres will welcome people of all ages and backgrounds.

## II. About The Ministry

### Similar Ministries

There are countless Christian and non-Christian spiritual retreat centers located on every continent. Some of these retreat centers operate like traditional businesses, renting out their facilities and charging fees for programs whereas others operate as monasteries for people who have made a lifelong commitment. Some are built on an explicit Christian heritage and abide by a strict Christian code, whereas others are only loosely spiritual and offer a buffet of eastern and western spiritualities. Each provides an example of how a specific combination ecclesial practices creates a specific effect. The spiritual centres I envision will offer a wide variety of ecclesial practices that gently invite people to know God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. By its existence, the spiritual centre serves a visible sign and foretaste of God's reconciling work.<sup>2</sup> (159, Guder) Here a brief look at some similar ministries in Canada and internationally, followed by a discussion of how the spiritual centres fit.

#### Corrymeela

Corrymeela is Christian spiritual center in Northern Ireland focused on peacemaking and reconciliation through gathering people of different backgrounds, political and religious beliefs and identities together. It works with schools, community groups, families and hosts programs in it's meeting spaces, lounges and residential accommodations. Corrymeela's mission is to "Transform Division through Human Encounter " and it does so by facilitating and creating programs to address sectarianism, marginalisation, legacies of conflict and public theology.<sup>3</sup>

#### L'Abri

L'Abri communities are study centers in Europe, Asia and America where individuals have the opportunity to seek answers to honest questions about God and human life. L'Abri is unique in that it's teaching emphasizes how Christianity is true and it speaks to all areas of life. It was founded in 1955 by Francis and Edith Schaeffer when they opened up their home "to be a place where people might find satisfying answers to their questions and practical demonstration of Christian care."<sup>4</sup> Today, branches are staffed by one or more "L'Abri families" called "workers", who look after the students who come to stay for a few days, weeks or months. L'Abri workers are involved in conferences, public speaking, writing projects and residential work.

#### Taizé Community

The Taizé Community is an ecumenical Christian monastic brotherhood in Burgundy,

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<sup>2</sup> Darrell L. Guder and Lois Barrett, eds., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 1998), 159.

<sup>3</sup> "Programmes," Corrymeela, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.corrymeela.org/programmes>.

<sup>4</sup> "L'Abri Today," L'Abri, accessed December 14, 2020, <http://www.labri.org/today.html>.

France. The community life follows the guidelines set out in *The Rule of Taizé*, which highlights kindness, simplicity and reconciliation. Taizé was founded by Brother Roger in 1940 in his quest to live a different expression of the Christian life, according to the Scriptures. Today, the Taizé Community consists of over a hundred brothers, including Catholics and Christians from various Protestant backgrounds from dozens of nations. It seeks, by its very existence, to be a “parable of community” in that its very existence is a sign of reconciliation between Christians and separated peoples.<sup>5</sup> The brothers of the community do not make any personal income or accept donations. Taizé hosts weekly meetings for young people and over 100,000 make pilgrimages to Taizé each year for prayer, Bible study, sharing, and communal work.

### **Loyola House**

Loyola House is a retreat facility specializing in Ignatian Spirituality retreats and training programs for spiritual directors, located in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. It uses the *Spiritual Exercises*, a spiritual guide written by Ignatius of Loyola, as the foundation of Ignatian Spirituality. It also runs projects for organic farming, reforestation, walking pilgrimages and other programs on ecological spirituality and stewardship. Because of the COVID pandemic, Loyola House has begun to explore shifting away from a full time live-in retreat house to a home for the marginalized while it continues to offer some retreats online.<sup>6</sup>

### **Crieff Hills Conference and Retreat Centre**

Located on 250 acres of forest and farmland near Guelph, Ontario, Crieff Hills offers day visitors and overnights guests an opportunity for rest and renewal in the midst of God’s creation. Built on land that a former church member donated to the Presbyterian Church in Canada in the 1950’s, its conference halls, trails and residential accommodations can be booked for church or group retreats.<sup>7</sup>

### **Whole Village**

Whole Village is a cooperative farming ecovillage in Caledon Hills, Ontario that aspires to model and support resilient, just, and regenerative systems.<sup>8</sup> The community is the permanent home of 20-30 people aged 1-84 living in two residences, who govern ourselves using a consensus decision making model. Some work off-site and some on the farm. Whole Village offers public orientations, work bees (days for the public to join them in work), and memberships, for those who want to consider joining the community full-time.

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<sup>5</sup> “About Taizé: The Community Today,” Taizé, accessed December 14, 2020, [https://www.taize.fr/en\\_article6525.html](https://www.taize.fr/en_article6525.html).

<sup>6</sup> “Mission & Vision,” Ignatius Jesuit Center, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://ignatiusguelph.ca/about/mission-vision/>.

<sup>7</sup> “Our Story,” Crieff Hills Retreat Center, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://crieffhills.com/>.

<sup>8</sup> “Who We Are,” Whole Village, accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.wholevillage.org/who-we-are/>.



## How The Spiritual Centres Fit

For most retreat centers or eco-communities, including those listed above, it is not required to be an adherent of a Christianity, or the particular spirituality in order to take part in its programs. Naturally, visitors are spiritually curious people, or already followers of the publicized spiritual path. What makes these communities different from churches is that people are brought together by a code of living, not necessarily a spiritual event, such as a Sunday worship service. Spiritual centers exist to invite people into a way of living and may not even operate Sunday worship services. Each of the centers mentioned above was started by an individual who saw the importance of an “alternative reality” and gathered others around this vision. Each Christian spiritual community offers a different inflection of the “social incarnation of God’s inbreaking reign of love and reconciliation, joy and freedom, peace and justice.”<sup>9</sup> (158, Guder). Some centres, like Corrymeela prioritize reconciliation, others, like Taize, offer a living example of renunciation and generosity.

I believe that God has called me to create a new type of spiritual centre. The spiritual centres I imagine will be differentiated from existing spiritual centres in at least three ways: (1) a holistic approach to reconciliation including ecological, social, spiritual and economic reconciliation, (2) an explicit Christ-formed internal culture and practices, (3) ongoing and honest storytelling that invites people to participate and contribute, and (4) the cultivation of a Christian retreat centre network to support existing centres. The first three factors will be discussed in Section III. For now, I will elaborate on the purpose of (4) cultivating a retreat centre network.

## Supporting Each Other in Gospel Work

My goal is for the spiritual centres to be a hub for connections, helping spiritual explorers to see that God’s mission for the work is lived out in different ways. This helps them to realize that God is not just an angry, wrathful figure in the sky. God, the God who is at work in these centres, is generous, compassionate, hospitable, selfless and welcoming. Some seekers may not be ready for a three-month residential volunteer commitment, but they are open to spending \$300 for a weekend spiritual renewal. Some existing retreat centers operate more like businesses, whereas others are amorphous, organic communities and each type serves a purpose in God’s kingdom. By connecting these spiritual centers that offer different forms of engagement, we widen the doors for people to enter into a spiritual experience with God. (See Appendix 3)

I intend to build a network of affiliated spiritual centers so that people can easily find their way to a centre in their own country or abroad. Right now, all the centres mentioned above are not connected. For example, when someone hears about Corrymeela, he or she can find out

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<sup>9</sup> Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church*, 158.

from its website that it operates out of one location in Ireland. If someone living outside of Ireland wanted to visit the center, they would have to arrange extensive travel including flight, transportation and accommodations. However, if someone were to discover L'Abri, they will see on their website that they have multiple autonomous locations around the world, including Australia, Canada, Korea, Switzerland, Brazil and South Africa. Still, L'Abri offers different kinds of programs from Corrymeela and both would appeal to different needs. It is not easy to compare what the different centres offer. My vision involves at least three stages of community building: a digital community, physical community and retreat community. (See Appendix 2 for Logic Model).

The physical community will hopefully be reinforced by the digital community efforts, and as the first permanent location is established, we will develop more locations and a network of similar ministries so that we can support each other. The spiritual centers will be connected by a strong digital infrastructure and public-facing websites so that people can easily navigate between information for different centres. Similar to how Workaway.info offers a massive library of places to do a work exchange and streamlines the information hosts are required to provide, I would like to create a library of spiritual centers.<sup>10</sup>

The benefit of having these retreat centers networked is that spiritual explorers are often nomadic. They move to new locations in search of fresh spiritual truth as their spirits move them. Furthermore, each retreat center offers something different, and by plugging them in together, I increase the likelihood that explorers might find their way to a Christian understanding of life and God (see Appendix 3).

## **Plan For Building Partnerships**

I have personally worked at three retreat centers and have a sense of how to build partnerships with retreat centers: it's all about relationships. Partnerships and collaborations with retreat centers, especially smaller ones, are built on friendship and shared values. In my experience, once I have met a center's founder or general manager and they get a sense of my vision and sincerity, it is easy to propose ideas that will benefit them.

Retreat centers are usually built organically, and the younger it is, the more influence members have in shaping its culture. Thus, God willing, at some point in the next decade, I would like to embark on a long world-wide journey and personally visit the retreat centers that God is leading me to partner with. I would especially target younger and smaller retreat centers, where I am more likely to make a direct, personal connection with the founder. (See Appendix 4 for my Plan for Community and Congregational Analysis for further details.)

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<sup>10</sup> "Workaway.Info," Workaway, accessed December 22, 2020, <https://www.workaway.info/>.

### III. Missional Nature of the Project

Alan Roxburgh defines the role of the missional leader as one who is “cultivates an environment within which God’s people discern God’s directions and activities in demand for the communities in which they find themselves.”<sup>11</sup> As a missional leader, my job is to activate people’s imaginations and this is exactly what the spiritual centers will do. Although I am calling the ministry I propose a “spiritual center”, it is a form of missional church and missional community. Church is neither a building, nor what we do on Sundays. At its heart, church is the people of God, called and sent to represent the reign of God.<sup>12</sup> If God called me to plant a “church,” this would be how, I believe, He would create it through me.

#### The God Who Seeks

The creation of the spiritual centers is built on the belief that God is already speaking to every person, tugging at his heart, trying to guide him home. In the book of Jeremiah, the prophet writes, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”<sup>13</sup> God is the one who compels us to seek him. In Romans 10:20, the writer quotes Isaiah saying, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”<sup>14</sup>

The impulse to seek, to seek love, gratification, satisfaction, fulfillment is from God and every human being since Adam and Eve feels the void. Society gives us countless options for filling the void, yet each person gets to choose how he or she will respond. The role of the spiritual centre is to provide a space for people to actively explore the best, spiritually-healthy options for filling the void in a safe and welcoming environment that reflects the heart of God. I trust that God will bring people to these centers, because God is the one compelling them to seek spiritual solutions.

Moreover, the reconciliation or wholeness that God desires for us is multifaceted. God is not just interested in saving our souls, but in the reconciliation of all things. In *The Mission Of God*, Christopher Wright explains how God’s mission for the earth and humanity is total reconciliation in every sphere of life.<sup>15</sup> Therefore the vision of a thriving spiritual center is a vision to being a living embodiment of the spiritual, ecological, social, economic and psychological wholeness that God desires for each of us. This is why the ecclesial practices, the

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<sup>11</sup> Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*, 1st ed (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church*, 153.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 29:13

<sup>14</sup> Romans 10:20

<sup>15</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006), 429.

business practices, the location, the physical design are all so important to its existence (see Appendix 2).

At the beginning, the centres will focus on spiritual reconciliation: allowing space for one to come to a new understanding of God and oneself. The long term vision is for centres to be a living embodiment of multiple levels of reconciliation through its integrated culture, staff, ecology, business leadership and civic engagement. At every point of intersection, I will seek the Holy Spirit's leading to design systems that reflect God's kingdom values of generosity, hospitality, compassion, love, justice and blessing. Therefore, we will be conscious to not merely copy what other centers are doing (ie. charging set fees for retreat programs), but look for inspiration in scripture and to discern how the Holy Spirit is guiding us.

## **Spiritual Centre as Missional Church**

Darrel L. Guder defines the missional church is one that “nurtures the social relationships that embody the reconciliation and healing of the world in Jesus Christ.”<sup>16</sup> This company of believers who share life — studying, conversing, eating and praying together — is a visible, tangible and experiential embodiment of the reign of God.<sup>17</sup> I can attest to the lasting impact of witnessing a community living together in harmony. Spiritual centers and communities act as “an alternative social order that stands as a sign of God's redemptive purposes in the world.”<sup>18</sup>

Guder explains that “Missional communities are cultivated through participation in particular social or ecclesial practices.”<sup>19</sup> These shared practices will form the culture of the spiritual center, such that when guests enter into the physical space, they are entering another reality, one that is permeated with the Holy Spirit. The specific ecclesial practices that will shape the community at the Centre will come through a process of discernment and receiving input from pastors and other believers that God brings to this project, but for now I will outline two practices that God has impressed on my heart. The Spiritual Centers will especially focus on two ecclesial practices that create a sense of open and welcome invitation: hospitality and breaking bread together.

## **Hospitality and Breaking Bread Together**

Through the practice of Christian hospitality, the spiritual centres welcome all of humanity “into God's new world order of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, love and company.” The center and the people who bring it to life make God's peace “visible through the quality of our interactions” and the center serves as a model and invitation of God's

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<sup>16</sup> Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church*, 149.

<sup>17</sup> Guder and Barrett, 149.

<sup>18</sup> Guder and Barrett, 149.

<sup>19</sup> Guder and Barrett, 153.

love.<sup>20</sup> The hospitality will also be demonstrated and be built into the ways we invite people to steward our land and use our facilities. For example, we will offer work exchanges, scholarships and other creative arrangements so that people can stay and work with us no matter what their budget.

The centre will be a place where the stranger is always welcomed and people are invited to break bread at the communal table, find where they belong, to rest and explore at their own pace. Daily communal meals will be a part of community life, a place where workers, leaders, volunteers and visitors can exchange stories and encounter lives transformed by God. The spiritual center offers the world an invitation to “a new communal life, a new social identity and a new way of receiving and sharing basic necessities,” all shaped by the Biblical story.<sup>21</sup>

Through hospitality and breaking bread together, the spiritual centre will also fulfill God's mission of crossing society's boundaries. The spiritual center exists as a living example of what Guder calls “free and fearless spaces.”<sup>22</sup> Rather than an urban church that offers religious goods and services to individuals, the center will be built as a “gracious and caring space”, where people are gently invited into a new relationship with God.<sup>23</sup> Through deliberate practices of Christian reconciliation, the spiritual center will be a place where hostility can be converted into hospitality, “strangers into friends and enemies into guests” as evidence of the welcoming news of Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup>

## **Cultivating and Experiencing Christian Community**

In *City-Shaped Churches*, Linda Bergquist writes about how the modern cities drive us into social isolation and social fragmentation, but Christian community can confront this unbiblical sense of individualism.<sup>25</sup> In contrast to the kinds of relationships that tend to grow in cities, relationships that form on the traveler route have a distinct intimacy. When travelers and spiritual explorers typically leave the comfort of home, they are also attempting to leave behind their identity, and desire to reflect on their personal motivations and values. Thus, the friendships and relationships between travelers form deep and fast. This provides a unique opportunity for members of the centres to “speak the truth in love” as friends, not as strangers in a city.<sup>26</sup> The spiritual center exists to give spiritual explorers a chance to experience an authentic Christian community. By manifesting the sacrificial love and hospitality of God, the spiritual center brings the reality of the kingdom to people who are seeking it. As a missional community, these

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<sup>20</sup> Guder and Barrett, 176.

<sup>21</sup> Guder and Barrett, 166.

<sup>22</sup> Guder and Barrett, 179.

<sup>23</sup> Guder and Barrett, 179.

<sup>24</sup> Guder and Barrett, 180.

<sup>25</sup> Linda Bergquist and Michael D Crane, *City Shaped Churches: Planting Churches in a Global Era*, Kindle, 2018, chap. 18.

<sup>26</sup> Bergquist and Crane, chap. 18.

spiritual centers will bring the gospel to life, by inviting the lonely and hurting to join the true kinship community and be adopted into the household of God.<sup>27</sup>

## A Place For The Prodigal

Another way of understanding how the spiritual centers reflect the content and character of the gospel is by looking at the journey of the prodigal son. In *Conversations That Change Us*, Bellous and Sheffield write that “the prodigal son story includes a citizen in the far country where the son finally found himself.”<sup>28</sup> There was a man who hired the son to work in his pig fields, and the pig pen was the place where the son could come to his senses.<sup>29</sup> I believe the role God has called me to play is the one who meets the prodigal son in the pig pen.

Bellous and Sheffield explain that “during collaborative theological reflection, other people act as citizens in a far country and create an environment in which it's possible to speak the truth in love (in a loving environment) as a way to summon and sustain the humanity of the one who struggles.”<sup>30</sup> The often ignored aspect of the parable is that the pig pen was a space of spiritual renewal and revelation. Through the spiritual centers, I intend to build living spaces for one to come to their senses, in the presence of someone who can see the other’s dignity. The practice of daily communal meals, programs, practices and encounters with loving committed staff will help guests to reflect on how God is working in their lives and discern how God is leading them.<sup>31</sup>

Can the church serve this purpose? It could, but my life experience and theology is that there needs to be additional spaces for people to process. I have felt called to create those other spaces, to hold the door open at the “prodigal’s pig fields”, so to speak, so that the prodigal can come in, be loved and keep the door open for him to leave and return home to his Father. The spiritual centers will be environments that gently create and encourage a desire to draw near to God in friendship, a place for people to experience God’s hospitable embrace.<sup>32</sup> At the center, we come alongside people and allow them to see what they are missing.

(See Appendix 5 for more areas of theological reflection.)

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<sup>27</sup> Bergquist and Crane, chap. 18.

<sup>28</sup> Joyce Edith Bellous and Daniel R Sheffield, *Conversations That Change Us: Learning the Arts of Theological Reflection*, 2017, 65.

<sup>29</sup> Luke 15:15

<sup>30</sup> Bellous and Sheffield, *Conversations That Change Us*, 65.

<sup>31</sup> Bellous and Sheffield, 67.

<sup>32</sup> Bellous and Sheffield, 78.

## IV. Strategy For Implementation

### Why This Project

The idea of being the caretaker and builder of a space where people can experience the goodness of God in a beautiful location has been growing inside me, piece by piece, for nearly ten years. This ministry idea also forms the foundation, physically and spiritually, for other ventures, which I believe are also from God. If I do not use this Proposal to develop the spiritual centres, chances are that it will come up again and again in my life until I do. Furthermore, as I have outlined in previous sections and in the appendices, I have extensive experience in this field and I am currently uniquely positioned to have access to several networks. It would feel to me a deliberate *ignoring* of the Holy Spirit if I do not use this time in my masters to probe and refine this idea.

### Implementation & Timeline

When I made the commitment to devote myself to this masters of divinity at Tyndale, I put all of my creative projects on hold, trusting that God would open up the time for me to act on the projects He wants to happen. Therefore, I will outline a very slow timeline for the building of the spiritual centres, taking into account that I have no extra time right now to initiate a new project. My sense is that the first spiritual center, complete with a solid location, brand, team, programs, etc, may not be fully established for ten years. However, there are many little steps I can take that will move me and my spirit in that direction.

There are three levels at which I will work to engage spiritual explorers: digital community, physical community and network community. (See Appendix 2) **Digital community:** Through robust digital platforms and ongoing storytelling, we will share the values and impact of our spiritual centres, and the values that guide us: generosity, hospitality, spiritual discovery and the gospel. **Physical and Social community:** Through our in-person programs and the building a physical location, we invite people to become an authentic part of the movement, to commit to God's leading in their lives. **Network Community:** Through our relationships with existing spiritual retreat centers, we seek to guide all spiritual explorers to an Centre where they can uncover the love of God in an environment that fits their needs, budget and comfort levels. This implementation plan will engage all three levels.

## **Phase One: Year 0 - Year 2**

### **Georgetown Townhouse**

God has graciously granted me a townhouse in Georgetown to use and live in, which is, in essence, the beta version of a spiritual centre. Since moving here, I have been intentionally building elements that I want to see at spiritual centers into the culture of this house. This townhouse is my place to practice hospitality, break bread together and welcome people to a communal table. It is the space where God is pruning me and preparing my spirit, as well as bringing people together around this idea. When the pandemic subsides, I will be hosting “spiritual explorer” gatherings. These may be disguised as baking parties, art nights, Alpha courses, pot lucks, and film screenings, just to name a few ideas. At the same time that I will be organically introducing people the values of the center and learning how to facilitate groups with multiple levels of spiritual engagement.

### **Media Production & Sharing The Vision:**

I will start publicly writing articles about the ideas surrounding the spiritual center, including generosity, hospitality, travel, wealth, spirituality, God and the Christian faith. This public material will help to share the vision of the centres and plant early seeds in peoples’ hearts. I hope that God will also use this material to bring people to the vision. As God leads me, I will also refine this proposal and share it with churches, pastors and other believers.

When the COVID restrictions subside and retreat centres open their doors again, I will start visiting centres again to pray, seek inspiration, and discern what the spiritual centre’s pilot programs should focus on (ie. contemplation, spiritual formation, inner healing, leadership or other topics).

## **Phase Two: Year 3 - 4**

### **Pilot Programs On Location**

From the initial gatherings at the Georgetown townhouse, I sense that God will highlight certain people to me, people who feel called to help bring these Spiritual Centres to life. These individuals will be the start of a “core team.” As I am led by the Holy Spirit, I will start hosting small structured programs at existing retreat centres or other locations, wherever God opens doors. I imagine hosting 1-day, 3-day, 7-day or 10-day programs that will give me and the team practice working together and ministering. These early retreats will help us to see what ecclesial practices are essential to the DNA of the center.

After each program, I will debrief with the Holy Spirit and consider what the Spirit highlights for us to improve or continue. During these years, I will tell more and more people about this God-dream to establish a permanent spiritual centre and see what doors the Lord opens to us.



Throughout this process, I (or team members) will build out the brand, website, blog and online community around the topics of generosity, travel, spirituality, faith and God. God will start to bring together more support for this idea, which may include people who want to invest financially in this idea and/or people who have attended our retreat programs.

Once we have run a few programs and feel a grounded confidence that we have landed on the Holy Spirit's model for the spiritual centre, I will start reaching out to more retreat founders, business leaders and potential investors.

### **Crowdfunding & Early Investors:**

I will formulate a crowdfunding campaign and an investor pitch. Together the team and I will discern when the Spirit is leading us to run a crowdfunding campaign and to whom we should pitch the idea of the spiritual centre.

## **Phase Three: Year 5 - 7**

### **First Permanent Location**

As we follow through on the crowdfunding campaign, we will move to purchase our first location. I believe that God has already prepared our first location and I am simply following in his footsteps and leading to arrive at it. This could be located Ontario or abroad. I, and whoever else I invite and feels called, will move onto the property full-time to build the centre. While living at the centre, we will install the physical, spiritual and relational infrastructure, establishing the culture of how we live and work together as a kingdom family.

Once we have settled in, and as I am led by the spirit, we will start inviting the general public, including past retreat attendees and whoever follows us on social media, to come and work with us for a few weeks or months at a time. One person at a time, I trust that God will call the right people to come and build their piece, or two stay longer term and become part of the permanent team.

### **Ecclesial Practices:**

By now, the team and I have a clear idea of what ecclesial practices to install into the renter's culture and how to do it. I will create a document that thoroughly outlines the theological reflection for why we do what we do. This serves as an early manifesto, vision statement and "rule of life" for why the centre exists.

### **Media Production & Storytelling:**

Throughout the building process, we will be actively sharing our story online through videos, blogs and social media. More than simply marketing materials, our media will share the heart of the Gospel, God's desire for universal shalom, which fuels us to keep creating. Our digital media will allow us to reach people all around the world so that we build a global digital community and in person community. At first, the people who attend retreats will be primarily

from North America, but I imagine the community will steadily become more and more international.

My role will transition from being the primary storytelling and content creator to the overseer who guides and shapes the stories. I trust that God will bring me administrators, managers, specialists and creatives who are more gifted at keeping things running smoothly.

## **Phase Four: Year 8-15**

### **Network Building**

At this point, the first location will be two to three years old and it is time to multiply the centre and bring it to new locations and communities around the world. As the flagship centre gains traction, the team and I will discern where God has opened doors for us to establish more locations, whether through buying and renovating old yoga retreat centres or building centres from the ground up.

By now, the work of the centre should have raised up committed disciples who are ready to become directors at our new locations. Using what we have learned at the first location, each centre will become easier to open as we have a cohort of mature believers well versed in the centre's culture and ready to lead.

I imagine that new locations will spring up in the home countries of our committed members, in much the same way reverse missionaries bring the gospel back to their home countries.

## **Potential Resources**

### **Catch The Fire Partners**

Catch The Fire World is a global family of churches, united by the values birthed out of the Toronto Blessing, including Father's Love, inner healing, and flowing in the Holy Spirit. I currently work on staff and help with communications for World. My position gives me access to numerous staff members who are very well connected. (See Appendix 4) I am certain that someone will be able to point me to someone who has a similar vision or once ran a similar ministry. Furthermore, Catch The Fire's global reputation might help me in building alliances between spiritual centres. Catch The Fire also offers a Church Planting online course, which may give me further insight into how God wants to shape these spiritual centres. My position on staff at Catch The Fire also gives me a particular voice and access to social capital within the church.

### **School Of Ministry**

Catch The Fire also runs multiple Schools Of Ministry in locations around the world. Conveniently, the largest and most established location is in the Toronto church. The School Of

Ministry is a type of spiritual centre and it operates with specific ecclesial practices that I want to learn more. (See Appendix 4 for more)

**Human Resources:**

I have a few colleagues who are equally as passionate about building spiritual centres as I am. They are each entrepreneurial, and experts in their own right. I trust that these are divine friendships, and God has put us together to bring forth this vision in his heart. Because of my work at Catch The Fire, I also have access to a large pool of believers, people who could become involved as donors, program participants, volunteers, and ambassadors. As a visionary, I would also consider myself good at casting vision for people. It's what I do naturally through stories and I trust that God wants to put this ability to good use for his kingdom. I believe that God has given me the apostolic gifting, which is why I am unafraid to chart new territory and so inclined to push for innovation. I trust that God wants me to use this gifting to build and multiply His missional ministry.

**Financial Resources:**

Right now I do not have a few hundred thousand dollars to purchase land for a spiritual centre, but God knows people who do! I am aware that there are wealthy people at Catch The Fire, and God is capable of connecting us if he wants them to invest in this vision. I also graduated from Ivey Business School and have access to an alumni directory with many incredibly wealthy people. Ivey alumni are people who become CEOs of global multinationals, making more money personally than an entire church's budget and I'm positive that God will move some of these wealthy people to direct their finances to His kingdom. Although I have not been active in the Ivey community, I trust God will lead me in this direction when it's time.

Practically speaking, I am a partial owner of the townhouse in Georgetown which could be sold and used to purchase a property or used as equity to purchase a centre. I also have had unique experiences with crowdfunding and online storytelling; I have witnessed God provide for me materially through the generosity, hospitality and kindness of others in a way that few have experienced. Thus, I have an uncommon faith in the generosity of human beings when they are invited to believe in a vision larger than themselves.

**Creative & Intellectual Resources:**

As a digital creator, I am capable of building websites, social media accounts, videos, logos and extensive digital marketing assets needed to bring a vision online. I also have a God-implanted desire to raise up "kingdom creatives," people with a burning desire to use their creative gifts for God. I have the sense that I'm not meant to build out the centre's digital infrastructure on my own. Instead, I am to train up and empower others. Lately, God opened some doors for me to start mentoring creatives and some of these people may be called to contribute to the vision of the spiritual centres.

## V. Evaluation

At least once a quarter, I will set apart a day to do a thorough evaluation of the project's progress. For each of the five categories listed below, I will assess qualitative and quantitative results, rating the project on a scale of 0 to 10 in each category. Although the rating will be somewhat subjective, it will still be valuable because it bypasses my conscious mind and goes right to the heart of the matter. As the project matures, the latter metrics will become more essential to discerning God's leading.

### **The Peace and Pleasure of God**

I define pleasure as the sense of inner fulfilment that comes from knowing that I have done God's will. It does not necessarily mean that my experience will be pleasurable, but that God's pleasure is evident. As I move through the first phase (Year 0 - 2) and run small gatherings at the Georgetown house, I will continually discern if I feel the peace and pleasure of God to continue holding more gatherings. Questions to consider include:

- Do I still have peace about continuing?
- Do I sense the "peace of God which transcends all understanding" through the process?<sup>33</sup>
- Have I been given the passion, perseverance and health (mental, spiritual, intellectual, emotional) to continue being God's instrument in this vision?
- Have I grown closer to and more trusting of God in this process?

I will track the number of people per gathering, and also attempt to quantify the depth of connection at each gathering. Above all, however, I will continue if I sense the peace and pleasure of God.

### **Depth of Spiritual Connection and Friendship**

As I am led and inspired by the Holy Spirit, I will start facilitating discussions similar to what happens at Alpha meetings. The purpose of the gatherings is not just to eat, make friends and enjoy hospitality, but to create space for the Holy Spirit to draw people closer to God. I will experiment with different forms of meetings, and continually evaluate what is successful or not about each gathering style. For example, how do film screenings differ from art parties, communal meals or book club meetings? Further questions to consider include:

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<sup>33</sup> Philippians 4:17

Are authentic connections and friendships being formed between attendees of the smaller events? Are the gatherings sparking something in the people? Do people feel comfortable discussing spiritual topics? Are people learning something new about God? Do people want to come back to more gatherings? Are guests feeling drawn to bring their own friends to the gatherings? Are people getting to have conversations about their spiritual journey? Are people getting to hear the truth and experience the goodness of God?

Criteria For Evaluating Gatherings:

- How easy is it to invite friends, neighbours and acquaintances to these meetings?
- What styles of meetings do people seem most enthusiastic about attending?
- What is most conducive to spiritual conversations?
- Is there a core group forming? I know that God has called others to help build these spiritual centres so I will continually discern how God is leading others.

## **Spiritual Growth and Maturity (Personal & Communal)**

As the project develops, it will become more important to gauge what is the spiritual fruit of the gatherings. Personally, am I growing more like Jesus in the process of bringing these ideas to life? Or, am I becoming more controlling, self-reliant and ambitious? I will know that I am on track if my character is growing more Christ-like. I will be taking time to debrief with myself and God after each gathering. I will also be looking for spiritual growth and maturity of the core team members. Are they being drawn into Jesus?

Communally, are people discovering Jesus? Are people encountering God during their time with us or afterwards? Are people being led to give their lives to Jesus? Are people discovering the love and goodness of God? Are leaders being formed? Are we using the ecclesial practices that God wants us to use? Are our ecclesial practices bringing people closer to God? Is there a Christ-like culture within the community?

At some of the gatherings, I may invite my Tyndale classmates or my pastors so that they can relay to me what they sense from God.

## **Financial Stability & Growth**

Financial and material provision will be visible signs for us that God's hand is on the project. Just as God provided manna for the Israelites in the wilderness, we trust that God can provide for us in any and every way, through provision of finances, buildings, supplies, expertise and more.

Has God given us a financial model that exemplifies his generosity and allows this project to be financially viable? Have people been moved to donate? Are we being as generous as we possibly can? Is God supporting me and the core team financially, spiritually, personally and professionally? Have doors opened for supernatural or natural provision? Is the project going in debt? Are donations increasing? It is important that we are good stewards of the people and resources God brings us, and if God ceases to provide, we will pause to discern where the Lord is leading us.

## **Spirit Led Alliances (Network Building)**

Is there a network of allies forming organically? When I share this idea with other retreat founders, are we getting any support? While some pushback may be normal, it is important for there to be some confirmation that other Christian retreat centres want to work with us. I have long felt that my calling is not to create one spiritual centre but a network of centres.

Is God opening doors so that I meet the right people who, without manipulation, feel called to support our efforts? Do other retreat centres want to be affiliated with our work? Is God inspiring us with mutually-beneficial ways of collaborating with existing retreat centres? Are people being called to be leaders in our movement? Is our community excited about opening up new centres? Are people stepping up to be leaders?

By this point I would expect some of the people who attended our programs years ago to now be ready to be directors and leaders in new centres. This is how I know the project has borne fruit. In contrast, if people walk away from God after attending our centres, if people do not experience any form of healing during or after their time with us, and they do not want to support us, then I must go back square one with God.

See Appendix 6 for more.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Anita's Intuitive Knowledge of Spiritual Explorers

The core community that I feel called to reach are people who could be called “spiritual explorers.” Spiritual explorers have a set of highly fluid spiritual beliefs, which are usually an amalgamation of several religious, philosophical and spiritual leanings, and evolve frequently based on their life experience and new learnings. I was immersed in the travel and spiritual communities between 2011-2017 and during this time I would have considered myself a spiritual explorer; thus, I am extremely connected to the psychographics of my intended ministry community.

### Location:

Physically, spiritual explorers can be found in the greatest density at retreat centres, hostels, eco-communities, ashrams, permaculture farms, concerts of “spiritually-oriented” musicians and yoga studios. They are often drawn to travel to spiritual events or sites, as that is how they find people with a willingness to talk about spiritual subjects. Although spiritual explorers can be all across North America, they are often drawn to rural areas or regions of the world where this style of humanist-eco-conscious spirituality is widely expected (California, expat communities in Costa Rica, etc.)

### Interests:

Spiritual Explorers tend to congregate around websites, Facebook group, social media personalities and events that specialize in topics like: permaculture, green lifestyles, alternative lifestyles, van life, digital nomads, new age spirituality, Buddhism, shamanism, yoga, work exchanges, world schooling, gap years, sabbaticals, budget travel, remote working, working holidays, veganism, vegetarianism, fasting, healthy diets, recycling, upcycling, reusing, do-it-yourself (DIYers), body hacking, meditation and body hacking. Spiritually, they may identify as agnostic, humanist, religious nones.

### Common Views:

- “Cities and jobs trap people in the matrix. People in the matrix are asleep or brainwashed.”
- “There is a spiritual reality underneath our physical reality.”
- “Believe whatever you want as long as it works for you and makes the world better.”
- “God could be a force, energy, vibration or love.”
- “Peace, love, compassion and kindness are more important than doctrine.”

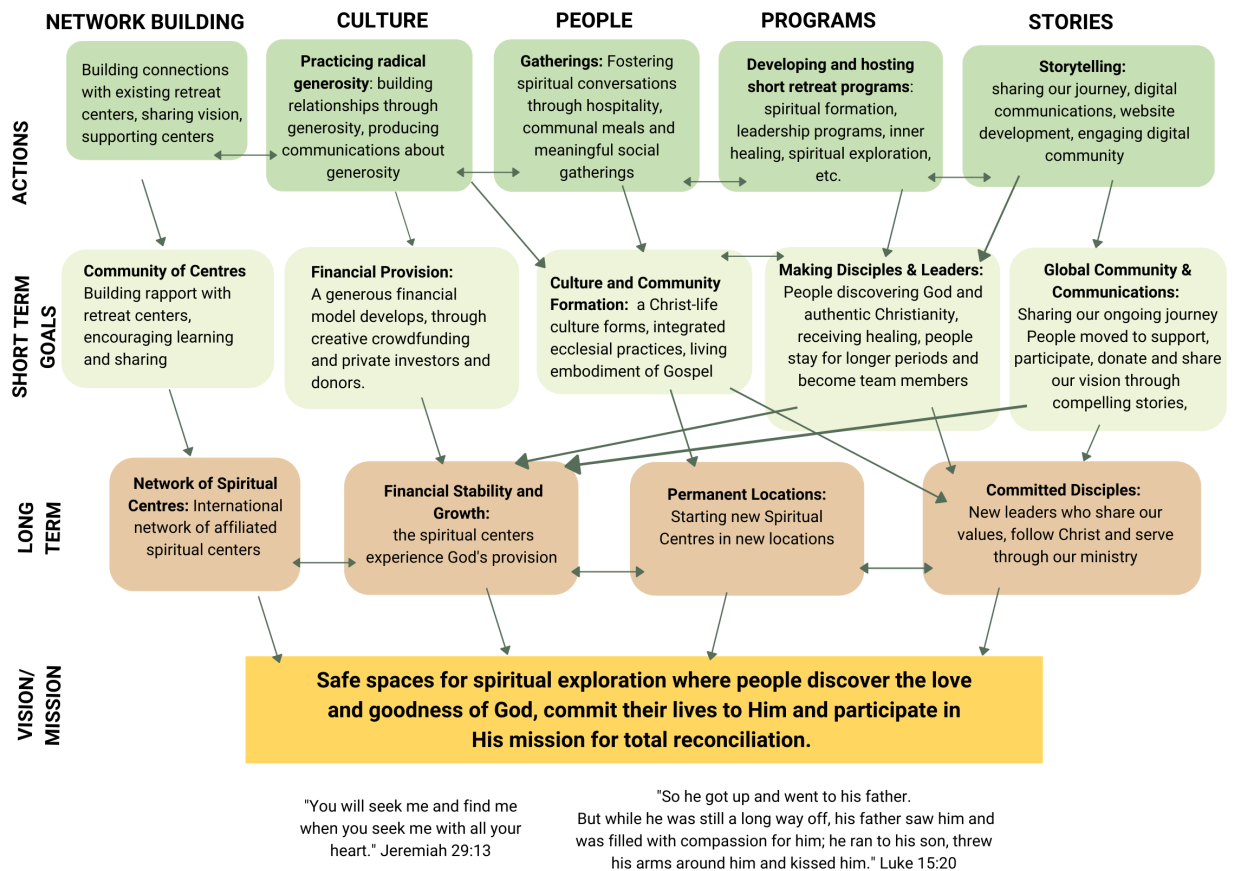
### Demographics:

They typically range in age from 18-40, come from English speaking regions of the world and have at least a high school diploma. Most will have a form of post-secondary education, although they may not agree with the education system. Western education is generally frowned upon, but it is the system most were brought up in. Due to the nomadic nature of spiritual communities, they often mix and mingle with numerous cultures.

My sense is that the population of spiritual explorers in North America is easily hundreds of millions, but this number can be specified by looking into more studies and reports.<sup>34</sup>

Source: Plan for Community and Congregational Analysis assignment

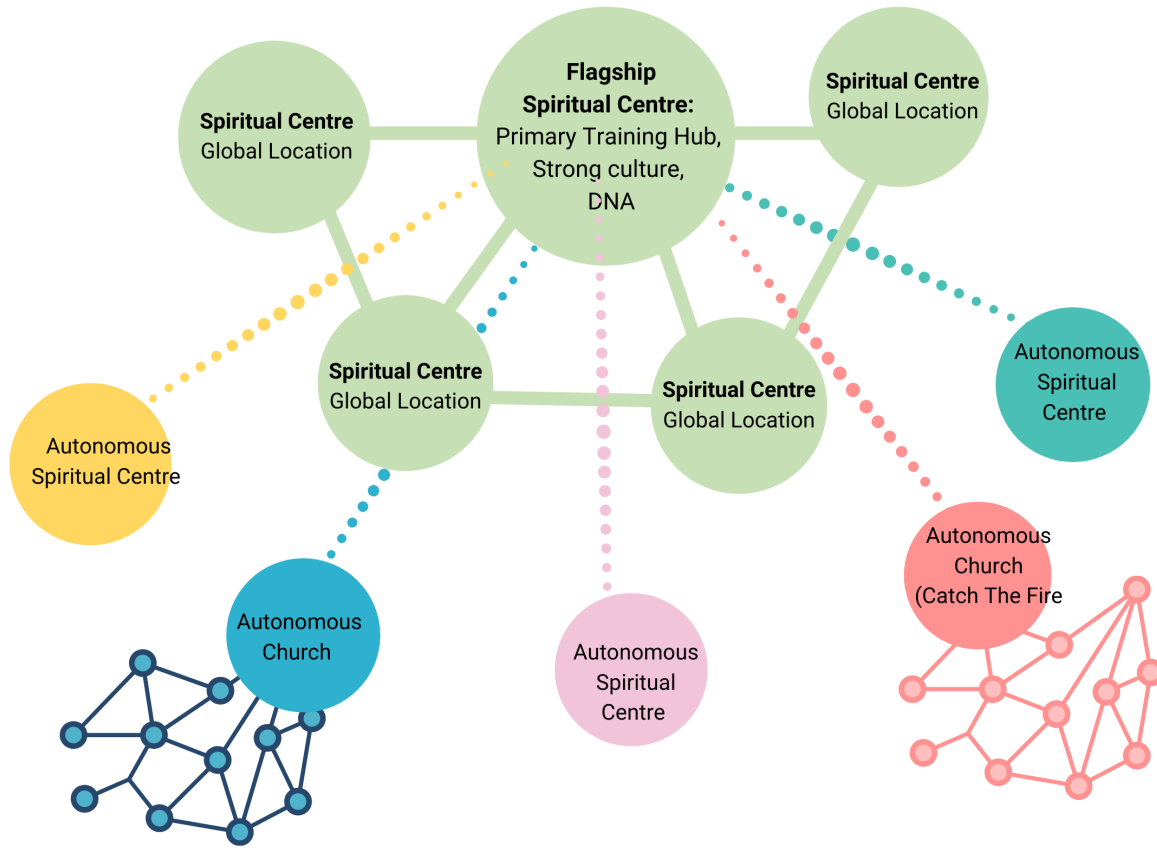
## Appendix 2: Simple Logic Model



<sup>34</sup> Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, "Religion, Non-Belief, Spirituality and Social Behaviour among North American Millennials" (University of Waterloo, September 19, 2019), 8, <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/15102>.



### Appendix 3: Network of Centres



## Appendix 4: Plan for Community and Congregational Analysis

### Community #2: Christian Spiritual centres

Through online research, I want to find out:

1. How many Christian spiritual retreat centres (including monasteries, campgrounds, etc) are located within a 3-hour drive of the Toronto area?
2. What makes each one unique?
3. What are its focus areas of ministry (reconciliation, inner healing, silence, prayer, etc.)
4. What do they offer people? (training, accommodations, spiritual direction, etc.)
5. What is the centre's heritage? (denomination, saints, theology, etc.)
6. Does the centre invest in building an online community? If so, how?
7. Does the centre invest in its local community? If so, how?
8. Based on their marketing materials, what are the demographics and psychographics of their target market?

To gather this information, I will start with a thorough Google search. First, I will find out where centres are located in Ontario and keep screenshots of Google Maps so that I can see if there are patterns. I will also look through the websites and social media profiles of each centre I find and identify their mission and vision. My intention in this online research is to get a grasp of the state and scope of each centre and what it communicates to the wider world. This research will give me a picture of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for a new spiritual centre in Ontario. I suspect that through this process, the Holy Spirit will illuminate where and how my ministry can be a bridge for spiritual explorers. My goal is to find out what is in the gap between what are spiritual explorers looking for and what Christian centres are providing. Following the online research, I will create a short list for the centres that I may personally contact and interview in 2021.

### Non-Christian Spiritual centres

I have worked at a number of spiritual retreat centres, including ones in Hawaii and Portugal. These experiences opened my eyes to the existence of thousands of non-Christian spiritual centres around the world. In my own journey, these centres played a pivotal role in my spiritual deconstruction and reconciliation with Christianity and God. They gave me space to ask questions about God with people who would not judge me. There were numerous factors about these centres that helped me to find my way back to God, even though none were explicitly Christian. These factors include the architecture, books available, work culture, clientele, housing arrangements, compensation, an abundance of and a reverence for nature, food provided and the hospitality and kindness of the staff. Non-Christian spiritual centres operate differently from Christian spiritual centres and I want to isolate, as much as possible, what are the practices that make them different. I will follow the same research style for Community #2, beginning with a thorough Google search, and looking through websites to find answers to the same questions as those asked of Christian spiritual centres. After this period of Google searches, I will consolidate my findings and begin to develop hypothesis for the following questions:

1. What are the ecclesial practices that appear most effective and attractive at Christian spiritual centres?
2. What are the spiritual practices that appear most effective and attract at non-Christian spiritual centres?

### **Community #3: Churches**

Despite the judgemental remarks I sometimes overhear at churches, I believe that God has planted this desire to reach spiritual explorers in the hearts of other believers. I would like to explore the possibility of partnering directly with a congregation. My desire is to find out if there are local congregations who have had, or have, similar interests in reaching spiritual explorers. Alternative, they have experimented with ways for people to experience God in a welcoming and non judgemental, space? The best place for me to start would be within the Catch The Fire network, where I am currently employed. I will speak to Cathy and Gordon Harris, Directors of School Of Ministry in Toronto; Nicole Pike, Operations Manager of Catch The Fire World; and Steve Long, Senior Leader of Catch The Fire Toronto. These three people are extremely well connected and will be able to point me in the first direction. I will conduct unstructured interviews and ask the following questions:

1. Have you (or some of Catch The Fire) ever tried to reach spiritual explorers?
2. What did you (or Catch The Fire as a ministry) do? What happened? How successful was it? If it ended, why did it end?
3. Have you ever thought about how our church can reach out to spiritual explorers?
4. Do you have any lessons from those experiences?
5. Do you know any more individuals, ministries or Christian networks who have a heart for reaching spiritual explorers?

I predict that these three individuals will have many connections. The places and people they mention will be added to my research subjects for potential ministry partners. Catch The Fire recently integrated with another church network, Partners In Harvest, that was originally born out of the Toronto Blessing, growing the network to nearly 100 churches. Moreover, there are countless ministries that were started as a result of the Toronto Blessing revival. I'm certain that I will be given some names to contact once I start bringing this ministry idea forward. My goal in my community research is to better understand where there might be intersections between Catch The Fire's mission and my mission. Is there space for overlap?

Source: Plan for Community and Congregational Analysis assignment

## Appendix 5: Theological Reflections

### Theology of Creation Care & Environmental Stewardship:

Living in retreat centres, I experienced a reverence for nature, God's creation, that stands in stark contrast to the disregard for the environment displayed by contemporary churches. How can spaces be designed to honour God through creation. As Francis Shaeffer puts it, "Loving the Lover who has made it, I have respect for the thing He has made."<sup>35</sup>

### Theology of Home:

What is God's vision for humanity's home? In what ways will the retreat centres give people a sense of being in the Father's home? What should be the eschatology of the centres? How can a retreat centre reflect God's design for Eden as home for humanity?

### Theology of the Spiritual Journey and the Engel Scale:

How can an understanding of the Engel Scale help me design meaningful retreat experiences? What role does solitude and silence play in spiritual growth? What are some frameworks for the Christian spiritual journey? At what stage in someone's spiritual pilgrimage is a retreat experience most helpful? What ecclesial practices could the retreat centre adopt in order to gently point people to God?<sup>36</sup> How would a spiritual formation (discipleship) process be different if we give people flexibility in their fundamental beliefs? How can new situations and environments for people to shift deeply held religious beliefs?<sup>37</sup>

### Interfaith Spirituality and Non-Christian Spiritual Formation:

How much overlap can there be between Christianity and other spiritualities before the gospel is too diluted?<sup>38</sup> In what ways can other spiritualities help people know God? For example, the belief in an all-knowing, loving universe is similar to a belief in God. Theism is closer to Christianity than atheism.

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<sup>35</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer and Udo W. Middelman, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, Kindle (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2011), 56.

<sup>36</sup> Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church*, 158.

<sup>37</sup> Bergquist and Crane, *City Shaped Churches*, 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Bradley P. Holt, *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*, Third edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 14.

## Appendix 6: Evaluation

	Questions to Consider	Format
Peace & Pleasure of God	<p>Do I still have peace about continuing?</p> <p>Do I sense the “peace of God which transcends all understanding” through the process?</p> <p>Have I been given the passion, perseverance and health (mental, spiritual, intellectual, emotional) to continue being God’s instrument in this vision?</p>	<p>Personal theological reflection, collaborative theological reflection, conversations, journaling</p>
Depth of Spiritual Connection and Friendship	<p>Are authentic connections and friendships being formed between attendees of the smaller events? Are the gatherings sparking something in the people? Do people feel comfortable discussing spiritual topics? Are people learning something new about God? Do people want to come back to more gatherings? Are guests feeling drawn to bring their own friends to the gatherings?</p>	<p>Informal surveys after events, Interviewing attendees for honest answers, organic feedback at the end of each gathering, attendance levels</p>
Spiritual Growth & Maturity (Making Disciples)	<p>Communally, are people discovering Jesus? Are people encountering God during their time with us or afterwards? Are people being led to give their lives to Jesus? Are people discovering the love and goodness of God? Are leaders being formed? Is there a Christ-like culture forming within the community?</p>	<p>Personal theological reflection, collaborative theological reflection, Reflection with fellow believers after events, consulting spiritual mentors</p>
Financial Provision	<p>Has God given us a financial model that exemplifies his generosity and allows this project to be financially viable? Have people been moved to donate? Are we being as generous as we possibly can? Is God supporting me and the core team financially, spiritually, personally and professionally? Have doors opened for supernatural or natural provision? Is the project going in debt? Are donations increasing?</p>	<p>Keeping a separate bank account for the project, success of crowdfunding campaigns, success of investor pitch meetings</p>
Spirit Led Alliances (Network Building)	<p>Are other retreat centres affirming our work? Is God opening doors so that I meet the right people who, without manipulation, feel called to support our efforts? Do other retreat centres want to be affiliated with our work? Is God inspiring us with mutually-beneficial ways of collaborating with existing retreat centres? Are people being called to be leaders in our movement?</p>	<p>Response from other retreat centres, anointed partnerships</p>

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