Canadian Urban Ministry:
The Nature and Challenges of Success

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Abstract

This thesis characterises the nature and the possibilities of success including its tensions and obstacles in urban ministry. There are featured descriptions on the nature and dynamics of urban ministry and various understandings of success are posed –especially that which favours a purposeful aim toward fulfilment of a ministry's mission purposes, with attention to a faithful public-and-prophetic witness (as the ground and aim for ministry). A literature survey to help discern and frame the research questions focuses on England and North America, especially Canada. The chapters consider the research questions of what characterises success and its challenges in urban ministry and how do urban ministry situations engage the enduring tensions of charity and/or justice. The chapters include three detailed case studies in three different Canadian cities. They are narrated and analysed from the perspective of what makes for a meaningful, enduring civic presence and what caveats to be critically aware of – the UK and USA social theologian, Luke Bretherton, with additions, is constructively employed (as well as for framing the literature review). The concluding chapter provides a comparative summary analysis of the case studies. It proposes that the most comprehensive and integral way to depict the nature of success in urban ministry is by way of engaging the interweaving variables of earnest listening, stable places or presence, a capacity to endure, and dedication to what it takes to bear a public-and-prophetic witness – including constructive attention to the critical caveats of commodification, co-optation, communalism, clientelism, and cowardice. Two appendices on extending the range and challenges of a literature survey and how grounded theory assists, narratively, to discern a central story-line of the case studies, supplement the above.

To those urban ministers, lay leaders, retirees, and virtually unsung volunteers of the case studies (and beyond) whose labours of deep dedication and relentless courage make it possible to be discerned and noted with steadfastness – as well as to those who devote the time and harness with discipline the energy it takes to write and in sharing, bear a faithful public, and thankfully, prophetic witness – that through our plain failures and myriad dead-end paths, a modicum of a purposeful legacy is passed on. You insert content into the greetings and blessings of "shalom."

Obrigado/Obrigada

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

AAR	American Academy of Religion
BC	British Columbia
CRC	Christian Resource Centre
CTS	Chicago Theological Seminary
DS	Dandelion Society
ED	Executive Director
EHPP	East Harlem Protestant Parish
GCBC	Grandview Calvary Baptist Church
IAF	Industrial Areas Foundation
JSM	Just Society Movement
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
MVA	Metro Vancouver Alliance
OD	Open Door
OPS	Our Place Society
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
UCC	United Church of Canada
UK	United Kingdom
UPA	Urban Priority Area(s)
UR	Upper Room
USA	United States
UTC	Urban Training Centre
WW II	World War Two
WISH	Women's Information and Safe Haven
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Table of Illustrations

Part I. Initial Overview

The first section of the thesis provides an introduction, a literature survey, and important considerations and key sources for a methodology for the research. In reverse order, the latter is important since all of the case studies' research include some approaches common in undertaking case study narratives and analysis, such as participant observation, but also employs additional, unique perspectives to fit the case in question. For example, the perspective of biography-as-theology is implicit for the case study on The Open Door (OD) and its eventual offshoot of the Dandelion Society (DS), following the lead staff person's time with Our Place Society (OPS); it also helps make sense of the deeply-held convictions of the chief actors or agents in the other two case studies (the Streams of Justice, SoJ, and Christian Resource Centre, CRC). The literature survey provides extensive coverage of urban ministry situations – and accompanying urban theological reflections, where appropriate – especially in Canada with the United States of America (USA) and parts of the United Kingdom (UK) considered as well. The focus is Canadian however and this is further explored and analysed in later chapters. Finally, the following Chapter 1 (Introduction) provides an overview of the parameters of the thesis and includes reflection on what consists of a working notion of what urban ministry entails (short of a one-sentence definition) and what constitutes an understanding of the meanings of success. What emerges herein and throughout the thesis is a hopefully realistic sense of a range of understandings of success and includes various renderings of the term with accompanying research questions that the thesis and its case studies summon and engage.

Chapter 1.   Introduction

This thesis considers what might constitute "success" in urban ministry, what challenges its outcome, and what prevents it. To begin, a definition of urban ministry is sketched. The later case studies focus on how specific urban ministries convey their own views of what success entails, though the concept of "success" itself is minimally articulated, at least explicitly, by the cases themselves. As a result, the thesis also seeks implicit or indirect evidence of the presence or absence of success according to a particular analytical framework (named below). As the research method and strategy outlined in Chapter 3 indicates, the cases are also analyzed according to narrative inquiry (which by includes thematic analysis and grounded theory). The gathering of the material includes the employment of a participant-observation approach as well as researching the literature on each case, such as it exists, in websites, newsletters, and as possible, correspondence via surface mail or e-mail.

Defining urban ministry, meanwhile, is a challenging task.[1] In general, urban ministry may be deemed to be the practice of ministry in the city as a whole. It is more than engagement of ministry in the inner-city or the urban core of a city, as was once assumed. As the issues that impact on city life are increasingly city-wide or metropolitan and, indeed, regional, country wide, and even global in reach, so also urban ministry is challenged to engage in far-reaching understandings, though its practices are likely to be local or regional in scope. To gain as wide a perspective as

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[1] Most basically, urban ministry is ministry-in-the-city (as well as "with," "for," and even, prophetically, "against" the city at times), where there is more than only the inner-city or urban core areas to engage, especially as numbers, density, diversity and gentrification (with eviction) pressures loom large and bear down upon now vulnerable dwellers and not only renters. See Louis Wirth's classical essay "urbanism as a way of life," in *Cities and Churches: Readings on the Urban Church,* ed., Robert Lee (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 21-33. See further, Ronald Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction*, especially pp. 12-18, on alienation, fear and violence along with ministry responses of "…reconciliation, compassion, and justice emphasizing cooperation, connecting with others, and collaboration" (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), and Matthew Desmond, *Eviction: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2016).

possible is as important as the effort to focus on the particular context in which a ministry finds itself. For denominations based on a "parish" framework, concentration of ministry on the local neighbourhood seems more natural. The literature review of Chapter 2 illumines both the wider perspective and the more immediate situation in which urban ministries locate themselves. In turn, the three case studies of Chapters 4, 5, and 6 illumine the specifics of at least Canadian urban ministries or networks themselves.

A working definition of ministry in the city must at least infer, if not also encapsulate, the influences that characterise life and ministries in the city as a whole. "Urban" refers to the character of a city where numbers of people, the density of their life situation and living areas, and the diversity or heterogeneity of communal life combine to depict what early 20th century, and especially what the once Chicago School of urban sociologists, referred to as "urbanism as a way of life" (see note 1). To this cluster, it is important for an urban ministry definition to incorporate some of the realities of gentrification – as evidence of the pressures and dramatic changes to previously traditional urban life and specifically of evidence for the downward spiral of working and welfare poor. Here, gentrification contributes to lower-income housing stock being bought by upper-income persons, groups or developers seeking the convenience of central city living but immediately impacting the lives of the welfare and working poor. Gentrification brings pressures to bear on the size, density and diversity of the city. Current realities thus now include forced evictions as a result of higher income people returning to the core of the city to live, perhaps due to proximity to work, convenient transportation and even a sense of moral responsibility to lessen the impact of urban living on climate change. Such pressures inevitably contribute to evictions – "reno-victions" – for the lower income, less politically and economically powerful population. Thus, vulnerability and fragility need be added to an urban ministry situation and any attempt toward a definition. When the pressures of globalisation are also considered – perhaps too, the virtually entrenched influences of neo-liberal policies, often neglected by the untrained eye of urban ministry practitioners – then the "urban" can be felt to be overwhelming and virtually impossible to minister to effectively. There is in effect a "dramatic" dimension to depicting the nature of what

is urban and therefore also to what characterises an urban ministry.[2] John Badertscher has long observed that the Chicago School of Urban Sociology tended to profess a banal description of urban life. Instead, he has called for an "iconic" analysis and perspective. This takes into consideration how a city portrays itself in terms of its raw and protected or disguised messages as for whom the city really is – and for whom it is not. He expresses coming to such an "iconic" view in this way:

> I came to the conclusion that we live in a post-civil [post-city in the true sense] era by studying what cities have been, and by taking Aristotle's *Politics* seriously […] criteria for an iconic analysis of the city include: sustainability, along with a presence of genuine community/hospitality; justice or common good; beauty or environmental harmony; and, faith/hope contending death's power to want the last word. [3]

His guiding questions could assist urban ministries in their analysis of what is happening, and how to respond strategically to it in terms of who is included, who is excluded, who is marginalised and even who is kept there for the sake of convenience (using the marginalised as statistics for people allegedly helped, for example, in food banks or soup kitchens). Such questions might include, who holds power? What happens to the poor? How is waste disposed of? What kind of prophetic, iconic art is

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[2] See a rather tongue-in-cheek reflection on gentrification with bold implications for urban ministry in Camacho. Daniel Jose, *God Loves Gentrification: Taking Jesus Seriously*. July 9 2015 <http://www.christiancentury.org/blogs/archive/2015-o7/god-loves-gentrification> [accessed November 29, 2016].

[3] Badertscher, cited in B. K. Morris, *Engaging Urban Ministry* (unpublished master's thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology, 1999), Appendix C-3.

encouraged?[4] And, last but not least, which gods are worshipped and what sacrifices are required?[5]

Alongside "urban," it is important to consider the meaning of "ministry." The following chapters are dedicated to exploring this. For now, ministry implies discerning the kind of pressures alluded to above and then, as possible, responding in a way that invites a faithful public offering and pastoral-prophetic response. Response implies the offering or living out of a witness (attestation); witness in turn, implies a sacrifice or voluntary offering of oneself [6] and in concert with others in a shared ministry for the sake of making whole that which is unhelpfully and unnecessarily fragmented and alienating. Such a witness could be implied if one is in an urban chaplaincy or the only staff person in an urban ministry; it could be explicit as in a team or corporate ministry. In any case, practical and public theologians offer helpful consideration of the meaning of "witness." For example, Miroslav Volf suggests that witness does not mean so much being a teacher or even a midwife – and surely not to act as tyrants or merchants – as

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[4] Examples of the prophetic in iconic art would include such images as Sebastião Salgado's photo-essays convey <http://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/sebastiaosalgado> [accessed May 10, 2016] and examples from the Streams of Justice case study, Chapter 6.

[5] Speaking of "the gods" being worshipped, see Linda McQuaig's "Restraint for everything but sports: Canada spends $6 billion for Olympics but budget holds line on health and education" in *Toronto Star*, February 26, 2010 <http://www.straightgoods.ca/2010/ViewArticle.cfm?Ref=263&Cookies=yes> [accessed November 29, 2016]. Cf. Marsha Lederman's "This Vancouver isn't in the brochures" reflection, *The Globe and Mail*, Sat., February 13, 2010, p. R4, citing Artist Isabelle Hayeur: "I've been shocked by what I could see in the downtown eastside – like most of the people who see it, I guess. I wondered how this was possible in a rich country" adding, "*Fire with Fire;* a four-storey building video installation which simulates a building on fire) expresses something of the Downtown Eastside that was before the games. [...] Nevertheless, since the Olympics tend to increase gentrification, social inequalities and censure, there is currently a special need for critical views."

[6] "Sacrifice" via martyrdom is part of the root meaning of witness especially in the Johannine writings, along with "attestation" (affirm and confirm) as in early Church and others' martyrdom; see *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged and trans. by G.W. Bromiley, ed. by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), pp. 564, 566-570.

much as bearing a distinctive witness to the presence of the life, teachings and abiding sense of the presence of Christ in shared lives and communities.[7]

For a Christian minister or lay worker, biblical thinking, historical models or examples and certain biographies are significant. It also means doing some serious analysis of the situation that a ministry attends to and in which it seeks to be a liberating presence. Put otherwise, "ministry" is concerned with taking note of, and offering a response to, some of the pressures that result from the conditions of inequality and indignity that, in turn, foster the general reality of poverty. It could further be stated that a purposive fulfilment – at the very least, a purposive aim – toward a faithful public and prophetic witness also characterises a successful accomplishment.

All of these features of ministry manifest a situation of relative powerlessness – relative that is to those in positions of power imposing limits upon those who are less powerful (or those experiencing a continuing sense of arbitrariness in those who hold power over them).[8] As will be elaborated later, this means that some urban ministry responses offer little more than programs and emergency services of charity. While such work might be necessary and can be considerable, it falls short of what can be characterised as justice (naming and redressing the roots of poverty). The roots of poverty must be named, unmasked, and engaged[9] as they can conspire to limit if not prevent the intended offerings of a ministry. This might lead to a ministry being set up for failure. While a "failure to succeed" could be the result of the condition of human limits and of course, even personal and collective sin, such a failure could also be the outcome of an inadequate analysis as well as inadequate resources. This could mean that any intended ministerial offerings to alleviate inequalities and indignities run into a dead end so that disillusion, weariness, and despair result. In contrast, the prospects for

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[7] See M. Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), pp. 106-109. He adds: "When Christians are at their best in sharing wisdom [a core meaning of witnessing for Volf], they are channels through which God imparts wisdom" (110-111).

[8] See Don Keating, *The Power to Make It Happen*, Toronto: Green Tree Publishers, 1975, passim, and Richard Sennett with J. Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), p. 159.

[9] Name, unmask and engage are the key words in the trilogy titles of Walter Wink, respectively, *Naming the Power*, *Unmasking the Powers* and *Engaging the Powers*.

success are enhanced when there is a willingness to face up to and engage the realities (and human/societal conditions) that make for failure.

A major question which needs to be addressed is how "success" is to be understood and, if possible, "measured." [10] As a qualitative understanding is sought, it may well be that an alternative notion for determining success is that of "assessment." For example, could a sense of success be based on the evidence and assessment of such factors as *stability,* when a ministry accomplishes the aims and objectives set out in its mission statement (purposive fulfilment) and that aspects of those aims and objectives endure (i.e., they achieve a degree of permanence).[11] Alongside this, one could ask how the ministry achieved such stability. Is there the presence of *self-criticism* so that change is deemed possible and thus sought rather than merely defending a status quo? Is there also the presence of self-criticism so that in the event that mission goals are elusive or beyond a measurable or assessed accomplishment, an investigation is made as to why this is so? Is there further evidence of historical, social, political, social ethical and theological *inter-disciplinary work* in the cases and the literature as over against solo ventures by a church or urban ministry that seem prone to serve the leadership's ego and church status (rather than sharing the work of a project with others as a way of association with ecumenical, the state, and even private developers)? Similarly, is there evidence of interdependence in the work of the ministry so that by working collegially and in coalition with other organisations more than mere emergency hand-outs for the

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[10] A "purposive fulfillment" or at least a purposive commitment of a ministry to its mission aims could be a necessary and sufficient criterion if the ministry under scrutiny were capable of being measured and thereby a conclusion drawn that indeed for that year or that decade or from the history to date the ministry is deemed to be "successful." And, while there are some measurable statistics reported in some of the case studies essentially in the form of comparative numbers (and usually with an accent on an increase in such quoted numbers from year to year) – this being the fund-raising occasion for CRC and OPS but much less so, if at all, for Streams of Justice – the tools employed to analyse them, one by one and comparatively are qualitative. As qualitative, it is the input and the eventual output of the ministry and its chief actors (with supporters, committees or boards, mentors, etc) that are studied. As one Canadian social worker and urban ministry analyst expresses: "In our situation here (Edmonton, AB) we place too much focus on our numbers, both people & money, and not enough on faithful witness in community. A growing concern has to be with a group called "done" – usually church leaders who are fed up with the preoccupation with numbers and little emphasis on exploring, deepening one's faith." Paul Nahirney, e-mail of May 27, 2016.

[11] One gets this sense from John McNamee's urban writings, *Diary of a City Priest* and *Endurance: The Rhythm of Faith.*

temporary relief of poverty or conditions requiring emergency aid, a degree of justice is accomplished?[12] In general, is there evidence of a *vital balance* which considers especially the inevitable tension which emerges between the practice of charity and the need for justice? Put another way, how is short-term emergency relief held in tension with the long-term goal of social justice, even recognising that a ministry cannot accomplish the latter on its own but can contribute through the networks or alliances with which it is involved?[13] These questions serve as a means of guiding and narrating the later urban ministry case studies – as well as the concluding chapter's evaluation.

Finally, it is valuable to consider dictionary definitions of "success." That which is "favoured" is one such consideration – and, when favourable contributions and conditions are missing then success might well be ignored, prevented or thwarted. Thus for purposes of this thesis, "success," following the questions raised above, could be summarised as when an urban ministry displays and favours the variables of endurance or resilience, self and constructive criticism, stability, and a vital balance which entails inter-dependency by way of inter- or cross-disciplinary relations and work. For example, this may entail cooperation with other churches not only of one's own denomination or zone of familiarity, but an engagement of city issues invites the study and appropriation of urban studies, social psychology, urban anthropology, and inter alia, social theology and ethics. It is therefore possible to affirm that what is encouraged and favoured in urban ministries is what they exhibit, contribute and bear witness to, and that this collective witness is a mark and measure of success. The following statement by theological social ethicist Thomas Ogletree illumines how favoured and success could be related:

> Favoured are movements, organizations, and institutions which recognize and promote the fundamental equality of all human beings… which are open to the plurality of human cultures and lifestyles, which are ready to negotiate patterns of community inclusive of significant

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[12] Among others, see Robert Lupton's *Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life: Rethinking Ministry to the Poor* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), as well as two further of his writings cited in the following chapter.

[13] The Longhouse Council of Native Ministry in Vancouver, BC is too small on its own to do meaningful and effective social justice advocacy and organising but along with networks like A Community Aware, focus groups like Streams of Justice and alliances like the Metro Vancouver Alliance it can meaningfully –and faithfully – contribute. See B. Morris, *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry* (Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 2016), Chapters 7 and 8.

diversity… which incorporate expressions of mutual caring, forbearance and forgiveness, which celebrate and give concrete social reality to the solidarity of peoples.[14]

Alternative renderings of "success," and not wedded merely to accomplishing specific goals that can actually or always be measured, could revolve around matters of "maturity" – i.e., a time tested, experienced arrival at a point and place of a seasoned ministry, which expresses a sense of stability if not a completion and even fulfilment of a ministry's mission purposes. Again, there could be the criterion of a "vital balance." Such a balance could be found by way of an exploration of the time-tested serenity prayer. This prayer embodies the specific check and balance grace-based petitions of serenity, courage, and wisdom to which the thesis elicits from time to time. In its original form, it reads: "God grant *us* the *grace* to accept the things we cannot change; the courage to change the things we *ought to*; and, the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other."[15] Furthermore, there could be a key phrase in a mission statement, such as the purposive fulfilment of a "faithful public/prophetic witness."[16] Admittedly this could be difficult to measure so an intuitive sense comes into play – with some of the guidelines that narrative analysts such as Riessman offer, such as persuasiveness and coherence (see Chapters 2 and 7). Such a reflection would also engage the very notion of "success" – that is, probing and pressing to discern if the notion of "success" could be a contradiction when linked to city ministry. As success might well imply a forced option of either "winners" or "losers," those succeeding and yet those also thus failing at the same time and perhaps in the same locale or city, urban ministries may be

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[14] Thomas Ogletree, *The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics: A Constructive Easy* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 191.

[15] See Elisabeth Sifton, *The Serenity Prayer: Faith and Politics in Times of War and Peace* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), *passim*, on her father, Reinhold Niebuhr's originally crafted prayer. The added italics denote differences from the popular version which is first person singular, lacks the imperative, and omits, crucially, grace.

[16] My own United Church of Canada denomination and that of BC Conference, affirms healthy congregations, effective leadership, and a "faithful public witness" as their mission purposes. As "prophetic" inserts more definite biblical content and mandate, it is emphasised herein <http://www.bc.united-church.ca/content/mission-and-vision> [accessed March 16, 2016]. "Purposive fulfillment" is added to this statement to connote the *telos* nature of purposive striving, even if not actually accomplished. Eschatology could – and has been added -- to denote God's time (e.g. see pp. 195-96, and below, p. 23).

unwilling to make such a public admission of being caught up in such a competitive game.

Nonetheless, in times of alleged scarce resources, competition especially for the same sources of funding (whether church, government, or public) can be fierce, even if suppressed. This evokes another set of helpful critical cautions, caveats, or key temptations including social theologian Luke Bretherton's four-fold critical categories. These entail: when is the church in collaboration to the point of *co-optation* with the state as a major funding source but then also the state being in a position of a threatening authority; when is she practicing a form of *commodification* or chasing after current fads or lifestyle choices for the sake of a palatable "sound byte" acceptance by funding sources and legitimising authorities; and when is the church lured to practice a form and level of *clientelism* when people being served might become beholden patrons, short of a sense of respectful mutuality? In a further reflection, he adds a fourth caveat as he cautions the possibility of communalism or a concern for "just us" even if a church is in a survival mode and trying to "take care of business."[17] This author adds a fifth caveat of concern. Sometimes a fear of change and an actual fear of people, as strangers and beggars, exist. This could be called a lack of courage or *cowardice*. We will return to some of these reflections in the case studies' analysis and in the conclusion of the thesis. An outcome of one or more of these conditions might well be a "domestication" of an otherwise public and prophetic impulse for an urban ministry or network.[18]

To maintain a balance of any kind – especially between charity measures and advocacy on the one hand and organising for social justice on the other – is an ongoing challenge. That such a balance be creatively self-critical, as well as constructive in relation to the purposes and goals of a ministry, is also crucial. When asked to offer an understanding of success, one veteran community or urban ministry supporter and long-term lay board member of the St. Mathews-Maryland Community Ministry describes

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[17] See respectively, Bretherton, "Interfaith Relations as Civic Practice," JAAR, pp. 355-56 and "A Theological View of American Politics," October 31, 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JHWizo67uY> [accessed November 29, 2016].

[18] Cf. *The Domestication of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. by C. B. Jones et al. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), especially Chapter 12 "A Prophet with Honor?: The Making of Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday and the Making of a National Icon."

his decades of work in Winnipeg as a founder, volunteer, and board member in this way:

> As for 'successful' urban ministries – for me they would engage in both personal/pastoral and social action/justice actions and they would challenge and enable those who use the ministry's services to get engaged in helping to run them. Beyond that, providing both concrete help to meet limited budgets via food, clothing and also providing counselling and advocacy with service providers would fill out the definition of a successful ministry.[19]

In this paragraph, Harvey Stevens addresses a range of activities, views them as creative tensions and as part of a balancing act embedded in a ministry's mission purposes. He draws not only on his own experience but also that of being a social planner and eventually, in his retirement, as a policy analyst and advisor to the Provincial government of Manitoba's planning secretariat. We can thus add to our working definition of urban ministry his observation that ministry in the city includes not only personal and practical responses to the life conditions and limited opportunities of the poor but also encouraging self or mutual help measures so that an urban ministry is more inclusive and less "top-down" managed or imposed upon people. He also identifies action for social justice to give a meaningful and corrective balance to action based on charitable relief alone.

Another understanding of success comes from the work of social ethicists. James Gustafson, for example, has argued that church body pronouncements on the range of issues – such as bio-ethical, environmental, social, political, economic, and institutional issues – be adequately researched before pronouncements are made, so that they are grounded in competent analysis. In other words, success depends on the quality of what is being issued as much if not more than the quantity of those advocating it. Public policy servants or professionals, academics, one's peers and certainly politicians expect

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[19] Harvey Stevens, e-mail of July 15, 2015; used with permission.

carefully researched statements.[20] On the other hand, there is truth to the saying that analysis can yield to a paralysis so that aspiring to an absolute competency on an issue needs some modest taming. For example, in my own city, there are debates on Metro Vancouver's top social issue of housing un-affordability (including the welfare and working poor as well as many in the middle class). There frequently arises the question: whose perspective and which analysis should be trusted? Meaningful action could be deflected, stalled, or postponed until the need to change policies and programs which maintain the status quo is forgotten. Statistics alone are insufficient. In the face of both overt and covert economic and political powers, activism by individuals or by coalitions is seldom sufficient. Both statistics and social justice actions require a "long-haul" perspective – one that takes seriously the politics and economics of the situation as well as the spiritually intuited reality of the contending, even super-personal, perhaps cosmic powers.[21] Then there can be concrete hope for taking action for the sake of justice, with weariness, despair and self-righteousness held in check. Here an eschatological perspective (and proviso) is helpfully operative, namely that the kingdom or reign of God is both near, if not present, as well as "not yet" fulfilled.[22]

In conclusion, it is tempting to gloss over the layers of meaning which belong to any attempt to measure or define "success" in urban ministries. Surely, one may well

[20] See James Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, Vol. One "Theology and Ethics" and Vol. Two, "Ethics and Theology," passim (University of Chicago Press, 1982 and 1992), respectively; also, see his earlier *Can Ethics Be Christian?* (University of Chicago Press, 1975). Urban ministries would do well to make use of competent research for their pronouncements and advocacy positions – such as USA's Matthew Desmond, above note 1, on current and forced eviction pressures and trends or Canadian urban geographer David Ley's studies – *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* (New York: Oxford University, 1996) and *Millionaire Migrants: Trans-Pacific Life Lines* (Oxford and New Malden, MA: Blackwell-Wiley, 2010). Or, Bruce Alexander's body of life-long work on addictions and the globalisation patterns that urban ministries know well of: fragmentation and dislocation and their roots in his magnum opus' subtitle, *The Globalisation of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[21] Along with Ephesians 6: 11-17 and Colossians 2, see Walter Wink's and Robert Linthicum studies on the Powers and UBC urban geographer David Ley's take on what contributes to Metro Vancouver's housing crisis: "[The governments'] objectives were aided by neo-liberal tools that included open borders, deregulation, a place-boosting world's fair, liberalized immigration policies and a development-ready province *pushing back the gains of labour and the welfare states,"* Douglas Todd, "Politicians are to blame for housing price crisis" UBC study," *Vancouver Sun*, March 21, 2016, Vol. 130 No.264, p. A2. Italics added.

[22] See among many sources http://www.gotquestions.org/already-not-yet.html [accessed April 13, 2016].

surmise that it is enough to remain faithful and to display the hope that the mission statements of a ministry matter – that is, that one's steadfast efforts help people in need and that in turn, those who support the ministry, at several levels, also feel good about their involvement. To fix one's hopes for and prioritise successful outcomes in a ministry might well amount to becoming attached to certain expectations which elude any verifiable sense of success. Here the recent influences of Buddhist or equivalent perspectives can be meaningfully felt.[23] If, however, a sense of success is less attached to definite outcomes and more to dedicating oneself and one's ministry to the practices of biblical-prophetic mandates,[24] then elusive, disillusioning and disappointing outcomes are but a modest part of the whole in a lifetime of ministry that is not endless and never only one's own.[25]

Alongside these considerations, this thesis endeavours to probe the ground of that which has come to matter from that which has endured in the life and work of urban ministries and their urban theologies. The research questions that guide the discussion may be expressed in this way: *What* is a "successful" urban ministry or what are successful ministries – including what prevents success? *How* can this be meaningfully

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[23] Buddhist understandings of hope, despite its recent engaged modes of practice, serves a caveat that an attachment to hope defers one – and one's ministry – from being (fully) present. I respectfully disagree, since hope is a relative virtue term and thus in need of helpmates, and affirm that the kind of hope that Jurgen Moltmann and his students have now long engaged addresses present realities and provides resources for attending to the present as well as what a hope from and of the future beckons and draws forth from us. See Pema Chodron's *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), especially pp. 38-45 and *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living* (Boston: Shambhala, 2004), especially pp. 136-43, but also Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987, especially pp.20-22. For the relativity of hope and hence its need for helpmates, see William Lynch's *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Helpless* (Toronto, ON: Mentor-Omega Book, 1965), especially pp.23-28; also, of course, Reinhold Niebuhr's famous dictum on hope balanced with faith love, and forgiveness in *The Irony of American History* (New York: Scribner's, 1952), p. 63.

[24] Biblical and prophetic mandates essentially refer to prophets like Amos (5:24), Jeremiah (9:23-24), Isaiah (58:6-7, 61:1-4), and Micah (6:8), where the latter's credo is echoed several times in the following literature review chapter – namely "to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with thy God."

[25] Among others, including Reinhold Niebuhr's Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic, see James D. Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 286. Cf. Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, trans. by L. Sjoberg and W.H. Auden (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965).

engaged and answered, if not adequately measured or assessed in terms of charity and justice tensions?

The thesis is structured in the following way. Chapter 2 consists of an extensive literature review which identifies urban ministries and theologies which offer a sense of how success (by whatever terms) is pursued and attained. Chapter 3 provides, in view of the research questions, the approach and methodology employed in this present research project as well as describing specific qualitative social inquiry and research approaches employed. The chapter also contains notes on the use of personal involvement, as part of the approach of participant-observation, to be able to observe, gather and by way of correspondence or confirmation to help verify the accuracy of the information. The resource of biography-as-theology is also noted and drawn upon in the case study chapters. Over-all the perspective of narrative theory is used but as a working "family of methods",[26] since to gather data, do an actual narrative, analyse and interpret it invites several complementary approaches (so named where applicable including Appendix B) While a literature survey can be drawn upon to state a working hypothesis, it is not, in itself, sufficient to discern all of the salient features of what constitutes success in urban ministries and urban theologies; thus, the thesis then turns to the analysis of three case studies of urban ministry situations in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. These case studies have been chosen for their accessibility to the author, their diversity and range of activity, and their potential for an intense focus so that they can be meaningfully described and analysed. As not all city ministries have the specific purpose of addressing the causes and conditions of poverty – not even for temporary, emergency relief – and staff support with a budget to engage such a mission, the three case studies were chosen to illustrate and examine such an urban mission focus. A compact Chapter 7 provides a comparison and contrast of the case studies and seeks to provide an overall response to the research questions. This final chapter also summarises the findings of the work, as a whole, pressing for a perspective on success in urban ministry – including the concerns, challenges, contradictions, and counter pressures that virtually any urban ministry and minister encounter. It can be said that what follows contributes to the perspective which

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[26] See C. Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), p. 11. She also aptly names narrative analysis making use of a "cross-disciplinary" approach, p.13. This is developed in Chapter 3's Methodology.

is discerned from one veteran urban theologian, namely, what is hoped for is, again "…reconciliation, compassion, and justice emphasizing cooperation, connecting with others, and collaboration."[27]

The six fields of academic study on which the thesis mainly draws and to which it seeks to contribute include that of social ethics and practical theology (or "practicing theology"[28]). These two areas of study come together in such a study of urban ministry and theology. It is more of course, than merely quoting the likes of Gustafson or Ogletree or Anderson – all helpfully theologically informed social ethicists. Both of these disciplines are needed for those occasions when an urban ministry encounters the plain frustrations of when charity fails to provide serious and sustained advocacies for justice, and to identify what it takes to do this. They are both needed for the times when the stresses and strains of engaging urban ministry run into the opposition of class pressures or entrenched imbalances of power and hence no amount of relentless charity measures can bring anything like a sustainable relief to poor people's actual life conditions and outcomes. It is then, however, that these two disciplines while necessary are not sufficient.[29] Thus it is that the theological approaches of biography as theology and spiritual autobiography are also drawn upon in order to assist from the case studies answering the research questions and analyzing the results of the research. All four of these genres or ways to depict theological discourse and practice are deemed helpful in the pursuit of a mature (or "favoured") understanding of a successful practice of urban ministry. A fifth resource and approach is a tacit employment of biblical theology; it is alluded to and drawn upon throughout the thesis especially when summarising what

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[27] R. Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction*, especially p. 18. Cf. note 1 above.

[28] See Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, eds., *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002). For an emphasis on communication theory and a focus on the present tense, but less helpful on the actual practices of social ministry, see Christian Grethlein, *An Introduction to Practical Theology: History, Theory, and the Communication of the Gospel in the Present,* trans. by Uwe Rasch (Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2016).

[29] See thus Joyce Ann Mercer, "Economics, Class, and Classism" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, edited by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Chichester, West Sussex, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 432-42 and especially: "Alongside the blindfold created by privileged scholarly contexts… One commonly underestimated barrier is fear… Many practical theologians steer away from economics out of fear that the discipline is too huge, too difficult to understand, or too far removed from our primary vocabularies or expertise as theologians" (434).

urban ministry mission statements, in the literature and in the case studies themselves, draw from as their basic *raison d'etre*. Finally, liturgical theology is present as an implicit background in the thesis; some of the literature and case studies have made occasional use of particular symbols or seasons in the church year that illumine a continuing sense of what endures and how mindfully to take note of what remains as important.[30]

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[30] The Longhouse Council of Native Ministry's *Advent* and *Lent Vigils for the Silenced* over the past eleven years are illustrations of this (see Chapter 7 of *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry*). See also Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), passim and Laurel Dykstra, *Setting the People Free: Beyond Exodus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), pp. 202-3. I have found the church seasons of the year to be a vital, enriched complement to an otherwise limited view of the Christian faith and its practice (from just a biblically based theology, as invaluable as this endures).

Chapter 2.   A Literature Review

2.1.   Introduction

There are several aspects of what makes for a "successful" ministry, including what the Bible contributes to our understanding of "steadfastness"[1] and how it seeks to name and to some degree redress the causes of poverty – and some would add, racism and even classism.[2] The introduction of the thesis drew attention to the notion that "success" could include such a feature as endurance; a ministry has a chance to endure *meaningfully* when it is both faithful and prophetic. Among several meanings, "prophetic" connotes a role of "speaking the truth to those in power"[3] where truth may well unmask any practical denial of inequalities that serve the self-interests of those in privileged positions and roles of power. The prophetic thus assists in illumining why

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[1] The rich biblical theme of steadfastness applies. It is explicit in the prophetic writings (Micah 6:8) and the Psalms (85) especially. Theologians like E. Schillebeeckx and J. Allen have also written of it; see respectively, *The Schillebeeckx Reader,* ed. R. J. Schreiter (N.Y: Crossroad, 1984), pp. 181-82, 192 and *Love & Conflict: A Covenantal Model of Christian Ethics* (Nashville, TN, Abingdon), 1984, pp. 25, 60, 72. From the latter, Allen writes: "God's covenant love is *steadfast*. God is *faithful to covenant*… even when people waver and are faithless …*God's hesed, steadfast love (is) the measure of human love*… requires *committedness over time*: not momentary concern, but *enduring loyalty*; not occasional beneficence, but *dependability*." Italics added.

[2] Classism is not adequately addressed in this thesis and not only due to space. The nature and dynamics of class and the practice of it, as classism, was retrieved, harnessed and applied in the various fellowships that Reinhold Niebuhr and his associates organised – but then they felt chastened by the realities of communism becoming Stalinism in Soviet Russia, due to the undue cooptation of economic by and in political powers with a loss thereby of a vital check and balance; also the perceived promises of "realism" via democratic reforms from the Roosevelt era of the depression and WWII era and the "New Deal" programs. But there is a further revisionist note such that even the American Academy of Religion now hosts a working group on religion and class for academic and practical theology purposes. Among others, see Joerg Rieger's writings, as his edited *Religion, Theology, and Class: Fresh Engagements after Long Silence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[3] Henry Sloane Coffin, no doubt with others, has been given credit for this popular rendering <http://reflections.yale.edu/article/future-prophetic-voice/speaking-truth-love-strategies-prophetic-preaching> [accessed May 6, 2016]; also see Ephesians 4:15 on speaking the truth in love.

charity on its own, while necessary often does not suffice as a thorough response to poverty even though acts of charity could be a convenient public relations strategy of ministry to salve wounds and contribute to "success stories" in newsletters and accompanying fund-raising appeals. From the previous chapter, it is also recalled that to admit to and face the failures of a ministry – what prevents successful outcomes and processes toward achieving a ministry's aims – also forms a part of the following literature review. The review takes the form of a survey which attends to an abundance of the literature with which it is possible to engage. There is nonetheless intent to identify useful perspectives as to what is present to interpret the literature that is cited and, for its relevance to the research questions.[4]

To help organise the vast amount of material on urban ministry and theology that pertains to the research question, I adopt and adapt Luke Bretherton's theological and social ethical reflections. His work contributes to providing a way of framing and anchoring the urban ministry and theology literature; it provides a frame or theoretical perspective and "parameters for the study."[5] His writings demonstrate a fresh interpretation of urban life and, given the vast array of issues that bear down upon people and their struggles, he gives due attention to the institutions that purport to represent and govern people. He gives due attention to religious institutions or faith communities including a range of political sins or "key temptations" they face in the exercise of their ministries.[6] He employs case studies on a city level, regionally, and even globally. In particular, his familiarisation with the community organising work of the London Citizens Council conveys important insights and dovetails with important parts of this thesis, as when the tension between offering charity and working for justice is noted and analysed. In two presentations, he helpfully offers a threefold outline of "civic practices" for engaging the social ethical values and implications of interfaith and civic or urban relations – and I add a fourth element. These consist of listening,

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[4] See A.N. Whitehead's apt guideline that the relevance of the evidence depends upon the theory that dominates the discussion, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 220. Cf. Catherine Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008), p. 57 (the bringing of "prior theory to interpret the case").

[5] I am thankful to Dr. Robert Pope for this phrase for purposes of this chapter.

[6] See and hear especially L. Bretherton, "A Theological View of American Politics" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JHWizo67uY> [accessed November 29, 2016].

reflecting on commitments to place, organising or re-organising civic institutions in the city and a summary term that could incorporate some of the first three terms, that of "meaningful stability." These terms are employed for characterising the nature of what depicts "hospitable politics" and a "politics of the common good" both of which effectively help portray what urban ministry and its theology is about.

In brief, by listening Bretherton means a willingness to be aware of, attend to and be respectful of other people and their situations. Listening eschews prejudging others and seeks a basis of trust so that common actions for the sake of the public good are possible. He cites the London Citizens Council community organising strategy of practicing Listening campaigns. "It was an exercise in discerning what are the goods in common among these people, in this particular place and time…a way of paying attention to others – through one-on-ones and testimony where vulnerability, anger, passions and hopes are shared – and so stepping out of one's own limited perspective and enable new understanding to emerge."[7] The use of the term "place" means a commitment to a definite place that can be shared with others so that common action is indeed possible as it is desirable. It is possible because people are actually in place, long enough for there to be an opportunity for shared activities like meetings and intentional social action. It is desirable so that such an intentional and public activity and processes of community organising are possible. Serious or disciplined community organising, after all, requires real membership-based organisations that can be brought together for agreed-upon action on issues which the above listening exercises, often repeated or revisited, have patiently identified and discussed (for those issues and concerns which are held in common by the member organisations and as possible, by way of a working consensus). However, there is a fragmentary nature in mass society that contributes to dislocation or uprootedness.[8] This is also due to "urban relations (that) are often fleeting, instrumental, and characterized by suspicion and fear."[9] There is thus the need for a third civic practice which is that of building strong institutions. Institutions are vital because they convey and sustain traditions of belief and practices. They

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[7] Bretherton, "Postsecular Politics?" p.14.

[8] See Alexander, *The Globalisation of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit* (Oxford University Press, 2008), especially Chapter 3 "The Dislocation Theory of Addiction," pp. 57-84.

[9] Bretherton, "Postsecular Politics?" p. 17.

compensate for individuals who are often mobile, sometimes rootless, and thus devoid of shared practices and means to experience life in common including with other people's institutions. Bretherton integrates these three terms expressing their interrelationship: "The negotiation of a common life between such institutions, rather than between individuals, allows for a listening, place-based politics to emerge."[10] He adds: "Not only are such practices intrinsic to most world religions, they are also central to the proper practice of democratic citizenship."[11] The notion of "caring and feeding of institutions" was once a mantra in the "new left" student activities of the 1960s and perhaps a counter-balance to another, less thoughtful mantra of "never trust anyone over 30"! The fourth term, "stability," relates to the need for endurance. Endurance denotes what "the rhythm of faith" means, to elicit the subtitle of McNamee's poetic account of his lengthy Philadelphia urban parish ministry.[12] Endurance also characterises the nature of urban ministry that has a chance to survive meaningfully over time, in actual places, and with the practical help of institutions. Among many ways, endurance is made possible by the monastic vows of stability and life-long conversation of manners – including variations on monasticism, as perhaps ministers in long tenures and even tenured academics who might consult with urban ministries to provide insights on what makes for meaningful stability or endurance. These monastic vows or their functional equivalents have been retrieved and creatively appropriated by the recent new monasticism.[13]

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[10] Ibid, p. 17

[11] Ibid, p. 18.

[12] See John McNamee, *Endurance: The Rhythm of Faith* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1996).

[13] See A. Grimley and J. M. Wooding, *Living the Hours: Monastic Spirituality in Everday Life* (London: Canterbury Press, 2010); J. Wilson-Hartgrove, *New Monasticism: What It has to Say to Today's Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008); and, B.K. Morris, "The Merton and New Monasticism Check and Balance" Appendix A, *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry* (Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 2016), pp.141-149. Fenton Johnson has duly studied and names "functional equivalents" to traditional and new monasticism vows in *Keeping Faith: A Skeptic's Journey among Christian and Buddhist Monks* (New York: Mariner Books, 2003).

These four terms could offer a basis for practicing hope in the city and in the long-term service of a faithful, public, and prophetic witness of the church.[14] Each of these variables merits their own attention especially as they arise in literature relevant to this research project. These terms help provide an important lens to form the basis for responding to the research question of what constitutes a successful urban ministry.

2.2.   On Listening

In two compact essays of the 1990s for *Crucible*, Michael Northcott provided a useful four-decade survey of literature on urban theology.[15] He identifies several issues that are common in city ministries, including inadequate housing, insufficient levels of support, substandard education, and indications that each of these in turn is rooted in inequalities exacerbated by racism and classism. He identifies key church based and theological actors, and their reflections on events, patterns, and processes in the UK and North America, including historic theologians like William Temple and contemporary thinkers such as Harvey Cox, as well as community organisers such as Saul Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) training model. He notes the precedents of industrial mission models and worker priest experiments. Northcott responds to his own Anglican Church's important *Faith in the City* report and incorporates a further document, *Living Faith in the City.* In his concluding summary, he calls for a patient and deliberative consideration of how it is possible to resource and to sustain appropriate urban ministry and theological reflection. Foreshadowing much of the current emphasis in both the practice of ministry and theology, twenty-plus years later, Northcott writes:

> The task of the urban theologian is to listen to the stories of urban peoples, hear what the Spirit is saying anew in the contemporary city, and bring this listening into creative interaction with the resources of the

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[14] Moltmann has recently twittered that "Hope is lived where we come out of our shells and participate in the life of others, in both joy and pain" <https://twitter.com/moltmannjuergen> [accessed April 11, 2016].

[15] M. Northcott, "Toward an Urban Theology 1960-1990s" (Part 1), *Crucible,* October/December 1990, 161-170 and "Toward an Urban Theology 1960-1990s" (Part 2), *Crucible,* January/March 1991, 17-23.

great missionary forces of Christian history, and the contemplative resources of Christian spirituality.[16]

In a later work, Northcott draws from fifty-two commentators on urban theology. He concludes in the introduction to *Urban Theology: A Reader*:

> [Urban Theologians'] writings reflect a new confidence in God and in spirituality which earlier generations of urban theologians and urban Christians were in danger of losing. They are not hesitant to argue that worship, spiritual experience and ritual are effective means to address social dis-ease; they are prepared to make direct connections between the Bible as the revealed witness of the Spirit and the stories of the people of God in contemporary cities; they are able to see the church in the UPA [Urban Priority Area] not as marginal to the secular forces which shape community but as potentially the central player, often the only grassroots organization on an estate, able confidently to host or organize regeneration initiatives.[17]

Moving from mere description to a constructive proposal which includes his own subsequent writings, Northcott adds:

> Too often urban theologies and experiments have involved a kind of functionalism and activism where Christians have substituted action for being, secular ideology for gospel, and ceased to listen and contemplate the divine in the midst of the poor. The dynamic for urban theology which is both alongside the poor, and discerning the voice of God in the urban world, must be contemplation in action.[18]

If a ministry is to be successful and be sustained, then it is necessary for there to be an exhortation to practice forms and levels of listening. To perform a pastoral and community ministry function of "being present," it helps if there are some instrumental kinds of listening in the service of larger or wider goals. These could include detached street workers commissioned to interact and listen to people in order to discern a sense of their needs as well as the potential for listening to recruit people to programs even if

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[16] Northcott, "Urban Theology 1960-1990 Part II" in *Crucible*, p. 23; cf. Northcott, "Theology in the City" in *Urban Theology: A Reader* (London: Cassell Wellington House, 1998), p. 6.

[17] Ibid, 6.

[18] Ibid.

this is tantamount to adding numbers for buttressing a ministry's year-end statistics.[19] An attainment of success sometimes seems to evoke a rationale whereby an end justifies the means used.

While there are further reflections below on the intentions and meanings of broad-based organising – it is across communities or districts and, on multiple issues – the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) has revised its original strategies for working quickly to bring various organisations into an alliance for taking action to resolve shared issues of concern. Since its earliest days, the IAF failed to sustain such broad-based organisations beyond a generation, so the second generation of IAF national and regional staff revised policy. To avoid or at least minimise the temptation to rush to "success" and leave member organisations of the alliance feeling used or by-passed, careful "listening campaigns" were adopted and employed. This consists of one-on-one conversations – "relational meetings" – that were sufficiently attentive to help each person gain and develop a sense of mutual trust.[20] Short of perhaps actual friendships emerging, these cultivated meetings became the basis for members of actual organisations to feel confident that there was promise to bring their own organisation into a wider alliance. Only then, the IAF came to contend, is there a genuine enough foundation for engaging in what issues provided common cause. This disciplined process includes inducing large gatherings of member organisations to report back from each of their own meetings and then as a whole decide which issues to agree upon as a priority for sustainable action. In short, the identification of and taking action on issues came to follow the prior development of relationships which had been sensitively forged by way of respectful listening. This provides and exemplifies a foundation and a process

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[19] Statistics in support of fund-raising is always a concern, especially following start-up or seed grants. From the field of non-profits, The Green Team's Victoria, BC program manager, Lyda Salatian confesses: "Foundations love funding pilot projects. After a few years, you aren't so young and sexy anymore. By that time, they expect you to land stable long-term funding" in "Green Team Struggling with Success," *Vancouver Sun,* March 29, 2016, Vol. 130 No. 263, p. A14.

[20] For relational meetings and their inclusion in IAF, see especially Ed Chambers, *Roots of Radicals: Organizing Power for Action and Justice*, pp. Cf. Luke Bretherton, *Resurrecting Democracy: Faith, Citizenship, and the Politics a Common Life*, chapter 3 "An Anatomy of Organizing I: Listening, Analysis, and Building Power," pp. 111-147. See also as an example of a plea for community organisers to write of their praxis, so to contribute to what success means, Michael Gecan, *Going Public: An Organizer's Guide to Citizen Action* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), especially Chapter I "All Real Living is Meeting."

for thinking of "success" in terms of aiming to be steadfastly resolute for the long haul.[21]

Pastorally speaking, listening has been identified as an important aspect of sensitivity training for theological students and active ministers. Phrases such as a "ministry of presence" for street ministries or various kinds of chaplaincies can also be identified, since listening is a foundation for being present.[22] For this reason, detached youth worker positions long held a place in YMCA/YWCA strategies to reach otherwise alienated youth. They needed to be listened to and hence taken seriously. "Place" has remained important but with a realistic recognition that the places of those marginalised from traditional agencies or churches also warrant due, patient consideration. Listening is again a foundation for this level of respectful consideration and helpfully commented on by urban sociologists such as Richard Sennett.[23] There has been an interesting retrieval of monastic-like disciplines, including contemplation. This dovetails with Northcott's observations of decades of urban theology and ministry and his conclusions on the synergy of contemplation-and-action. That is, there is a mutual check and balance practice which could provide stability when both contemplation and social justice actions are held in creative tension (and hence weariness or burnout is minimised). It is sufficient to note the wealth of resources available from those who have drawn from Thomas Merton and others. Among many, one thinks of those influenced by Merton like Kenneth Leech, Jim Forest, Henri Nouwen, Richard Rohr, Donald Grayston and the societies or centres that they in turn have instituted and from which they have virtually evangelised. Presently in the UK one senses such an influence even if implicitly or coincidentally in "Fresh Expressions" as in the USA via the Center for Contemplation and Action (Rohr) or the Church of the Saviour's similar daily

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[21] See http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/steadfast [accessed April 14, 2016].

[22] I recall David Dranchuk latching on to a "ministry of presence" *raison d'etre* for his years of street work with those in the sex trade in three different cities, which eventually led to the formation in Vancouver, BC of the Women's Information and Safe Haven (WISH) drop-in; from an Anglican to a United Church and now with its own building. Dranchuk may have adopted the term from various influences including Henri Nouwen and Jean Vanier.

[23] See R. Sennett, *Respect in a World of Inequality* (New York: Norton, 2003).

meditation resource, "Inward/Outward."[24] The discipline and craft of listening is also evident in Canadian retreat centers such as continuing education centres, which are financially challenged, of the United Church of Canada (UCC) and a special retreat resource on Bowen Island near to Vancouver, BC, "Rivendell," with its intimate ties to Grandview Calvary Baptist Church (GCBC), including the sustaining support of New Testament-like benefactors or patrons. Without the practical availability of such places there would be a scarcity of places to attend for guidance and support for what it means to listen and how it relates to the other components of what makes for success.

2.3. On Place

Whole essays and even books on the topic of place and its contribution to success in urban ministry could be cited.[25] The work of Michael Northcott and Kenneth Leech in the UK is relevant to urban ministry and theology as are the origins and development of the East Harlem Protestant Parish (EHPP) in the USA,[26] and, in Canada, the early reflections of the Anglican parish priest, Norman Ellis and, more recently, Bob Burrows' historical profile of First United Church. There is also Keith Whitney who decided to remain in downtown urban Toronto in the 1960s – exemplifying a vow of stability not well known at that time in Protestant circles. Rather than move on to other pastoral charges or institutional ministries once his "normal time" with the Fred Victor Mission expired, Whitney chose to stay to live and work until his death. He moved into a nearby live-in space of the large Metropolitan United Church, a virtual UCC

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[24] See http://inwardoutward.org/the-church-of-the-saviour/churches [accessed November 29, 2016]; also, see Ian Mobsby, "Mixed Economy Parish in North Peckham" <https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/mixed-economy-parish-church-north-peckham> [accessed April 22, 2016].

[25] See again, M. Northcott, *Place, Ecology and the Sacred: The Moral Geography of Sustainable Communities* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

[26] Fortunately, among many sources including EHPP founding practitioners (George Webber, Don Benedict and Archie Hargraves), there have been a major profile, a dissertation account of the East Harlem Protestant Parish, and a later 40th anniversary reflection, as respectively, Bruce Kenrick, *Come Out the Wilderness: The Story of the East Harlem Protestant Parish* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); Benjamin Alicea, *Christian Urban Colonizers: A History of the East Harlem Protestant Parish, 1948 to 1968* (unpublished doctoral thesis, New York Union Theological Seminary, 1989); and Lowell Livezey, "Church as Parish: The East Harlem Protestant Parish," in *The Christian Century*, December 9, 1998, p. 1176.

Cathedral, to commit to the rest of his ministry to the people in that area.[27] Further Canadian counterparts consisted of several Jesuits living in a Toronto urban parish, Our Lady of Lourdes, as students and then as continuing post-scholastics and brothers to continue with their ministry. The case of former Jesuit scholastic Carmel Hili is narrated in Chapter 4. The case of Al Tysick's place of ministry in Victoria, BC's capital city, illustrates how in and through three urban ministries his street ministry of presence is rooted in place – getting to know it by immersion, that is being present six early mornings every week and there attending to the people and their life concerns (recounted in Chapter 5). A third case situation, which is also later narrated in Chapter 6 is the Streams of Justice ministry in the east end area of its host church, which almost suffered extinction but found renewed life by re-committing to listening to the concerns and hopes of people living in its surrounding area. GCBC found timely and sustaining support of a benefactor so that the church's building could be supplemented by several houses for significant community hospitality, housing for refugees and former street people being uppermost.[28] All of the above ministries represent cases which help to bring together the activities of listening and place.

There are descriptions of incidents of urban ministry that depict the significance of place and how it contributes to an understanding of success. Brief Canadian examples would include Tim Huff's *Burnt Hope*, Greg Allen's *God in the Alley* and Tom Dickau's *Plunging into the Kingdom*. A discerning analysis is necessary in order to be more helpful for considering the nature, possibilities, and challenges of success. This would include an awareness of paradoxes, lest what an urban ministry intends – as advocating for local neighbourhood improvement measures such as a controlled density and respect for diversity – actually undermines affordable housing in the same area. That is, an urban ministry could espouse neighbourhood plans and improvements and

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[27] There is precious little to consult on Keith Whitney. One source, if still accessible, is Nancy Edwards, *The Late Keith Whitney: An interview with Keith Whitney* via audio cassette. Toronto: Berkley Studios, 1977. Much of this material above is from my own experience and awareness of Whitney.

[28] For New Testament benefactors, see Joshua Rice, *Paul and Patronage: The Dynamics of Power in I Corinthian* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013). In his own account of GCBC, Tim Dickau – albeit, implicitly, respecting anonymity – alludes to the indispensable support of patron-benefactors in *Plunging into the Kingdom: Practicing the Shared Strokes of Community, Hospitality, Justice, and Confession* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

yet unintentionally be indifferent to the pressures of gentrification that cause these same areas to be less affordable and thus less accessible to lower-income populations, so that diversity is compromised. In a recent reflection on Vancouver, along with several other cities, Matt Hern comments on the irony of city planners working hard to make the city globally attractive while contributing to pricing low income people out of the housing market especially in their community. In *Common Ground in a Liquid City: Essay in Defense of an Urban Future*, he cites a planner's off-the-record confession:

> The nicer the city gets, the more people want to live here. The more people want to live here, the higher the prices. What are we supposed to do? Make it uglier? Honestly, we are kind of proud at how expensive housing is – it shows that we're doing a good job developing this as an attractive locale.[29]

Hern then adds his own ethical conviction, relevant to many urban ministries with citywide issues. Drawing on recent comparative housing price and rental figures, which show the striking costs in Vancouver despite a drop in average house prices in the rest of greater Vancouver, he asserts "That trajectory is difficult to address, given Canadian cities' limited range of tools, but political will is the more important requisite including the backbone needed to confront certain sectors' reticence to give something up."[30] Here then as another mark of success is political will and a willingness to engage in sound analysis, even if the ministry situation is frustrating and constituting a constantly moving target.

Of enduring value in terms of a valuable body of work and a virtual legacy to students of urban theology and the practice of urban ministry, there is Leech's exemplary role and frequent reflections in his role as an East End of London urban

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[29] M. Hern's *Common Ground in a Liquid City: Essay in Defense of an Urban Future* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2010), p. 129; also with a Vancouver urban ministry-theological focus, see Sean Benesh's *View from the Loft: Developing a Theological Framework for Understanding the City* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishing, 2011).

[30] Ibid; cf. Clive Doucet's *Urban Meltdown: Cities, Climate Change and Politics as* Usual, Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2007, especially p. 22 for this former Ottawa City Councillor's *raison d'etre* for politics-as-a-vocation. "[...] the reason I am a city councillor: to be part of helping my city continue to be a beautiful place. It should be that simple but I cannot detach myself from the feeling that it is no longer enough, that there are *great forces at work which are closing around the city"*; italics added.

theologian.[31] There is John McNamee's involvement as parish priest in at St. Malachy's Church, North Philadelphia, successfully aided by his dedicated writing. His two books on his often raw and wearying experiences have been used and commended by philosophical theologians like John Caputo.[32] Similarly, there is a further focus exemplifying a monastic-like commitment over a life-time of ministry by way of a vow of stability, a tenure of ministry – as during the 1930s and 1940s by Andrew Roddan of Vancouver's First United Church. His story is briefly depicted in his only modest publication, *The Church in the City*[33] and helpfully noted in Burrows' *Hope Lives Here* history of First United. Without elaborating on the important details of their particular urban ministry, their long-haul commitments disclose at least the following points. By committing to one place, their ministries enabled a combination of various pastoral and social service works, including preaching, priestly duties and writing, with complementary prophetic pronouncements and advocacy for change in the social polices and programs that supposedly assist the poor but often frustrate attempts at meaningful change in their living conditions. Their writings attest to an encouragement to the next generation to face its challenges. Indeed, since urban ministers are not prone to write and, if they do so, to be published – other than via pamphlets, booklets, occasional interviews or short, in-house articles[34] – it is possible to draw certain conclusions from these examples. They exude the role and import of contemplation or

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[31] Leech, "Theology and Place" in *Prayer and Prophecy: The Essential Kenneth Leech,* ed. by David Bunch and A. Ritchie (New York: Seabury Books, 2009) especially pp. 292-303.

[32] Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct? The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), especially pp. 118-134.

[33] See Andrew Roddan, *The Church in the City: The Story of Threescore Years of Practical Christian Service 1885-1945* (Vancouver, BC: First United Church, 1945), and his son, Sam Roddan's account, *Batter My Heart* (Vancouver, British Columbia: United Church of Canada BC Conference, 1975).

[34] Al Tysick's street ministry or chaplaincy is noted here and there, but not in widely published, accessible sources.

prayer – contemplative prayer[35] – alongside social service and social action work. Their writings could not occur apart from the discipline of taking time and space to journal and then to elicit written accounts of their ministry experiences for publication. There was a period when these accounts served as a spur to theological schools or seminaries to consider combining the roles of teacher/professor with practitioners, in the service of a creative check and balance of critical theory and constructive practice (practical or practicing theology) and for the long haul.[36] Such partnerships harbour a hope for contributing to success in ministry, bringing the best of scholarship to the urban field and vice-versa. This seems to have been short-lived though helpful examples of ministry in the city apart from a Seminary or Theological School's association continue.[37]

"Drop-in" forms of ministry in the city further illustrate the intrinsic and instrumental value of place. That is, there is the organisation of a drop-in for the purposes of inviting people to come, share, and possibly contribute through volunteering. There is also the offering of a drop-in, on its own or as part of an established church, for the instrumental purpose of encouraging people to consider, seek out, and find a means to recover from addiction – or move from a state of homelessness

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[35] *Contemplative Prayer* (1971) was Merton's last public book while still alive. Written basically for fellow monastics it is accessible for wider readership as virtually all of his writings. There are volumes on this persistent and hopefully creative tension of action but with contemplation; contemplation but with action. Not surprisingly, Biblical scholars contribute as well: "Life with God that finds no expression ion the world is dead, just as action itself can become warped by selfishness, manipulation, and control without contemplative living" Kathleen O'Connor, "Building Hope Upon the Ruins in Jeremiah," *The Bible and the American Future*, ed. R. L. Jewett et al. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), p. 159.

[36] See, e.g., Saunders and Campbell, *The Word on the Street: Performing the Scriptures in the Urban Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) and Ronald Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction*; also, though less explicit of the Seminary/Ministry association, see Brian Walsh's year of being a theologian-in-residence, while with the Toronto CRC from Toronto School of Theology. Subsequently, he and Steven Bouma-Prediger wrote *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008) (where some credit is given to the CRC within the book as for chapters on "socioeconomic homelessness" and "from housing to homemaking").

[37] Thinking of the East Harlem Protestant Parish's early evolution and links with Union Theological Seminary (via its founding students, some faculty, and initial team ministers) and Columbia Theological Seminary's links to Atlanta, Georgia's The Open Door. On the latter, see Peter Gathje's edited *A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader: 1982-2002* (Atlanta, Georgia: Open Door Community, 2002).

to emergency shelter space and from there, a hope for stable social housing. Almost any urban ministry begins with a base and mode of place be this inner-city, suburban or in outer ring redevelopments. A later case study explores this, namely the Open Door (OD) of Victoria, BC which later merged with another drop-in, The Upper Room (UR), to form Our Place Society (OPS) and then to get back to the streets a street chaplaincy style of ministry arose called the Dandelion Society. The latter is essentially a retrieval and fresh application of what Tysick briefly reflected in *Out in the Open* and later in *Our Place Society* (see Chapter 5).[38] Other publications that portray the significance of the drop-in include Jesuit Priest Gary Smith's *Street Journal: Finding God in the Homeless* and *A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader: 1982-2002*. Fr. Smith's concluding sentence illustrates a kind of success that comes from being affirmed, even if this is left to one's departure from the ministry as a whole: "This final day has been a whirlwind. Lots of goodbyes. Overwhelmed. Captured…. I thought of the image (of hands being placed on my head) as our guests were saying goodbye to me. They embraced me, placing their hearts upon my heart."[39]

There is also Vancouver, BC's The Door Is Open, this being an on-going drop-in ministry of the RC Archdiocese of Vancouver. There, Bart Campbell confirms the effective nature of his volunteer experiences at a time when his marriage was threatened with what he observed in the drop-in space, namely a threat of the loss of identity and self-worth. He attests that his life and marriage all could well have come apart, "…if I hadn't started hanging out at The Door Is Open and let the experience change some of my entrenched outlooks on life, and teach me some things – like how often the best way

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[38] See *Out in the Open: Life on the Street*, ed. M. Schwartzentruber (Northstone Publishing Co, 1997). Tysick writes the preface, professing: "This book was conceived in a back alley amid garbage and filth as a bottle of mouthwash was being passed… Some of the people who were present to witness the birth of this project have since died…It was their struggle with the street, their dedication and their passionate belief that this book would be completed …that has time and time again resurrected these pages."

[39] Gary Smith, *Street Journal: Finding God in the Homeless* (New York: Sheen & Ward, 1994), pp.147-148.

to help yourself, is by helping others, and that the more you give of yourself, the more you forget yourself in work or in love…."[40]

Sometimes the drop-in approach moves from a relationship of basic dependency (upon the donor or host) to hospitality, where the roles of guest and host display mutual respect. Overcoming any initial fears and resentment from those in the role of being a panhandler or beggar[41] – to become more that of an abiding witness of what it may mean interactively to share[42] – is vital in order to appreciate how charity might come to include advocacy for one's legal and human rights and from this, to justice making and keeping. It seems that what begins as a drop-in mode of ministry could evolve and enlarge into a church ministry – or ecumenical, interdisciplinary ministry of several religious and public entities right on site and thus as a legitimate place of recognised ministry for the long haul (see Chapters 4 and 5).[43]

Finally, the contributions of the new monasticism are important – and they warrant considerable space not possible here.[44] These new monastics have set out to retrieve and re-apply to their chiefly urban settings, the classical monastics' basic vows of obedience as listening, celibacy as enabling a purity of purpose to will the important purposes at hand, and poverty as unencumbered commitments from the distractions of

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[40] Campbell, *The Door is Open: Memoir of a Soup Kitchen Volunteer* (Vancouver: Anvil Press, 2001), p. 11; cf. Morris et al., *The Word on the Street* for further testimonies on and from drop-ins and the significance of place.

[41] See Kelly Johnson, *The Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 2007.

[42] See Christine Pohl, "A Community's Practice of Hospitality: The Interdependence of Practices and of Communities" in *Practical Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* ed. by M. Volf and D.C. Bass (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), pp., 121-136.

[43] The Dugout Drop-in Centre began very small and simply; now, it is a bit larger and supported by more than one church entity, as the City of Vancouver and other partners which are non-profit agencies and ecumenical. See Burrows, *Hope Lives Here: A History of Vancouver's First United Church* (Madeira park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 2010), pp.93-94, 212.

[44] See among many possible sources, J. Wilson-Hartgrove, *New Monasticism: What It has to Say to Today's Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008) and via a chief mentor for them, Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert: Saying from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century* (New York: New Directions Book, 1960), especially therein pp.3-24 with emphases on determination and dedication; cf. Morris, *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry*, Appendix A "The (Thomas) Merton and New Monasticism Check and Balance."

property, money and prestige[45] – as well as the vows of stability or a commitment to stay present for the long haul, and its accompanying life-long conversation so to be in community.[46] The formation and practice of spiritual disciplines – as what some call "habits of the heart"[47] – might contribute to a spiritual renewal and thereby help to ground and sustain people in their spiritual, even intentional communities. A new monastic participant confirms this:

> Embracing spiritual disciplines and discipleship is also a key component, with intentional practices like praying through *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* daily and receiving education from folks further on in the journey proving vital for healthy, visible manifestations of belief. And perhaps this approach is the antidote to the false dichotomy of radical/ordinary Christianity. For the New Monastic movement to grow beyond a trend into a sustainable witness, Claiborne and others hope to see a renewed commitment to the church.[48]

To mention a final example of the significance of place, there are the recent writings of Lutheran pastor, Nadia Bolz-Weber. Her *Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint* and *Accidental Saints* and *Finding God in All the Wrong People* describe

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[45] Cf. the 7th tradition of 12-step groups' admonishment to minimise concerns and certainly preoccupations with property, money and prestige. It may well be that 12-step recovery groups and processes are tantamount to being monastic-like, especially in terms of dedicated determination. Again, see Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert* (New York: New Directions, 1960; repr. 1970), pp. 23-24.

[46] As participant-observers and students of the older and newer monasticism sensitively affirm: "Cassian tells us that monasticism cannot be learned from a book but only through living it out; the Benedictine commitment to *stabilitas, obedientia, conversatio morum suorum* can be a means to that end. A commitment to stability does not mean that I must live forever in the place where I was born, but that I take the trouble to learn and respect the particular characteristics and needs of the place where history has put me. A commitment to obedience does not mean blind adherence to the pronouncements of authority but devoting time and effort to cultivating, then heeding my conscience, that interior and intuitive guide that I so often ignore. A commitment to conversion of manners does not require me to sell all and retire to the desert or to refrain from sex. It requires rather that I accord the spiritual equal weight with the material, that I practice not poverty but frugality, that I recognize the power of intimacy – the power of the body – and that I inhabit that power responsibly," Fenton Johnson, *Keeping Faith: A skeptic's journey among Christian and Buddhist Monks* (New York: Mariner Books, 2003), p.297; cf. 51-52.

[47] See Robert Belluh et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, with a New Preface (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2007).

[48] D.L. Mayfield, "What It's Like to be Shane Claiborne-again," February 19, 2016 <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/march/what-its-like-to-be-shane-claiborne-again.html?share=XYu6J%2byJbX1kUalZLKRyQm3nKjPnuK7v> [accessed March 11, 2016].

her inclusive ministry in Denver, Colorado. It is perhaps a mode of ministry that is akin to the kind of steadfast social evangelism stream that Sojourners' community and journals and the Church of the Savior in Washington, DC, express in the USA. It combines regular biblical study with liturgical settings and evidence of outreach and follow-up visits to occasional attenders in the hope of forging an enduring ministry. Providing a cautionary note to those seeking easy success, the church's operational mission statement reads: *Welcome to House for All Sinners and Saints. We will disappoint you.*[49] Finally, denominational publications feature articles, often by professional journalists, on what it is to speak meaningfully of "community" and especially in view of its raw absence, as in isolation and loneliness. Thus, Andre Picard asks and reflects:

> … what is this mysterious thing we call community? John McKnight, director of community studies Program at North-western University in Chicago and author of the seminal work *The Careless Society: Community and its Counterfeits*, defines our understanding of community: "To some people, community is a feeling, to some people it's relationships, to some people it's a place, to some people it's an institution." But the definition McKnight prefers is: "Community is a place where people prevail."[50]

2.4. Re-Organising Civic Institutions

Bretherton is not alone in affirming the central role of organising in building or as necessary, re-building institutions which make up the city. Organising is a dynamic process since the challenges and conflicts of city living have to deal with urbanism in terms of size, density, diversity, and increased inequalities arising from gentrification of one's living place. When academics like Bruce Alexander discern the influences of the forces of fragmentation and the outcome of dislocation to contribute to a real poverty of spirit and to the globalisation of the phenomenon of addiction, then the case can be made that redressing such pressures invites the contribution of community organising. Of course, those in the vocation of broad-based community organising consider that this

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[49] N. Bolz-Weber, *Accidental Saints* (New York: Convergent Books, 2015), p. 55.

[50] A. Picard, "All the Lonely People" In *The United Church Observer*, Vol. 79 No 11 June 2016, p. 27.

is often easier said than done. Developing any sense of mutual trust takes time, energy, shareable space, and an accompanying set of clear purposes. In integrating the emphases on listening and the value of place, Bretherton draws attention to the normative purposes of ministry as exercised by congregations. He attests:

> Non-pecuniary institutions that are not wholly subject to the demands of the market or the state are key for creating public spaces amidst political, economic, social and technological pressures which undermine such relationships. … Congregations represent institutions of this kind and are places constituted by gathered and mobilized people who do not come together for either commercial or state-directed transactions, but instead come together to worship and care for each other. In short, if we have nowhere to sit together free from governmental or commercial imperatives we have no genuinely public spaces in which to take the time to listen to each other and develop mutual trust.[51]

The literature attests the value of organising power for the sake of justice making and keeping. Alliances of organisations provide practical opportunities to move beyond the safer, more convenient modes of ministry that convey charitable responses to the inequalities caused by, if not undergirding, poverty.[52] There is of course the biblical mandate to do justice. There seems little in biblical writings that actually offers concrete help for critical reflection in the service of constructive methods, especially to organise for justice-making and keeping. Nonetheless, it could nonetheless be argued that the biblical imperative to employ something like organising can be discerned in the call to balance power for more socially just relationships.[53] And, such a summons and example is present in social ethics' literature, such as Reinhold Niebuhr (below) and the middle axioms or principles' reflections he and others influence.[54] There are some criticisms of organising such that it begins and remains too middle class – that in the very nature of working with already formed organisations, there is a middle-class modus operandi at work. It seems that if one is not middle-class then one needs an habituation into the

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[51] L. Bretherton, "A Postsecular Politics? Inter-faith Relations as a Civic Practice" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, June 2011, Vol. 79, No. 2, p. 372.

[52] See E. Chambers' instructive subtitle in *Roots of Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action and Justice* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

[53] See e.g. Proverbs 11:1 and 16:11, Psalm 85: 10-13, Job 31:6, Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8, et al.

[54] E.g., See R. Niebuhr's Gifford Lecture volumes, especially Vol. 2 of *Nature and Destiny of Man*, chapter IX (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1964b). The William Temple Foundation publications have, *inter alia*, written on middle axioms.

work ethic practices (e.g. deferring pleasures for the sake of planning) of what it means somewhat to be middle class.[55]

Alongside this material, it is important to acknowledge the vast writings of Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian realists. Although only recently noted, Niebuhr was a mentor to the founder of the Industrial Areas Foundation, Saul Alinsky and his successors and for good reason.[56] Niebuhr's stress on collective sin means that love on its own is simply insufficient for communities or classes of people or nations to be able to counter balance and hold accountable the disproportionate power held and arbitrarily imposed by political and economic powers on the populace. This also means that the employment of charity could well serve as a guise through which those who hold power practice good works but fall short of admitting to the power they hold but enjoy the accompanying prestige they own as a result of their charitable work. To seal this salient point, Niebuhr repeatedly cautioned:

> love in its purest form may not be as immediately relevant as either equality or liberty to the issue of establishing justice within the structures and traditions of community […] Love may easily be corrupted, so that a powerful man will use benevolence in personal relations as a substitute of granting justice in the basic organization of life […] he displays his power with his goodness while justice challenges his power as incompatible with goodness. These facts are withheld from the wise but they are known by the 'simple', particularly if they should be the victims of the 'benevolence' of the powerful.[57]

Hence, a theological engagement with justice must engage with Niebuhr's work because of his penetrating analysis of the way in which love, charity or benevolence fall short of

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[55] See, e.g., L. Schaller's *Community Organization: Conflict and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 103-110.

[56] See e.g. L. Bretherton, *Resurrecting Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.355 n60; and chapter 2 "Local: Augustine, Alinsky, and the Politics of the Common Good" in *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, especially pp. 88-91. cf. Ed Chambers, *Roots of Radicals,* p. 31 and Ron Fujiyoshi's, "A comparison of action theory: Saul Alinsky and Reinhold Niebuhr" (unpublished bachelor's thesis, Chicago Theological Seminary, 1968).

[57] Niebuhr, *Self and Dramas of History* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1955), p.186; cf. *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1932, reprinted. 2001), pp. 80f. and *Beyond Tragedy* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1937), pp. 186-87.

the goal of justice.[58] To be sure, there are writings that issue a clarion call for organising, many of them published after Niebuhr's work. Some of these have the advantage of being practically based and orientated. Luke Bretherton's work is among them, as are the writings of Robert Linthicum, Jeffery Stout, and Deb Cameron Fawkes.[59] Most of these express indebtednesses to Niebuhr (and others) and provide updated nuances to his conclusions. Nonetheless, Niebuhr's teachings and public-prophetic witness are worth noting especially his implications for urban ministry, including his theology of justice. To state these but summarily, they include: the dialectic interplay of love and justice; the temptation to use charity or benevolence to mask if not avoid the need for justice; the strategic summons to engage church-based and inter-disciplinary community organising by way of addressing the balance of power in order to establish justice; the place and role of mentors; the place and role of solid, self-critical fellowships or reference groups; and not all, on one dealing with urban ministry experiences of cynicism and despair, via Niebuhr's living in and out of the tensions of life and academic thought including the loss of his once activist life-style, following some debilitating strokes and its then enforced passivities. Nonetheless,

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[58] There is much on justice to note. Non-religious resources add a check and balance pressing theological language to be more precise. Stuart Hampshire's *Justice Is Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000) is a complementary read to the Niebuhr. It is a political philosopher's plain recognition of conflicts in the regular contests of power. To cite two further Harvard political philosopher/scientists, there is *Justice: What is the right thing to do?* by again Michael Sandel, posing three distinct ways of understanding justice in terms of virtue and *The Idea of Justice*, by Amartya Sen, with a broad look at political argument, civic engagement and human rights though it lacks Sandal's clarity and focus. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' publications engages justice issues like inequality and the need for progressive tax policies. Canadian resources include the more theological and social ethical treatise of Terence Anderson's *Walking the Way: A Guide for Christian Ethics* (Toronto: United Church Press, 1993) especially for its mature method and model of doing ethics in tough, practical situations. University of Winnipeg professor emeritus John Badertscher and Merton Society Board member, political science professor Ron Dart have long commended George Grant; also, Alistair McIntyre. Their works represent life-long summaries engaging justice. While Ogletree's work on the ethics of the fitting and its levels of interpretation is drawn on as an implicit framework for posing and pressing questions in the case studies, the clearest for summary teaching purposes is Anderson's.

[59] See thus R. Linthicum, *Transforming Power* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); J. Stout, *Blessed Are the Organized Grass-roots Democracy in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); and D. Cameron Fawkes, "There Is a Power not Ourselves, That makes for Righteousness" *Tommy Douglas: Political Life as Religious Vocation* (unpublished master's thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver School of Theology, 2011).

Niebuhr's now popular "Serenity Prayer" resources innumerable 12-step groups – Alcoholics Anonymous being the most obvious – and also provides a nuanced, vital, balanced perspective for aspiring to the disciplined practice of justice. Indeed, one is encouraged to think of this concise prayer as perhaps a basis for the whole of Niebuhr's theology of justice.[60] It also provides an eschatological perspective that encourages a sense and rhythm of pacefulness – not surprisingly nuanced and noted in recent theological writings, such as *Slow Kingdom Coming: Practices for Doing Justice, Loving Mercy and Walking Humbly in the World*.[61] In its original form then, this grace-based prayer professes: "God grant us the grace to accept with serenity the things we cannot change; the courage to change the things we ought to; and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other."[62]

2.5. On Stability with Faithfulness

There are perhaps obvious elements, including that of place, people, and financially supported structures that contribute to the kind of stability that, when present, contribute to the long-haul prospects for success in urban ministry. Without such stability, to which reliable or sustainable funding contributes, there would be little confidence for the future and hope is frustrated. Briefly, there is the heritage of what a ministry grows out of and which may continue to revitalise it. It is what has come to "stand the test of time." Bob Burrows' centenary account of First United Church and its mission, *Hope Lives Here*, exemplifies this. In his book, he seeks to recover a governing perspective that then contributes to the stability of the ministry. This is especially important if the loss of such a governing principle threatens continued funding or, perhaps worse, loss of morale or an *esprit de corps*. The UCC's Task Group on the Church in the Metropolitan Core's *A Dream That is Not for the Drowsy* also illustrates

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[60] See B.K. Morris, for a detailed exegesis of the grace-based serenity prayer and its urban ministry implications, see the concluding chapter of *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry*, pp.127-140. Cf. also, Henry Clark, *Serenity, Courage, and Wisdom: The Enduring Legacy of Reinhold Niebuhr* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1994).

[61] See Kent Annan, *Slow Kingdom Coming* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016).

[62] As cited and well exegeted in Elisabeth Sifton's *The Serenity Prayer: Faith and politics in Times of Peace and War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), passim.

this. The testimonies of urban ministers or community ministers that this document elicited inspire and rekindle the desire to carry on with ministries in and for the city, despite the pressures of city living and an erosion of church resources for supporting especially prophetic as well as pastoral ministries. Engaging these pressures and loss of support– as by way of the once biannual, week-long "Energy from the Edges" sessions in support of otherwise weary and isolated UCC community or urban ministers – is a third example from the literature.[63] Further examples that illumine the importance of a governing, interpretative perspective which also draw on the resources and examples of ministry from the past would include, respectively, Michael Northcott's account of the nature and dynamics of urban theology over four decades of ministry in the UK and Clifford Green's historical and personal account of urban ministries over several decades in the USA, *Churches, Cities, and Human Community.*

A stable governing structure is not merely affirmed as a survival for the sake of survival, however. It takes a hopeful realism by way of a continuous attending to the signs of the times in order for previous or inherited urban ministry work to take note of dynamic urban realities and their pressures. To elaborate on the above reflections of English and American writers, there is a similar Canadian example, *A Dream that is Not for the Drowsy.* The publication arose from a 1977 Moderator's UCC Consultation on the Church in the Metropolitan Core. It was the outcome of an extensive consultation of 130 people in 18 cities over a period of 3 years. It was revised several times before submission to the national church's General Council, its highest decision-making body. The final document included this introductory confession:

> We are in deep conflict regarding the nature and identity of the Divine, God's locale and priorities, the city, evangelism, ministry. We have no clear sense of the process of urbanization; we have not yet learned to help each other use contemporary resources for analyzing the dynamics of a community. And we have never learned to use such analysis as a basis for discerning how to be an evangelical and prophetic component

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[63] Barry Rieder, *Energy from the Edges: Historical Study of the Biennial United Church Outreach Workers Consultation Events* (unpublished Master of Theological Studies Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, 2003).

in a post-industrial, computerized social system. There are illusions that need illumination, and grieving that needs catharsis.[64]

Nothing similar to this document has appeared since, despite several requests for this task group's deliberations and recommendations to be re-issued. It is the view of this writer that if "success" is to mean anything of encouragement and sustenance in urban ministry it means the willingness to keep alive important documents such as *Dream*, alive. Such a document conveys a carefully honed creed or a body of crafted convictions which draw from the hard-earned dedication of hard-working veterans of urban ministry. Many remain left out of publications and especially it seems even in their own denominations' organs.

In his summary chapter to *Churches, Cities, and Human Community: Urban Ministry in the United States 1945-1985,* Clifford Green posed eleven questions to diverse male and female, lay and ministerial, denominational and executive staff and researchers over three and a half decades. He discerned four major turning points over five distinct periods. These included WWII as the first turning point when suburban growth emerged as the primary challenge for change in the church. The second turning point arose from the social, economic, and political crises in the city – recalling the forces of gentrification and its exacerbations for increased housing unaffordability – becoming crises for the church in the city. Such crises present opportunity if there is willingness to take risks. This was exemplified by a return of the wider church to urban centres by way of those returning WWII veterans, who with Union Theological Seminary, came to establish the East Harlem Protestant Parish (EHPP). Seminary faculty and the headquarters of national denominations in New York further assisted. During this period "Denominational urban ministry staffs grew to their largest size for any period following WWII, a contributing factor to the bulk of literature generated during the 1960's."[65] A third turning point occurred in the 1970s, when urban ministry activists attempted to integrate otherwise racial or ethnic specific cultures of the church, but failed. Instead, funds declined, ethnically homogeneous membership persisted (even

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[64] *A Dream that is Not for the Drowsy*, an undated, out of print, in-house United Church of Canada publication of the Task Group on the Church in the Metropolitan Core, a 1980 Division of Mission in Canada, pp. 3, 5.

[65] *Churches, Cities, and Human Community: Urban Ministry in the United States 1945-1985*, edited by Clifford J. Green (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 361.

if in a shared building with the host and other church bodies), and survival strategies were pursued. The fourth turning point occurred in the 1980s and consisted of dwindling denominational funds, and individual staff rather than denominational bodies pursuing matters of justice. On the other hand, Green notes that there were significant research projects on the nature and meaning of ethnic church life and interest in church-based community organisation "in urban areas where all other social institutions have fled or failed,"[66] while evangelical Protestants reflected and wrote about their missionary endeavours, including church growth. Green ends with a similar affirmation to that of Harvey Cox (notwithstanding earlier cautions of *The Secular City* and *Religion in the Secular City*), that "Religious faith is a marvellously persistent thing, and urban change, though modifying it, shows no real sign of destroying it."[67] These two significant studies indicate a combination of earnest listening and attention to forms of stability, both employed in identifying signs of faithfulness, with stability, that contribute to successful urban ministry.

To practice listening, to honour place and to employ both in the service of organising for the sake of advocating for justice all imply a stable base. Without a trustworthy base, it is unlikely that any apparent success will endure. While an urban ministry could exist apart from an actual place – detached street ministries and chaplaincies can exist without belonging to any specific address – an identity requires the stability which place can give. An urban ministry depends as much upon its personnel and financial resources as it does upon its operational base, even if this consists of the worker's laptop, journal, cell phone, and a means by which to connect with others as part of their overall ministry. Often, such ways of engaging a ministry evolve into actual places or physical bases of identity, but sometimes with regret that a lot of flexibility is compromised, even lost. The move from an institutionalised base of operations as at Victoria, BC's OPS led its officially retired lead minister to begin anew yet another fresh street ministry. It is now known as the Dandelion Society and essentially exemplifies a return to this street minister's earlier modus operandi, namely a kind of flexible ad hoc chaplaincy (see Chapter 5). To be sure, however, in order to try

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[66] Ibid., p. 362.

[67] See C. Green, *Churches, Cities, and Human Community,* p. 363 citing therein H. Paul Douglass, *The City's Church* (Cleveland, OH: Friendship Press, 1927), p. 53.

to provide or at least advocate for actual affordable social housing for the homeless or under-housed, other urban ministries have moved from small bases, including church basements, to incorporate their own official, government-approved societies so they could qualify for public funding and then attract the private sector, including wider church, funds. This has been the case of the Toronto Christian Resource Centre (see Chapter 4). Yet, there is a third form of urban ministry which is noted in Chapter 6's case study of Streams of Justice (SoJ). This ministry is chiefly a network that seeks to engage city and national or global issues on at least a weekly basis. It makes creative uses of its de facto sponsoring, benefactor church base – GCBC – for meetings, pot-luck forums and a hosting of issue-orientated events for many of its allies. It nonetheless remains intentionally non-institutionalised and thus hopefully freed to be dedicated to a singular focus on seeking justice.[68]

The practice of contributing to stability in a fragmented, mobile and dislocated mass society can be no small feat of endurance, even by the most dedicated ministers. It is indeed this latter element that the new monasticism offers. Wilson-Hartgrove's *The Wisdom of Stability: Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture* is but one example of work highlighting this. Their retrieval of the classical monastics' vows such as that of stability is instructive – and with stability, the vow of life-long conversation with one's monastic support base and peers (so to practice the life of community that stability assists).[69] While not explicit these vows seem to be evident when people covenant together (steadfastness) for an urban mission and stabilise their ministry's capacity and hope to endure by way of "rooting their faith." This occurs by any number of means: sharing houses for mutual support, pooling of incomes and finances, worshipping, and other ways of practicing spiritual disciplines. This also includes extending hospitality to

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[68] See, e.g., http://sorenkierkegaard.org/upbuilding-discourses-in-various-spirits.html [accessed March 19, 2016].

[69] See creative elaborations of these vows as well as especially on the vows of conversion of manners (where the vows of poverty and chastity are implicit) and *stability* (with obedience as an attentive listening to trusted authority) being core, see T. Merton, edited by P.F. McConnell, *The Life of the Vows: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 6* (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications of Liturgical Press, 2012), especially pp. 183- 192 and pp. 478-479 ("Finale") on "the nature of religious vows"; pp. 237-274 on the vow of obedience; pp. 274-311 on the vow of conversion of manners (with pp.311- 447 devoted to two aspects of this vow, namely chastity and poverty); and pp. 447- 478 on the vow of stability ("to live and die in the community of [one's] profession").

strangers and/or refugees, doing justice usually in association with other city groups, and perhaps via the IAF model. Summarising much of this, long time student of and lay participant in monasticism, Kathleen Norris reflects:

> Stability helps us to do the necessary foundation work so that we can pay close attention to what is going on around us, and adapt to changing conditions without losing our sense of place. Only stability can give us a way to accept the vicissitudes of life with a sense of peace, and even joy.[70]

The implications of these four elements for characterising aspects of success are significant when ministries advocate for justice and employ community organising, to challenge works of charity, at least when employed on their own and then used as a "substitute for justice withheld."[71]

2.6. Review Implications

It remains in this chapter to emphasise some of the implications for urban ministry and theology arising from this literature review especially as they relate to gauging the success or its equivalence (favoured conditions) in urban ministry. By way of a reminder, they offer insight into the nature of ministry in the city and a challenge to articulate a helpful – even commendable – overview for the sake of a faithful public and prophetic ministry for the long haul. This latter phrase conveys a theological sense of what characterises "God's success."[72] What is helpful is how this cluster of terms combines the three features adopted from Bretherton's reflections, and with that of stability, assist in shaping and guiding an outline to this chapter. These same four terms are employed as a lens to guide a description and analysis of the later case study chapters. They are employed for their utility value as much as for their normative value

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[70] K. Norris, foreword to J. Wilson-Hartgrove, *The Wisdom of Stability* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010), p. x.

[71] Attributed to St. Augustine <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/s/saintaugus148531.html> [accessed March 19, 2016].

[72] In addition to previously cited BC Conference of the United Church of Canada's website expression of this mission purpose; see also Robert Moss' *The Neighborhood Church* and its instructive subtitle, *God's Vision of Success* (Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 2014).

(in the same way that each of the case studies is valued for their intrinsic *and* instrumental contributions to a mature or purposive understanding of urban ministry).

The late Kenneth Leech represents another urban theologian whose lifetime in urban ministry in the east end London is worthy of note as he exemplifies what characterises success as incorporating his deep sense of place, therein his ministry's endurance and all of this via his legacy.[73] He affirmed the best of an Anglo-Catholic heritage (with Christian Socialism features); he heralded this before the current popularity, at least in North America, of the creative link and tensions which exist between contemplative prayer and social justice. Leech illustrated the importance of a collaborative theology whereby his parish ministry and his work as an urban theologian were combined with the work of British urban sociologists such as that of Ruth Glass.[74] Leech's legacy is that of putting theology into practice, concretely and patiently with the assistance of the tools of other disciplines, including monastic emphases on spirituality, especially that of contemplative listening and prayer. It is this model of action-reflection and revised-action, forged by way of his role as a resident-in-the-parish theologian, that gives to his urban ministry integrity and foreshadows what is now called the "new monasticism." Leech often emphasised the role of "place" and context for urban ministry and any emerging theological and spiritual reflections, as he did in *The Eye of the Storm: Living Spiritually in the Real World* (1992*), Care and Conflict: Leaves from a Pastoral Notebook* (1990), and in his writings anthologised in *Prayer and Prophecy: The Essential Kenneth Leech* (2009). In the latter, he asserted that "physical location is a critical element in theological work," and his work echoes insights about place and human relationships. Leech adds:

> Throughout almost all my writing, there is a dynamic engagement with the question of space and place [...]. The idea of place involves emotional bonds, identity and so on. Place is the result of human beings working with and giving character to space. But space is never a neutral background to action. Space in East London is seen through its history as

[73] London's East End for Leech is like that of Italian novelist Ignacio Silone of *Bread and Wine* fame, who reflected out of the one valley of his family and personal life in virtually all of his writings. See I. Silone's *Emergency Exit,* trans. by Harvey Fergussion II (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), especially pp. 63-64.

[74] Glass is cited (at least) three times in Leech's "Urbanism and its Discontents" in *Through Our Long Exile* (London, England: Darton Longman Todd, 2001), pp. 98, 104, 112.

the site of social struggles, and it is in the course of such struggles that becomes place, contested territory, home. Like the bread of the Eucharistic offertory, place is something 'which earth has given and human hands have made.'[75]

Secondly, there is evidence that while success is denoted where and when there is evidence of a meaningful endurance – that is, an ongoing stability that contributes to the hope of fulfilling a ministry's mission purposes – the dangerous outcome of weariness and even burnout may occur. This outcome could occur as the result of the pursuit of success being derailed or it might occur in the frenetic pursuit of success but beyond one's natural limits. Urban or community ministry gatherings have been organised. This has featured numerous workshops on burnout, all volunteered from the rank and file of attending ministers or laity during the numerous bi-annual sessions of "Energy from the Edges," among Canadian and mainly United Church workers. Literature on burnout and even "rust-out"[76] to the point of premature or enforced retirement abound on this. It is sufficient to note that students and practitioners of urban ministry have long confessed these dangers. Among others, Taylor has succinctly confessed:

> Those of us in urban ministry read and hear a lot about professional burn-out, that creeping deadness of the soul that narrows our vision and extinguishes our energy until it is all that we can do to get out of bed in the morning. We are sitting ducks for it [...] for at least four reasons: 1) our jobs are never done; 2) our results are hard to measure; 3) our expectations are high – not to mention the expectations others have of us; and 4) most of us do not get to choose whom or even how we will serve.[77]

[75] *Prayer and Prophecy: The Essential Kenneth Leech*, ed. by David Bunch and Angus Ritchie (New York: Seabury Books, 2009) p. 290; cf. his "Agenda for an Urban Spirituality" in *Through Our Long Exile* (London, England: Darton Longman Todd, 2001), Chapter 10.

[76] See Jerry Kennard, "Rust-Out: Causes, Symptoms and Cures" <http://www.healthcentral.com/anxiety/c/4182/157313/symptoms-cures> [accessed October 24, 2016].

[77] Barbara Brown Taylor, "Looking for God in the City: A Meditation," in *Envisioning the New City: A Reader on Urban Ministry,* ed. by Eleanor Scott Meyers (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1992), p. 18. Cf. John D. Caputo's *What Would Jesus DECONSTRUCT? The Good News of Post-Modernism for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), especially Chapter 6's "The Working Church"; it aptly draws on John McNamee's *Diary of a City Priest* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1993), itself an urban ministry case study.

Ironically, it may well be the case that when even on the cusp of a serious weariness, there arise study groups or task forces to summon a fresh round of calls for yet more action. The 1970s study document *A Dream Not for the Drowsy* illustrates such a call to action, based as it was on considerable discussion and input from across the country – a parallel on smaller Canadian scale than the Church of England and the Methodist Church in Great Britain's research and call for action that issued in *Faith in the City* and *Living Faith in the City*. But such calls for action, if directed to already dedicated and busy urban and community ministers, might not fall on ears virtually deafened by the noise of their busyness.

Success, however, summons more than a mere analysis of an issue or a city's inequalities, with even the accompaniment of shared social actions, as necessary as both of these are – biblically, there are always "the powers" to discern, resist, and perhaps even exorcise, as some literature attests.[78]

Thirdly, careful discernment is vital if an urban ministry is to last for the long haul *and* with faithfulness to its *raison d'etre*. Such discernment is vital for a required critical check and balance that in turn provides a ministry with a critical acumen not only to endure faithfully – and to endure by way of in-place stability – but to address the root causes and contributing conditions for poverty and its accompanying indignities. Thus, this review briefly notes the legacy of Niebuhr's contributions. Of particular significance is Niebuhr's warning that charity may become an actual substitute for justice (that is then even withheld). Some social theologians and ethicists like Terence Anderson view charity as a form of redistributive justice. Urban theorist and practitioner Robert Lupton has devoted several recent volumes to redressing the "toxic" and thus

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[78] E.g., see Linthicum, Wink and even Cox in his more secular city phrase of writing – respectively, then, "The Presence and Prayer of the Church in the City" in *City of God City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), Chapter 7; *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Random House/A Galilee Book, 1998); and *The Secular City : Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1965), especially Chapter 7: "The Church as Cultural Exorcist."

distorted dimension of charity.[79] These works help one to be aware of the temptation to slip into self-righteousness, if only when justice is held in opposition to charity.

Other critical and possibly creative tensions include the factors which prevent weariness and burnout from becoming sheer despair as well as those which prevent the advocacy for justice from becoming self-righteousness. A further tension that potentially arises is when success in urban ministry is thought of primarily in terms of financial stability and apart thus from an understanding of success that remains focused on the people and issues at hand This tension can be exacerbated when social justice with public action threatens the fund-raising functions and financial anxieties of a ministry's board. This could be characterised as an administrative-management and pastoral-prophetic tension.

There are, in the literature, examples of urban ministries exhibiting two or more of the above terms and tensions. When listening, space, organising and stability are present, there is bound to be a synergy of purpose and energy. While L'Arche communities are not always viewed in terms of urban ministry, in practice they often are. L'Arche founder Jean Vanier's numerous writings often reflect on the importance of space, listening and organising for a move "from brokenness to community." There is a caveat via the L'Arche experiences that, when organising on social and political issues, the uses of conflict to organise and challenge change may inadvertently risk to undermining actual experiences of life-in-community itself.[80] This illustrates yet another tension between ministries on the one hand which, like the world-wide L'Arche networks, accent intentional community living in relatively small spaces or group houses-as-home, and those urban ministries which extend beyond their convenient four walls to network and organise with alliances so that social justice has a chance to succeed in the collective structures and institutions of mass society (necessarily less personal). All of this may well require utilising the tools of conflict resolution on more than a mere inter-personal scale, since inequalities of power often need a countervailing

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[79] In addition to Lupton's *Compassion, Justice, and the Christian Life*, appropriately subtitled "Rethinking Ministry to the Poor", see his *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (and How to Reverse It)* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011) and *Charity Detox: What Charity Would Look Like If We Cared about Results* (New York: HarperCollins, 2015).

[80] See J. Vanier, *From Brokenness to Community* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), pp. 49-51.

base and balance of power for meaningful bargaining or mediation to occur. The success of a ministry might thus be measured in terms of the pursuit of its mission purposes for the long-run and its capacity to discern the significance of the above tensions and that such tensions to be creative need regular attention and careful strategising.

2.7.   Listening and Space Combined

The importance of listening and space for the practice of urban ministry is discernible in urban ministries which provide drop-ins, soup kitchens, over-night emergency shelter, worship services or its equivalent, sharing circles and a host of other spaces that may be employed for a ministry of presence – including a presence conveyed in and by street ministries, chaplaincies, and even that which is embodied and conveyed in songs or hymns. For example, a 1980s inner-city student minister Juanita Allen (since: Austin) wrote the "Hastings Street" song as a theological reflection on an intense experience of trial and error while working with street prostitution. This resulted in helping to establish a drop-in space out of First United Church, called "WISH" or Women's Information and Safe Haven. Her reflections on this resulted in lyrics which express this combination of a listening space (the church steps), and a yearning to move to a healing resolution, even when (eschatologically) not yet complete or imperfect.

> Gray morning on Hastings Street, | Hot Soup and shufflin' feet as they | Gather on the Church steps, | To face another day | Lonely hooker by the parking lot, | For the right price she can be bought | Been standin' there for so long, | God she must be tired.
>
> *Refrain*: God take the anguish that I feel | Transform it to a love that's real.
>
> Men and women and rich and poor, | Stand in suspicion at the other's door. | Legacy of oppression, | Can we change that now? Cup of wine and a piece of bread, | At your table we can all be fed. | Broken body for a broken world, | Heal us once again, heal us once again.[81]

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[81] See J. Allen (Austin), "Hastings Street" in Morris et al., *The Word on the Street*, p. 121.

Rev. Austin's song has become used in many a memorial or funeral service and especially for victims of the street by way of violence (overdoses, murders, abandonment or a plain "missing").

2.8. Listening, Space, and Organising Combined

For the purpose of an adequate literature survey that illumines the nature and dynamics of Bretherton's terms augmented by my own, there is more to glean when each of the previously discussed terms are even briefly combined for a focused reflection. Organising is essentially a balancing act. When organising seeks to redress an imbalanced situation – to move dynamically from the world *as it is* to the world *as it ought to be* or could be[82] – it is a re-balancing act. As noted, organising consists of a good deal of consistent listening or what broad-based community organisers call "relational meetings." Eventually, there could be "listening campaigns" within an organisation for the purpose of identifying members' concerns and issues and once this step has taken place then further careful listening campaigns occur between member groups of the overall alliance. This is the case for the IAF model of community organising and, for the author, the Metro Vancouver Alliance (MVA). While without its own publications – other than its newsletters and an assertive website[83] – the principles, purposes and processes of the MVA are adopted from its parent body, the seventy-five-year-old IAF. The second-generation leadership, working on the foundations laid by IAF founder Saul David Alinsky, has duly emphasised the need for building relationships among membership groups as well as honouring the space that each member identifies as its root base and from which its basic identity emerges and asserts itself. Not alone, Luke Bretherton has provided various studies of the IAF model of broad based and multi-issue community organisation in recent publications such as *Christianity and Contemporary Politics* and *Resurrecting Democracy: Faith, Citizenship, and the Politics of a Common Life.* While the latter volume does not

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[82] See the Industrial Areas Foundation and Metro Vancouver Alliance's use of this movement, as in Ed Chambers, *Roots of Radicals: Organizing Power, Action, and Justice* (New York: Continuum, 2003), p.21.

[83] See http://www.metvanalliance.org [accessed May 6,2016].

elaborate on examples of urban ministry and its accompanying literature, as much as does the former, the value and contribution of this IAF model is conveyed by way of a practical sense of what the public or common good entails and how to attain it. As if he were providing indicators of success in the fierce, contending pressures of city life, Bretherton offers a careful history of the legacy of organising. In particular, the London Citizens is described as a case by way of its issues which involve interfaith groups as well as civic and labour organisations to engage and redress a living wage campaign and minority employment before and during the London 2012 Summer Olympics. Therein he offers two chapters on an "anatomy of organizing" parts I and II – respectively, "Listening, Analysis, and Building Power" and "Rules, Actions, and Representation. Much of what is described above finds its elaboration in Bretherton's writings as well as that of other authors. Indeed, listening is featured in not only organising but the normative role of the church in general.[84]

Bretherton is not alone in espousing these important terms for a civil and socially just society. From secular literature, there are also important resources to note. One recent participant-observation or ethnographic study of several years is that of Harvard social scientist Matthew Desmond. Disturbed by the levels of inequality in his country's policies and housing practices, he concludes in his most recent work, *Eviction* with the instructive sub-title "poverty and profit in the American city" that stability – when based on the above variables of place and respectful listening (to the life conditions of the welfare, working, and now, lower middle-income poor), and combined with meaningful organising – are intimately or conjunctively related. In conclusion to his study, he attests:

> Residential stability begets a kind of psychological stability, which allows people to invest in their home and school relationships. It begets school stability, which increases the chances that children will excel and graduate. And it begets community stability, which encourages neighbors to form strong bonds and take care of their block. But poor families enjoy little of that because they are evicted at such high rates…

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[84] See L. Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness* (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), especially pp.212-22.

> Instability is not inherent to poverty. Poor families move so much because they are forced to.[85]

It should be added that this notion of stability, in the service of endurance, is holistic in that it indicates more than the physical, the psychological, the communal, and even the political and ecological dimensions. It is integrally theological as well: it attends to the possibilities of an enduring stability as it seeks to assist people by way of place, respectful listening to do such, and where and possible, organising so that there be a flourishing of possibilities rather than marginalisation or plain rejection and thus a sense of remaining a sinned-against person or community.[86]

2.9. Implications of Literature Review

It remains to outline what this literature survey offers but leaves unanswered.[87] There are at least two questions that arise. First, does the literature reviewed offer sufficient grounds from which to discern what success means in the context of urban ministries? Put otherwise, what characterises a successful urban ministry and further what might prevent its success? On the latter point, there is the reality of fear; that is, what it entails to risk change in the face of working with people in poverty who are often angry if not depressed. Some welfare, working, and even lower middle-class poor express that they have little left to lose and when they feel a kind of "hot gut anger,"[88]

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[85] Matthew Desmond, *Eviction: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2016), p. 296. Cf. a *Vancouver Sun* front page headline: "In a hot market, complaints about evictions are up sharply," by Matt Robinson. August 22, 2016, p. A1.

[86] Among others, see Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), pp. 56-74.

[87] Doubtless, more could and should be included on what the literature review chapter does not cover pertinent to the thesis intent. E.g., if there is not more material to elicit and note on the question of what constitutes "success" in urban ministries – I suggest that there is more to be found specifically on "success" or its equivalents – then this could be noted. As this thesis chiefly attends to the practical dimensions of urban ministry (practical theology), it is the hope in the case studies to suggest what practically – an on-the-ground praxis – contributes to if not constitutes success in urban ministries. In the end, what the literature has not provided adequately enough is the eschatological dimension though Ogletree's *The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics* reflections (see notes 5, 9 and 15 of Intro Chapter) are indicative –with a lot left of his virtual companion volume, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985). See also Appendix A.

[88] See D. Keating, *The Power to Make It Happen*, p. 234.

that could be explosive. In view of this perception, there are those of us who try to offer help from a more secure position of safety. These perceptions are important to note and there is some literature which assists:[89]

> Facing beggars, we fear poverty, we fear conflict, we fear drowning in the demands that may arise if we open ourselves to the needs of others, we fear entanglements of gratitude. We fear to be family to the poor because we fear becoming poor […] many of us also fear that refusing to be family to the poor is refusing membership in the body of Christ, which is the greatest danger of all. What then, will we do?"[90]

But what then of the potential for success in urban ministries if and as such fears are honestly and continually faced and resolved?

Secondly, does the literature reviewed provide, or at least intimate, what resources are necessary in order to secure a successful urban ministry? This chapter has not fully answered these two sets of questions. Not in any particular ranking, there are characteristics, or markers, or anchors[91] of success which include: the presence of what makes for significant endurance or stability; vital balances as in contemplation and action or charity and justice or hope and realism;[92] political will in tension with the grace grounded "serenity prayer"; fortifying theological and practical ministry partnerships; the identification of authoritative sources for realistic analysis and hopeful encouragement (e.g. Niebuhr, Alinsky and Bretherton); an admission that analysis and social action are insufficient in the face of the "principalities and powers"; redressing the dangers of eroding the possibilities of success via burnout or insufferable self-

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[89] One study focusing on fear as a less admitted and underrated reality is Kelly Johnson, *Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), see especially, pp.3-5, 41, and 220-221.

[90] Ibid, p.5.

[91] Dietrich Bonhoeffer called for a "theological anchorage which holds while the waves dash in vain." Cited in Keith Clements' "Ecumenical Witness for Peace" in *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* ed. by John W. deGruchy (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 160.

[92] Realism had hardly been mentioned, as such, in this review. It is the focus of *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry*. Realism comes into play as urban ministries wonder about future funding and stability or endurance for the long haul. Current statistics for the millennial generation does not bode well for general, once mainstream churches and thus a chief source for many urban missions. See e.g. Anne Bokma, "Millennial Migration: Young People Are Leaving the Church in Droves…" in *The United Church Observer*, March 2016, Vol. 78 No. 8, p. 16, where she cites from several current, authoritative studies/polls.

righteousness or succumbing to the temptation to take short-cuts; a ministry becoming compromised by way of ill-conceived or imbalanced partnerships with government or the State; retrieval of important study documents tantamount to creeds or manifestos and that serve as instructive precedents; and, the reality of that which prevents fostering and sustaining successful urban ministries such as fear and/or succumbing to short-cuts or quick fixes. Although not all of the above can be incorporated in this thesis, there is promise in what this literature review detects and presents (see further Appendix A). That is, there is the promise of valuable precedents, authoritative theologies as well as organising models, and an outline of a process of careful attentiveness to listen, acknowledge the value of place, engage in the discipline of patient community organising as this in turn contributes to a vibrant and socially just society, and respecting what makes for creative stability. There is also a promise in attending to that which prevents a successful ministry from occurring or being mended – thinking of insightful dictums from ancient and recent philosophers such as that which prevents a task from being accomplished then becomes the task or, what bars the way, becomes the way.[93] There arise a range of questions that only examination of actual ministries can illumine. Then, following the three case studies and a succinct reflection on their contributions, the thesis' final chapter engages the challenge of mature responses – "answers" – to these questions. The rationale for the selection of these urban ministry case studies as well as a justification for the employment of a case study approach and the basic methods employed to conduct the research and the analysis, now follows.

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[93] See Marcus Aurelius cited by and in Albert Camus, *Notebooks 1935-1942,* trans. by Philip Thody (New York: Modern Library, 1965, 1963), p. 211.

Chapter 3.   Methodology

3.1.   Overview

To recall, the basic research question this thesis seeks to answer regards the discerning of understandings and strategies for success in urban ministry. This is implicitly supplemented with an opposite view, and inevitable experience in ministry, namely what prevents an urban ministry from achieving the goals outlined in its mission statement. An implicit supplementary question concerns the use of case studies and whether alternative ways of understanding and referring to "success" arise from them (earlier indications also suggest a complementary use of "favoured" or "mature" or a "purposive fulfilment").

For at least two reasons, this thesis employs case studies. First, case studies require a careful and comprehensive examination of a situation – in this thesis, urban ministry or network situations. The ministry cases are examined for the purpose of providing a concrete grounding of how such ministries come about (including by whom, for what purposes, and with what strategies), what happens to them along the way, and when faced with threats to their demise or co-optation by larger bodies, how they may survive with integrity. The cases are employed to "illumine" how the identified purposes and perceived results of the ministries or networks' mission is evident in the everyday practices of their ministry. Secondly, and of equal importance, each of the three cases assists in "testing" as well as "exemplifying" that which might constitute success. That is, how the inter-active presence of the ministry's animating origins, trial and error development, and revisions along the way are evident – and how such phenomena as weariness, cynicism, and temptations to take short-cuts (charity rather than justice, for example) or a degree of self-righteousness hamper an urban ministry's commitment to the long haul. In turn, the cases are used to illumine and test the applicability – the usefulness – of terms for discerning and assessing when success has been achieved, when there is evidence of approaches for success being revised, or if

there is evidence that pursuit of success is abandoned for the sake of other aims and guidelines.[1] That is, what happens when the aims toward a faithful, steadfast, public-prophetic and renewing ministry for the long haul in the Canadian context are approximated, revised, jettisoned and perhaps even achieved, even if tentatively?

The reader need keep in mind how the almost intractable tensions and struggles within urban ministries can be illumined by such research questions and how these ministries can be meaningfully sustained for the long haul. Thus, the use of first person stories or spiritual autobiography and the perspective of biography-as-theology are also employed (all a part of information access and gathering). Illumination refers to the lens by which an examination of what is going on in each case separately and then, when compared, all of these urban ministries together. This is accomplished by narrating the cases from their origins almost to the present day which includes providing insights into what gave birth to their existence – what factors helped to animate and establish the origins of these ministries or "networks" (as one case is named) and what has contributed to sustaining their ongoing life. This is important to discern in light of the tensions observed in the literature – supplemented by one's own reflections on collegial and vocational experiences, as an urban minister in several Canadian (and when a student, USA) cities.

Some of the data is gathered by participant-observation, including personal observations. This is necessary since not all of the pertinent information is available in written or published sources, or for that matter from a ministry's website, if indeed this is even available. Much of participant-observation stems from the prior work experience of the author as an employed minister (especially Toronto Christian Resource Centre). To help keep one's own subjectivity in balance (see note 10), the observations are updated by further visits to and interviews with the Christian Resource Centre (CRC) work sites as well as for the other two case studies. This is duly noted where appropriate. As earlier noted, these above tensions include the temptation to practice mere charity in response to poverty rather than follow the biblical and social ethical imperative to "do justice." The tensions also include admitting to despair yet finding a

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[1] See C. Riessman's *Narrative Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1993), for an elaboration on the guidelines for assessing the validity and/or usefulness of a case's findings, pp.64-70.

hopeful resolve to endure; experiencing weariness and the pitfalls of self-righteousness and "burnout;" using contemplative prayer as a means of resourcing a paceful ministry which will endure beyond one's own tenure. These three case studies shed light on the presence of these tensions (and, temptations to circumvent them). They further reveal the inherited and cultivated resources to endure and indeed, live out the purposes identified when each ministry was established. Each of the case studies is compared (and contrasted) in order to reach conclusions which offer insights into urban theology and the practice of urban ministry (especially on the research questions in Chapter 7).

I have selected three specific urban ministry-related projects or networks working in urban areas, in the three different Canadian cities of Victoria, BC, Vancouver, BC, and Toronto, Ontario. These have been chosen as case studies both for their similarities (urban), differences (size, scope, and range of activity), and because they were within reasonable access to the researcher. In order to study these three ministries and draw relevant conclusions from that study, it is important to supplement what little literature on them as exists to include first-hand information obtained from those working within them, either past or present (thus to supplement or complement published or website accounts). Accordingly, carefully selected staff workers, past and present, have been interviewed face-to-face or by email. They were initially asked general questions on the nature of their work and their involvement in the particular ministry or network, leading to open-ended conversation and exploring their own contributions to their ministry situation. A formal questionnaire was considered, but not employed, as each case situation was sufficiently different to warrant using more open-ended questions and adapting the interview to the particular nature of the three church ministries or networking projects. To keep the research manageable a time limit was set for the most distant case study (Toronto). The other two cases have been followed right up to the time of writing this thesis, except that for Victoria, the particular ministry of the once Executive Director (ED) for OPS has been followed into his founding and leading the Dandelion Society (DS). In other words, the Victoria case study features aspects of both ministries with the latter (DS) being up to date and the former, OPS, ending in 2015 (some follow-up has occurred into 2016 for clarification).

Such a comparative analysis of these three cases employs a variety of qualitative research approaches. A quantitative approach seemed beyond the scope of this

undertaking in that none of the case studies provide the depth and range of statistics with which to measure actual outcomes (other than for two of the cases, year end financial statements and perhaps occasional numbers of people served for a particular program) – nor did the researcher utilise instruments such as interviews or questionnaires to provide sufficient data to tabulate, compare and contrast.

Narrative theory provides an overarching perspective and approach but again, all approaches employed are part of a "family of methods". Thus, the following case study chapters engage the approach and methods of first case study analysis and then as part of the inquiry and analysis of content, the employment narrative or thematic analysis. This in turn is further assisted by the approach of participation-observation and participation-action, autobiography or *testimonia,* biography (as a form of doing theology, as below) and in Appendix B, a brief employment of grounded theory for engaging a comparison (and contrast) of the cases.[2] In other words, a "multiple triangulation" is utilised in that the research and its analysis "combines […] multiple theories, data collection strategies, data sources, and methodologies."[3] Narrative inquiry and narrative analysis commend such an approach.[4] This approach builds on case study research methods for the case studies themselves – that in order to gather the

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[2] In addition to Appendix B, see representatively, the sources for these approaches and methods include: Robert E. Stake's "Qualitative Case Studies" in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, ed. by N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), pp. 119-149; Catherine Kohler Riessman's *Narrative Analysis*, Qualitative Research Methods 30 (London, England: Sage Publications, 1993); Mark E. Luborsky, "The Identification and Analysis of Themes and Patterns" in *Qualitative Methods in Aging Research*, ed. by J. Gubrium and A. Sankar (Walnut Creek, CA: Sage, 1993), 189-209; William Whyte's *Participant Observer: An Autobiography* (Ithaca, New York: ILR Press, 1994) and Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart, "Participatory Action Research" in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, Chapter 10, pp. 271-330; John Beverley's "Testimonio, Subalternity, and Narrative Authority" in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, Chapter 8, ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, pp. 257-269; and by no means all, Anslem Strauss, with Juliet Corbin's *Basics in Qualitative Research: grounded theory and techniques* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1990); also a 3rd edn, 2008, with J. Corbin only.

[3] Paula Allen-Meares and Bruce A. Lane's "Social Work Practice: Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection Techniques" in *Social Work*, September 1990, Vol. 35, No. 5, p. 452. The authors added: "In practice, a [...] triangulation of methods reveals different aspects of the same phenomenon and provides the tools required to get at the interactions and transactions constituting the reality of the phenomenon."

[4] See Catherine Kohler Riessman: "Any methodological standpoint is, by definition, partial, incomplete, and historically contingent. Diversity of representation is needed." *Narrative Analysis*, p. 70.

information the use of participation-observation and extensive research are employed to supplement material gathered through interviews and readings. Grounded theory, a method of constant comparison and contrast of two or more case situations for the purpose of discerning a central story-line, merits attention as it is a strategic, analytical approach employed and, following all three case studies, briefly elaborated in Appendix B when the cases' chief originators are brought into focus. No matter what particular approach or method is employed and however named – with narrative, thematic and grounded theory being very similar if not identical in their way of paying attention to the material content of a case study – it is the "data" that is analyzed with the help of this family of methods. The analysis of course, is assisted by the inevitable assumptions if not actual prior theory of the investigator and those being interviewed and observed.[5] An early reflection on data analysis thus expresses:

> "Data analysis" refers to a process which entails an effort to formally identify themes and to construct hypotheses [ideas] as they are suggested by data and an attempt to demonstrate support for those themes and hypotheses. By hypotheses we mean nothing more than propositional statements that are either simple ("attendants distrust professionals at the institution") or complex ("attendants misinterpret residents' behavior because they lack empathy for the residents"). The purpose of hypotheses, as we use them, is to sensitize one to the nature of behavior in a setting and of social interaction in general: to help one understand phenomena that were not previously understood.[6]

A more recent account of analyzing data points to its dynamic nature, since "…it is an art not a science; [it] is an interpretive act where more than one story can be created from data."[7] A respected authority in narrative inquiry and analysis adds: "All we have is talk and texts that represent reality partially, selectively, and imperfectly."[8]

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[5] See further notes 4, 8, and 10.

[6] R. Bogdan and S. Taylor, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Method: A Phenomenological Approach to the Social Science* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1998); p. 79. Italics in original.

[7] K. Corbin and A. Strauss *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edn, p.47.

[8] C. Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1993) p. 15, cf. p.22. More recently, Riessman comments: "…Transforming a 'lived experience' into language and constructing a story about it is not straight forward, but invariably mediated and regulated by controlling vocabularies," *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), p. 3.

The data from the case studies was collected from selected staff or volunteers and board or network members of the three church projects, chosen for their standing within their organisation and their direct involvement with it. Some of these people were already known to me, facilitating their involvement due to existing degrees of mutual trust and esteem. In the case of more recently engaged workers, they were introduced to me by then present staff or past and former volunteers as board members. The nature and purpose of my project was explained to them and they were informed of their ability to withdraw at any time. Their consent was sought, and given in each case.[9] In addition, I drew on my own experience and observation at each of the case studies sites or environs, especially for Toronto's CRC and Vancouver's SoJ, and to a lesser degree with the OD, its merging into OPS and then, as a further offshoot, the Dandelion Society, where contact was maintained largely through correspondence with a key minister. To the extent possible, these sources are duly-noted by way of footnotes, though one footnote often serves for a body of extended information. Anonymity is employed unless an exact quotation is used and then duly cited, with permission to use.

I collected information by the following methods:

1. Several face-to-face interviews were carried out by me at the interviewees' place of work or at coffee shop. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour. They were recorded by myself in hand-written notes (which are kept securely in a private residence). All told, there were 30 people specifically interviewed, 10 from each of the case studies and not including myself as participant-observer (see p. 196).

2. Email inquiries were made with eight of the above, plus over 20 more to clarify aspects of the case studies. These were planned in advance and arranged in agreement with the persons thus interviewed, and took place over a period of 3 years; they were limited to five exchanges with each person (fewer in most cases).

3. Reflective journal writings of one person – this person freely sharing his periodic reflections based on his street ministry in association with his chief place of ministry as the then executive director; also, several "real mail" letters with another person in the CRC case, over a period of two decades.

4. My personal participation in two of the ministries or networks (CRC and SoJ) consists in the first as a former staff member (though not recently) and is duly noted. In Chapter 4, a fair amount of historical

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[9] A formal process of approval was sought, May 28, 2013, and accepted soon after by the University of Wales' ethic committee for the research process and methodology of this thesis.

material that is included that draws upon personal knowledge gained through my years of work with the CRC (1969-75) as well as through subsequent, on-going communications with my successor and, in turn, his successor. My participant-observations of the SoJ case study also depend upon a fair amount of personal observation and reporting (which is duly noted), and serving to complement some interviews where published sources are scarce. No doubt, this risks a degree of bias given that it is an informal, more "subjective," less "objective" source and of information. However, qualitative research literature duly recognises and honours the value of the researcher's involvement.[10]

5. My observations *in situ* of work being carried out at two of the other projects – i.e., on-site visits as noted above.

The data was collected from the observations, interviews and websites and was subject to analysis. Use was made of published accounts and interviews of the ministries where possible, which included some of their chief staff persons and observations of some of their actual programs or outreach efforts. This evolved into writing on aspects of their "animated origins,"[11] mission purposes, current activities and where pertinent and available, their future plans. This has been supplemented with follow-up emails and phone conversations. Then, the information collected has been used to compare the

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[10] See, e.g., "The Researcher's Role" in John W. Creswell's *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), pp. 147ff. He writes: "Qualitative research is interpretative research [...] the biases, values, and judgment of the researcher become stated […]. Such openness is considered to be useful and positive [...]." Cf. "Authorial representation" in Creswell's *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), pp.171f. Given the autobiographical or personal nature of parts of the CRC case study – necessitated by there being no complete published history or account of it; also, see John Beverley's "Testimonio, Subalternity, and Narrative Authority" in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, especially pp. 258-59 and p. 261: "[...] *testimonio* carries the connotation in Spanish of the act of testifying or bearing witness in a legal or religious sense [...] gives voice to a previously anonymous and voiceless popular-democratic subject [...] in a way that the intellectual or professional is interpolated, in his or her function as interlocutor/reader of the testimonial account, without at the same time losing his or her identity as an intellectual" (p. 267). Finally, see Kathy Charmaz, "Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies" in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, ed. by N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, especially pp. 206-7, for an emphasis on locating oneself in the realities narrated.

[11] By animated origins, I mean a *contrast-awareness* of the situation in terms of the way it is compared and contrasted to the way it ought to be or could be and what it takes to move/animate from the one to the other. Edward Schillebeeckx's writings are seminal on this and cited specifically later. See Appendix B as well. See also his *God the Future of Man* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968) and further from R. J. Schreiter, ed., *The Schillebeeckx Reader* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), pp. 18, 45, and 54-9.

three different ministry projects, in order to identify similarities or differences. This has further led to drawing conclusions concerning what is successfully effective or unfavourably non-effective – all with the aim of informing the conclusions of the thesis and answering the general research question. Once the relevant chapters of my thesis were written in draft form, I shared the material with each person so interviewed, and I invited further comments, modifications and consent as appropriate. Where appropriate and useful, I make use of past correspondence via letters and/or emails of the persons interviewed, i.e., prior to the period of the research interviews. This makes use of the approach of biography-as-theology, also called narrative theology by some – a respectful use of a person's life story, including their deeply held and practised convictions, and the materials that contribute to it for purposes of theological reflection.[12] With one person, the street chaplain of Victoria, BC's Dandelion Society, I have made use of his diary or journal reflections – which provide in-depth details on what he is doing, why, and with frank rhetorical questions. This was done always with his prior and subsequent approval to use. As I have been a member of Vancouver's Streams of Justice since its foundation and sought permission by way of my own participant-observation to make use of other persons' views. Among others, I have made use of a premier source on participation-observation philosophy and its implicit, virtually intuitive methods in William F. Whyte's *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*.

To summarise: the research for the three case studies was completed along the following lines. The general perspective of narrative theory is assisted by "response ethics" or "an ethics of the fitting response." Their suggested questions are implicitly drawn upon to assist an organising and analysis of the material. These questions consist of: what is going on in the situation or community or even city; in light of this, what is a fitting or pertinent response by the urban ministry – taking into consideration as well, others' responses to these situations or issues – and by what social ethical or theological

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[12] See especially, J. McClendon, Jr. *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1974) and especially his 1990 preface to the 2002 edition via WIPF and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, pp. v-xi; also, see Trisha Elliott's "Narrative Theology: Exploring Our Stories – and God's," *The United Church Observer*, September 2014, Vol. 80 No. 2, p.43.

criteria?[13] More specifically, the relevant literature on each was gathered and supplemented by a participant-observation approach.[14] The observations elicited and collected are supplemented (and used as check and balance) by some of the personal testimonies of ministry staff or volunteers by way of interviews or their own informal narratives where possible and helpful. There is also some elaboration of such testimonies or stories in order to note the instructive and illumining value of the urban ministry – that is, ministries are valued in and of themselves for their own stories but also as ways of shedding insight on urban ministries beyond themselves.[15] As these cases have only been occasionally documented or profiled – as again by way of popular denominational literature or occasional publishers – these qualitative research approaches are necessary.

But again, by way of Catherine Riessman's work, narrative analysis is the chief approach employed to reflect on the thematic insights of the cases. To the extent that it is an actual method or "a family of methods"[16] it really consists of an integration of sub-approaches like thematic analysis, case study, and even grounded theory strategies to examine and reflect on the materials gathered in each and then all of the case studies. The advantage of a narrative analysis approach is to help "keep the story intact for interpretive purposes."[17]

Secondly, each ministry will be examined and composed into a case study, using the general techniques and methods for doing so from case study literature itself – that is, data gathering and narrating the overall story with attention to the "intrinsic" or immediate value and "instrumental" uses or instructive value of case study research. In

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[13] Among others, see Thomas Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), especially Chapter 4: "The Activity of Interpreting in Moral Judgment," pp. 97-126.

[14] William Whyte's introduction and appendices in *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, 4th edn (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993) is exemplary for a dedicated participation observation of a culture and its sub-cultures of activity. See also his *Participant Observer: An Autobiography* (Ithaca, New York, ILR Press, 1994).

[15] See John Beverley's "Testimonio, Subalternity, and Narrative Authority" in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, ed. by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), pp.257-269.

[16] Again, see Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, p. 11. She also aptly names narrative analysis making use of a "cross-disciplinary" approach, p.13.

[17] Ibid, p.73.

view of the opening research question and its supplements, it is chiefly the instrumental purpose of case studies that is sought. Thirdly, each of the case studies (including that which preceded and fuelled the particular ministry in question) together are briefly compared and contrasted in line with narrative (akin to grounded theory) strategies and categories.[18] Therein bibliographical resources will again be duly cited and in Chapter 7 one of the tasks is to discern and offer a core theme or central story line which accounts for the essential characteristics pertaining to the origin, development, outcome and ongoing sustenance of each ministry or network (see Chapter 7). These are duly noted and out of all three cases, an integrating core theme is suggested which expresses an overview of the material. These core themes focus on the research questions of this thesis; namely, are there concrete senses of how success in urban ministry or network is evident and, how so? Also, how is the elusiveness and prevention of success handled, including the ever-present tensions of charity and justice?

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[18] The literature on grounded theory approaches and methodology is vast and is cited as pertinent in the comparative case studies' story-line, in Appendix B. Chief among these are: B. Glaser and A. Strauss' *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New York: Aldine/Atherton, 1967); A. Strauss with Juliet Corbin *Basics in Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory and Techniques* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1990); also 3rd edn, 2008, with Corbin only; and Kathy Charmaz, "Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Research" in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, ed. by N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), pp. 201-241.

Part II.

The Case Studies

The purpose of the case studies is to gather data in seeking answers to the thesis research questions. They are: what is the nature of success in urban ministry? And if success or favourable outcomes are prevented from occurring, how might this have been otherwise minimised? Put otherwise, an implicit question emerges in the sense that if a task is prevented from being accomplished, then does what prevents it become a preliminary task to be fulfilled?[1] The cases will be analysed according to narrative analysis methods in Chapter 7. Without this additional evaluation, the cases on their own could be overly subject to the observer's selective memory and too limited to bridge observed data to good theory.[2]

The cases are presented chronologically in terms of their origin, from the earliest to the latest. Secondly, the cases proceed chiefly by considering the testimony and work experiences of their founders or co-founders, their successors and other personnel (some of whom might have retired by the time they were interviewed). Thirdly, the cases are chosen for their capacity to illustrate the variety of urban ministries in Canada that contain components of intentional outreach – in terms of size, location, degree of institutionalisation, and mission purposes. This task could thus be called "multisited research" since several cities' urban ministries or networks are researched and reflected upon in seeking answers to the research questions.[3]

Chapter 3 summarised the major research approaches used to find and narrate the information. In light of the research question, Chapter 7 will, by way of comparison and contrast, evaluate the "findings" of the urban ministry cases to discern an over-all

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[1] See Albert Camus, *Notebooks 1935-1942,* trans. by Philip Thody (New York: Modern Library, 1965, 1963), p. 211.

[2] Daniel S. Schipani writes: "[…] cases help bridge the gap between experience and practice, on the one hand, and reflection and theology on the other […] case studies can exemplify theoretical constructs, and the latter can also be drawn from particular case descriptions and analysis" from "Case Study Method" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, edited by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Chichester, West Sussex, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 99.

[3] See Barbara Miller et al. *Cultural Anthropology*, 4th edn, Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada, 2010, p. 35.

perspective on urban ministry. The following case studies perform the function of bridging the gap between theory and practice, and vice-versa.[4] The analytical framework that guides the interpretation of the case studies is primarily concerned with asking what makes for viable civic institutions and practices (using the categories listening, place, organising, and stability) and then what impediments arise from the factors which undermine success in these institutional or organisational practices (using the ideas of co-optation, commodification, communalism, clientelism, and cowardice). These combined sets of terms provide a guiding framework by which the task of interpretation is possible. Put otherwise in the words of a philosopher of education, the "relevance of the evidence depends upon the theory that dominates" or guides the discussion.[5] Hence, in terms of narrative analysis, authorities attest that an analyst "brings prior theory to interpret the case."[6] This thesis thus makes uses of Bretherton's four points augmented by an additional point of the author, in order to proffer an analytical framework for the discussion; it also makes use of Riesseman's points, as below, on what constitutes validity to guide the discussion.

Meanwhile, there are no fool-proof criteria for verifying the validity of the cases other than some helpful guidelines suggested by narrative analysis.[7] Adopting Riessman's works on narrative analysis, there are several ways to "validate" the truth of one's story or the narrative plausibility of an urban ministry case. There is the presence of *persuasion* or how reasonably convincing the testimony and evidence is. Secondly, there is the matter of *correspondence* or comparing the outcome to the comments of the persons studied. There is thirdly, the issue of *coherence*, which invites the reader to look for more than an ad hoc set of conclusions. Fourthly, there is the *pragmatic* or utility value of the success or otherwise displayed by the case studies. Each of these four

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[4] See D. S. Schipani, "Case Study Method," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, p. 99.

[5] A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: Free Press, 1977), p. 220.

[6] C. Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (Los Angeles: California, Sage Publications, 2008), p.57. Riessman pleas for the whole of a case to be interpreted rather than fracturing the case into merely thematic categories (see also: "… particular histories of individuals are preserved, resulting in an accumulation of detail that is assembled into a 'fuller picture…" p. 11).

[7] See especially Catherine K. Riessman's *Narrative Analysis,* Qualitative Research Methods Series 30 (Newbury Park, CA: Sage publications, 1993), pp. 64-68. Italics added.

terms is also pertinent in assessing the degree and level of success in each case. Finally, a fifth evaluative mark could be added: *integration*. This consists of employing response ethics or an "ethics of the fitting response" to illumine how it is that each of the urban ministry case studies measure up to and integrated in what is considered to be "fitting" or pertinent, in light of the research questions and the overall purpose of each urban mission in seeking what characterises a faithful public and prophetic witness.

Chapter 4.   The Toronto Christian Resource Centre

4.1.   Overview: From House to Church to Building for Lives and Community

The Toronto CRC began in 1964 in the central, east end of urban core Toronto. It emerged as a result of the growing awareness – a perceived *unconscionableness* – of unequal city conditions, by a few affluent UCC lay persons. They were domiciled in a nearby but distinguished area where their own Rosedale United Church was located. The CRC thus began as an outreach project of this church but soon became its own operating base with a dedicated ministerial position and its own board of directors in the tough inner-city then known as St. Jamestown. The mission purposes changed as district and city politics changed and as the staff numbers and skills developed. It began with an outreach purpose, developed a capacity to practice community development – including the coordination of social agencies and other non-profit entities such as faith communities – and eventually with more staff, attained its enduring purpose of addressing social or community needs including crises of a personal and emergency nature. A combined historical approach and biographical profile – the former to indicate favourable developments and revisions, the latter to discern pertinent convictions of key staff or volunteer actors – helps to bring the CRC into a case study which examines how it might be that the CRC illumines the question about the nature of success in urban ministry.

4.1.1. Origins and Purpose

The history of the Toronto CRC could be described in three periods. First, there is an early period from its 1964 inception to 1975, when there was a change of a lead staff or an "associate director" person (the author). Secondly, there is an intermediate period, from 1975 to the change of executive directors, in 2002. Thirdly, there is the recent period from 2002 to the time of finishing the research for this thesis. For the purposes of this thesis, these are the parameters, though other demarcations are possible

such as changes of key staff in leadership positions; change of locations, such as when the CRC moved from previous house-based ministries into Regent Park United Church and the Regent Park community as a whole (circa 1980); and changes of mission statement especially in view of having become more of a government funded and public-related institution. To detail these phases, several sources were drawn upon ranging from interviews, some examination of the CRC website, e-mail inquiries and responses, some "real mail" correspondence, some publications on aspects of the CRC in each of the three periods, as well as my 6.5 years of working with the CRC (1969-75), alongside a full summer's ministry in 1965. There is some reference to the EHPP as a source of inspiration and a working model of what led the founders of the CRC to draw encouragement for a significant re-engagement of the then Canadian existing mainstream churches to the inner-city Toronto of the 1960s. Of necessity, in all three case studies, we will trace the origins and contribution of antecedent organisations as part of the case under observation. In other words, there is a prior contributing situation which can be discerned as being formative for the case under consideration, though, in the case of CRC, one has to dig into its origins to detect the EHPP influence and this depends primarily on accessing oral accounts of its history.

Following a description of the CRC in three phases, the following questions are posed: 1) what nourishes and sustains the ministry? and, 2) what social and ethical responses are "fitting," and thus likely to prove "successful," in light of the pressures surrounding housing affordability in the city of Toronto? In the CRC's environs, this has meant replacing former public housing projects with mixed housing uses and subsequent displacement of long-term residents. These questions are employed in order to reflect a response ethics approach; that is, to discern from a range of possible urban ministry responses the actual and pertinent response by the CRC to its changing context. As the meaning of success in this thesis is sometimes related to what is "favoured" (for constructive outcomes), it is instructive to ask of the CRC's favoured responses (in view of its mission purpose). Emergent and enduring themes, a further mark of success, are identified in the CRC's programs and shifts in direction over two generations. Finally, there is an attempt to discern evidence of a sense of success in this urban ministry and what contributes to it.

4.2.   Early History

Several conscientious lay persons of the early 1960s from the affluent Rosedale United Church witnessed poignant contrasts of wealth and poverty in Toronto's inner-city, just to the south of their homes and church, as they commuted to work. Such social contrast[1] inspired these people to ask the question: what may we be called to respond to out of our privileged situation?[2] In probably the first published account of the CRC, United Church minister and York University sociologist Stewart Crysdale depicted the social consequences of urban re-development in the Toronto of this time.

First, Crysdale asks: "When re-development overtakes the inner city, what happens to its people?" He responds:

> It depends on how much money they have. Re-development throws a harsh light on the conflict between winners and losers in the city – between rich and poor, operators and outcasts. Developers make huge profits, the city gets a big tax boost, middle income people get nice new apartments close to work and business flourishes. The poor lose their homes and are scattered, like leaves before the wind. What can the church do?"[3]

He then draws from one of the key Rosedale United Church lay persons, Don Cameron: "It bothered me that so little was being done, especially for children and young people – in spite of our general affluence."[4] Cameron was aware that until then the status quo

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[1] See Chapter 7 and an appendix on comparing and contrasting the three case studies for an elaboration of the meanings of the core category of "contrast awareness." There are also these following remarks regarding a *contrast-awareness* governing theme, a central category by way of grounded theory's coding approach to a case study, as in John Deacon's testimony (akin to Don Cameron's, cited in the beginning of this narrative); to wit, "… the line between Rosedale and what we `call S. Jamestown was like passing from one country to another…It (CRC involvement) was my first direct exposure to the other side of the street" [cited in *40 Stories*]; also see Herbert Marcuse: "… the incongruity of potentiality and actuality *incites* knowledge to become part of the practice of transformation," in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p.69. Italics added.

[2] See H. Richard Niebuhr's *The Responsible Self*: *An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* – upon whom most "response ethics" or "ethics of the fitting" social ethicists lean into and build upon (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 61-65. Cf. Thomas Ogletree, cited most often of response ethicists in this thesis, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), especially pp. 111-112.

[3] S. Crysdale, *Churches Where the Action Is* (Toronto, ON: United Church Publishers, 1963), p. 23.

[4] Ibid.

both for his local church and for the national UCC was to minimise, if not be indifferent to, any meaningful social engagement.

He spoke with some colleagues who shared both his faith and his business or professional interests and they decided to harness the latter to the former. They had heard about New York City's EHPP and its ecumenically endowed engagement with the inner-city. The core committee of Rosedale United "went to New York and saw what the EHPP had been doing for many years and wondered why nothing like it had been started in Canada. 'Our slums are not as big as Harlem – but they're just as bad in their own way,' they said."[5]

Fellow parishioner Ian Jennings, a construction engineer and chair of the Rosedale United Church board had had mining experiences during the depression years and had grasped that socio-economic difficulties are not always due to one's own "fault." Crysdale writes and cites Jennings further:

> "The need is so obvious…Our Rosedale people live in conditions at the extreme opposite to those in the inner-city and we feel under obligation to help," he said, adding, "I am interested because it is something out of the usual and I guess I am a non-conformist…Our job is to help people regain their dignity and open up resources through personal contacts – enabling them to participate more meaningfully in society as a whole."[6]

The ministry of the CRC later illustrated various levels of response to what these co-founders were aroused by – namely, on site drop-in hospitality over coffee; responding to personal and family crises via emergency aid; advocating for the neighbourhood's involvement on re-development plans; and efforts to co-ordinate clearer co-operation among existing social agencies. While the wider, even national United Church denomination was interested, there was no apparent finance available for this kind of experimental venture which could support an inner-city ministry as its own project. A core of the Rosedale United Church laity forged ahead, receiving some initial support of $15,000 a year from their own congregation for a three-year period of fostering an experimental venture of urban ministry. They called the Rev. John Metson, then living in Alberta and exercising his first field of ordained ministry. Metson was impressed by

[5] Ibid, pp. 23f.
[6] Jennings, in Crysdale, *Churches Where the Action Is*, p. 24.

the creative courage of these lay persons, particularly with flexibility for the task for this then experimental ministry. Jennings expressed that "If it fails… at least we've learned something," since the funding proposal itself to the Rosedale congregation expressed it similarly: "We said to our people that there is a core in the city where the conventional approaches are not getting through. Will you help us with this experiment?"[7]

On a personal note,[8] I stumbled across the CRC following a first year at Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS), feeling uncertain about next steps. I met Rev. Metson quite by chance at an informal meeting and agreed to move into the modest 615 Ontario St. house for the summer of 1965. While he was away for vacation and study leave, I used an ad hoc approach to meeting many of the former neighbourhood youth who had been dis-located from their roots as a result of re-development pressures, but returned almost daily and even over-night, to connect with what still was their community or "'hood." I received some stipendiary support from the UCC in return for making a summer report on the nature of street youth dynamics in a transient neighbourhood. This became the basis for a United Church submission to the Select Committee of the Ontario Legislature on Youth.[9] Visits to New York's EHPP stirred the interest of those involved with the CRC (staff, volunteers and Board members) in the EHPP effort and the publications which arose from its model of urban ministry. Foreshadowing current writings on the "new monasticism," this consisted of living right in the community, via a team ministry that pooled its earnings so that it was equal pay for equal work (including women); weekly if not daily disciplines of Bible readings, prayer and sharing in the news of the streets and metro area at large; and cross-fertilising biblical and theological themes with socio-economic-political issues of both East Harlem and the city as a whole. The EHPP also provided meaningful theological education for Union Theological Seminary students. Finally, the EHPP became a reference point for imaging and evaluating further urban ministries – especially through the writings of George "Bill" Webber, Don Benedict and Archie Hargraves. Of note for this thesis is a 50th-

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[7] Ibid, p. 25.

[8] As noted in Chapter 3's Research Approach, I recall and narrate some of the CRC's origins and historical development out of my work there and subsequent communications with my successor, Carmel Hili and his virtual successor, Phil Nazar.

[9] In Crysdale, *Churches Where the Action Is*, p. 26.

year anniversary account of the EHPP. While attending a 50th anniversary commemoration of the EHPP, one academic journalist noted:

> The EHPP staff's [practices of] the prayer discipline of worship/Bible study/Eucharist; the economic discipline of equal pay and sharing; the vocational discipline of commitment to group ministry or consulting if moved to leave; and the political discipline of justice work, even partisan levels of involvement to challenge power imbalances) were recalled, ritualized and celebrated. […] At a deeper level, the fact that prayers for East Harlem were a designated part of the order of worship implied a continuing understanding of East Harlem as a parish – as a sacred place […].[10]

Anticipating later comparisons, the notion that the local and district communities are "God's own parish," to which the faithful are called to gather, dedicate or re-dedicate themselves, and serve, seems common to all three case studies.

In the summer of 1965, there emerged the importance of putting an ear to the streets and surrounding neighbourhoods and thus discern opportunities of being a *community* ministry (as distinguished from a traditional congregational and even city-wide church ministry). There was concern about what these youths might turn to as they experienced their first hot summer of housing displacement and up-rootedness; they faced an insecure future. At the end of the summer, further staff joined the CRC to continue working with youth and, as possible, their families. Later, others were involved and even hired. One such volunteer, John Deacon, at the time of this writing remains a key supporter. He leads the CRC's "Honorary Board," with his own blog to sustain support.[11]

Finishing theological studies, three years later I returned to Toronto and began working full-time with the CRC. I returned with the EHPP model of urban ministry which was hailed as a virtual success – not yet knowing of the "new monasticism." In Seminary, I had interned with two of the founders of the EHPP. In Don Benedict, then director of the Chicago City Missionary Society, I knew a dedicated churchperson who worked with the grass-roots and found ways to foster black leadership, including ex-

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[10] This being Lowell W. Livezey's valuable 50-year anniversary account of the EHPP "Church as Parish," *Christian Century*, December 1998, pp. 1176-1177.

[11] See Deacon's own *40 Stories* testimony below, notes 53 and 59.

convicts, into community organising efforts. Fortunately, before his death, he came to write *Born Again Radical*; in effect, a memoir. In the preface, he writes:

> It is my hope that those who read *Born Again Radical* will gain an insight into the dangerous notion of the Christian gospel. Innocent Bible stories read in churches have a way of transforming life day after day and enlisting ordinary people in crusades against institutional racism and institutional poverty" [and Benedict adding] [my colleagues'] faithfulness has enabled me to achieve breakthroughs in matters of justice.[12]

Later in his memoir Benedict bears witness to how such dedication is sustainable. He understood that to be born again is to be awakened, time and again, and ushered into the continuous work of God's justice. He notes:

> [R]ebirth happens daily. Because progress is slow and the evil remains, one must be born again, not once and for all, but continually to an unfinished task. Paul wrote, "I die daily in Christ". To die daily in Christ is to be reborn again each day to deeper engagement.[13]

Archie Hargraves was the designated continuing education person at CTS. He and Benedict helped to set up the Urban Training Centre (UTC) in Chicago. Benedict often cited a phrase coined by Hargraves, that the church is called to respond to God's agitating presence likening the world to a floating crap game and the church's task: to go to where the action is.[14] Like the lay CRC founders, I also returned with perhaps a sense of what makes for "success" – via the EHPP model of ministering in the urban core of a city. They seemed to discern and practice how "success" or a "steadfast purposive fulfilment" was possible, including a virtual employment of monastic-like disciplines (again, a sharing of resources, including income, housing and offices, and regular devotions).

There was also John Metson's flexible leadership whereby one felt free to be adventurous and make mistakes. The author joined an effort to organise a Just Society Movement (JSM), an attempted implementation of a campaign slogan ("The Just Society") from the newly-elected Prime Minister Trudeau's government – where much

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[12] D. Benedict, *Born Again Radical* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), pp. xii, xi.

[13] Ibid, p. 220.

[14] Ibid., p. 211.

had been promised but little with grass-roots involvement.[15] The JSM involved the poor, especially via organised welfare rights groups, single-mother spokespersons, and an alliance between them and some social change agents. Some dedicated academics even formed their own "think tank" called the Praxis Institute. The then traditional and mainstream national churches had their ecumenically supported UTC in the Canadian UTC administrated and even overseen by some like-minded people in head office, but with little of a presence at the local levels of urban ministries. Thus, the JSM provided a concrete reference point.

Through my CRC-based JSM outreach, I came across a released convict and burgeoning writer, Don Bailey. He responded to a posted leaflet in east Toronto, announcing the presence and agenda of the JSM. I invited him into the CRC orbit and he organised a "Creative Resource Centre" for local artists (especially writers), and he worked to fulfil a commitment made while he was incarcerated; that is, to establish a network that would assist prisoners to maintain helpful communication with wives, family members or any other "significant others," such as girlfriends or close friends. Bailey's own marriage had eroded during his long prison term. He was anxious to be involved and follow through on some prison reflections. While incarcerated, he was mentored by the late Margaret Laurence, already by then a renowned Canadian novelist and essayist and decades later he wrote one of the few memoirs on Laurence, entitled *Memories of Margaret*. This book also expressed a lot of Bailey's own travails and ventures into urban ministries, including the rarely cited CRC.

Bailey and a former in-mate friend Ed Laboucane held weekly and then daily meetings to rally interest, recruit volunteers and commence a weekly and eventually weekend transportation system from the city to outlying prisons which were located off the public transportation grid. Its success can be attributed to the dedication to connect would-be visitors with willing volunteers to do the driving and share their cars (all of the federal prisons were more than two hours away from Toronto and beyond public transportation). Operation Springboard was thus born. It remained a major new

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[15] See however Michael Welton's *Unearthing Canada's Hidden Past: A short history of Adult Education* (Toronto, ON: Thompson Publications, 2013), pp. 190-196 for the example of the "Challenge for Change" National Film Board series on Canadian poverty and social change efforts involving some poor, one film being *Up Against the System* of the 1970s featuring Toronto welfare, working and elderly poor people.

component of the CRC, while other projects and programs also arose, such as a creative writers group, a food buyers club, a virtually full-time drop-in and eventually a roomers' project. The "resource" in the very name became a means of practicing semblances of success, favouring that which makes for a re-source for creativity, reconciliation, and justice-making.

A research based "Roomers Project" sought to identify how practically helpful isolated and even clusters of roomers – i.e., individuals or occasionally couples occupying a single room – could individually, or ideally, be cooperatively housed. The project arose from when we tracked down Norman G. Brown, the author of a *Toronto Star* opinion piece entitled "I am Poor by Choice; it's more fun that way." This spoke of the experience of being much less employable than in one's younger years and now with his neighbourhood experiencing substantial gentrification and a resulting loss of low rental stock, slipping into an involuntary poverty while asserting otherwise. Later, an Anglican Church journalist and writing for the United Church's national publication, Hugh McCullum, drew on the work of Mike Shapcott, a CRC community worker of the 1980s, in order to address the myth of "equal opportunity."

> Shapcott says one of the problems he and his colleagues face daily is that the poor have bought into the notion that "anyone can make it in the world's greatest society. When they can't make it, when they literally have no bootstraps to pull themselves up by, they figure it must be my fault, I'm the loser."[16]

Browne had been a reporter and knew his satire. He was persuaded to volunteer for the CRC. He was involved in a major research report (for the Roomers Project) addressing the basic needs and hopes for adequate, affordable housing of single people otherwise forced into crowded, usually run-down older housing. Browne also was recruited to help with founding a new community newspaper, *Ward Seven News,* which made use of the Don Vale Community Centre (successfully converted from a closed-down St. Enoch's United Church). There is again an accent on the importance of "place" in an urban ministry even when beyond its traditional church use.

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[16] In H. McCullum, "No Place to call Home" in *The United Church Observer*, December 1987, p.25.

The CRC also lent time, connections and energy to sustain this former St. Enoch's United Church building for community use and programs, subsequently known as the Don Vale Community Centre. Laboucane later helped the community centre to recruit several other self-help groups into the facility – from disabled to injured workers' groups to simple self-help or mutual-help activities around food, dancing and discussion of social issues. Discerningly, he realised that beginning small, "listening" carefully, and thereby assisting people to experience some semblance of self-worth through collective effort was an appropriate strategy to adopt. These might then evolve into larger collective activities, if not into social justice organising. Laboucane further tried to move beyond Springboard's "merely" service work to form, at least for a while, Community Parole. This was an ambitious effort to match would-be parolees with actual community residents to form mutually accountable committees to foster meaningful parole and the involvement of "outside" people in the hope of new life for convicts after release from prison. Alas, this was short-lived due to lack of funds. Laboucane eventually became attracted to community work in Winnipeg, where Bailey had also moved to run several United Church half-way houses. In response to queries from funding sources about the nature and meaning of "Christian" in the CRC name, "Christian" was defined as taking a risk beyond hitherto safe and agency controlled boundaries; providing actual seed money for ex-convicts (whose resumes lacked current credibility) for a pilot project that might later attract sustaining support and provide operative models of post-prison life with others in areas otherwise thought to be downtrodden if not virtually hopeless or predictably recidivist. The nature and meaning of "Christian" has continued to engage the CRC and its working committees to the present.[17]

On my departure in February 1975, the CRC hired former Jesuit scholastic Carmel Hili. Hili stayed on for another 33 years and is a bridge to the second period of the CRC case study.

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[17] Hear Emmanuel College Theology Professor Michael Bourgeois's authored comment which opens a sub-group's specific study of the CRC's name and its implications. They write: "We are the Toronto Christian Resource Centre, not because we are necessarily all Christians or because we serve only Christians, but because the work that we do can be called Christian work. This defines not only what we do, but also why and how we do it. Perhaps most importantly, it defines who we serve"; an unpublished draft shared with Morris in January 28, 2011; used with permission by M. Bourgeois.

4.2.1. CRC's Second Period: 2002 to 2008

The focus of this CRC case study is chiefly by way of Carmel Hili and as a complement, another former priest, Phil Nazar – both Jesuits who have had ministries which have endured and hence assisted similarly, the CRC to almost the present. Hili was in the early 1970s a live-in Jesuit associate of the parish. He successfully engaged the CRC via an ecumenical Lenten study on the meaning of the city, using some of the National Film Board films, especially those featuring the urban historian Lewis Mumford. Hili and I "connected originally through our involvement in the South St. Jamestown struggles against the block-busting of the area by the developer and eviction of families whom we knew and had lived here for long time. Also through our solidarity and picketing for the farm-workers` grapes boycott."[18]

Much of Hili's original and subsequent work can be seen to characterise the CRC. He exemplified aspects of the meaning of listening, engaging place, discerning opportunities to organise and hence favourably contributing to an enduring stability. He walked the streets keeping an eye and ear to where the current needs and concerns were. He visited shut-ins and knocked on doors to listen. He recruited and accompanied otherwise left-out people for brief but refreshing summer camping experiences out of the humid heat of the city (making flexible use of an otherwise underused United Church out-of-the-city summer camping facility). He attended meetings to support local and regional mutual help programs and, especially, to influence city and provincial government policies for affordable social housing. Many of these meetings were to maintain the vital networks of the CRC to surrounding church ministries in order to pool resources and reduce unhealthy competition. This was especially true, for example for community gardens, once the CRC moved from a house setting to merge with and take over the administration of the nearby worshipping centre and building for Regent Park United Church. This meant two distinct but related United Church ministries could meaningfully integrate and with minimum difficulty or resistance. (This persisted to the time of the past decade when the church building was eventually demolished in favour of the redevelopment of the whole area and with the current site now hosting continuing operations for the CRC with social housing above it.)

[18] E-mail communication of January 4, 2011, Hili to Morris; used with permission.

Hili has shared in the supervision of both staff and volunteers of the CRC. As an associate director, he exercised the CRC's mission statement, namely, to be a resourceful presence in and out of buildings, programs, experiments, and model projects. This is reflected in its enduring website mission statement: "Building Lives. Creating Community." Earlier, the CRC had as its mission statement: "The purpose of the CRC is not to work for, but with people, to help them discover a sense of self-worth and to activate within them, that innate ability to change situations and conditions around them for the better, both in their own lives and in society."[19]

Hili advocated for people on the basis of their personal needs and concerns, which pointed directly to social and community issues, especially the pervasive need for affordable and adequate housing. Hence, the chief project for him became the previously researched and enduring Roomers' Project, where building on the first period's research and consultations (with roomers and other agencies working with them), he spearheaded a move to persuade the City of Toronto – and Ontario's Ministry of Housing – to buy houses for the CRC and lease them (with necessary rooming house owners' participation) for explicit and exclusive use as mutual help rooming house communities. This was organised with a consistent CRC facilitation and on-site support, including interventions with people experiencing crises of one kind or another. Hili comments: "This is one example of *the team* pushing for housing and being successful in being given allocations."[20] Hili elaborates on the emergence and specifics of doing this organising work in his capacity as a "co-manager" or "enabler of management" of such houses-as-homes.

> I have worked to bring a group of people together, to design and put into place a new housing project. I have included people who are going to use the projects, or people who have been through them and are currently living in rooming houses. They have first-hand knowledge of being on the streets, of needing housing. They have experienced the short comings of housing already in place. They can tell us if certain features should be in our houses, or not – both in design or physical part of the project, as well as in the management phase. Other people who live in rooming houses remain very much alone…Our model of housing encourages people to come together, to take on all of the traits of a family, to look

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[19] From a City of Toronto CPIP 2008 "Organizational Overview" of the Toronto Christian Resource Centre.

[20] E-mail communication, January 4, 2011, Hili to Morris. Italics added; used with permission.

out for each other, to assist each other, and to share their skills with each other, to be friends. It takes a long time to bring this about and, even after a number of years, we sometimes see little progress. But good things can and do happen.[21]

Hili held weekly clearing sessions to determine the next steps and to share mutual concerns. His wife, Anne-Marie, recalls this incident. At Hili's CRC departure party (in 2008), she spoke of a late evening visit to one of the rooming houses under Hili's supervision. After waiting in the car awhile, wondering what her husband was up to, she went to look for him and found him on his hands and knees scrubbing the kitchen floor after an apparent accident. Former board person and a continuing Honorary Board member, Tom McCauley, explains this incident in this way: "This demonstrated his sincere commitment to providing the roomers a dignified place to live (and that his version of social justice was not just 9 to 5)."[22] There is a mark of "success" here: a willingness to follow-through until a task is completed. Put otherwise, the effort put into the process and the perseverance required therein, is as important as the hoped-for outcome.

Hili's philosophical *modus operandi* may be best captured by one of those rare occasions when he consented to be interviewed. Pondering the inevitability of disappointment, he observes:

> You learn that as an individual, you cannot do an awful lot, but with the help of others, you *can* make changes. You learn to accept the qualities and gifts that people bring to you; qualities which you don't necessarily have, but which supplement what you have to offer. You learn that things take a long time. You learn to be patient and not lose heart if you don't change the world overnight. You learn to allow people to change slowly, for changes to take place over a long period of time; and to allow for that process of growth.[23]

Perhaps only a Jesuit in the contemplative tradition could express such a patient view of an otherwise harsh ministry in the inner-city:

> I often need to remind myself of my Jesuit rule: namely, to be more of a contemplative in action [.... It] is important for urban ministers to blur

[21] Hili, quoted in Morris, Stevens and Urquhart, eds, *The Word on the Street* (Winfield, B.C.: Wood Lake Books, 1991), pp.70-71.

[22] A June 3, 2009 e-mail of Hili to Morris; used with permission.

[23] Hili cited in *The Word on the Street*, p. 9.

the distinctions and understand that doing politics, organizing among the prostitutes and other 'secular' affairs are also holy and building the kingdom.[24]

Elsewhere, exhibiting a constant reflective posture and approach to his work and that of the CRC he adds, with particular reference to the tensions between charity/justice and weariness/renewal:

> We need somebody *to step back from the frenetic pace and style of activists among us and reflect on and evaluate what is happening? We need to go to our roots, to enrich them and to live out of them.* How are we different from secular organizations and very good, committed and effective organizers, that work to redeem our system?[25]

Similarly, Merton asserts "The spring (of contemplation) remains more important than the stream (of action), for the only thing that really matters is for love to spring up inexhaustibly from the infinite abyss of Christ and of God."[26]

For discerning spiritual persons, a contemplative practice for the purposes of taking action in favour of social justice is possibly a constant aspect of ministry. Such contemplation when combined with social action sometimes translates into revised policies and practices, especially when there is a disciplined commitment to transform the plethora of charity responses to inequality in poverty or marginalisation into a justice framework. Hili, with others, was aware of the merits and promises of serious, long-term community organising – if only because it happened in the next district east of the Don District, in that of Riverdale, in the 1970s and early 1980s. Don Keating was the lead member of staff for building the ambitious Greater Riverdale Organization. But this consisted of a singular focus – attending with single-mindedness care and prayerfulness. It also called for dedicated fund-raising so that a trained professional organiser such as Keating could be hired and supported. Keating's precedent-setting

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[24] Hili, cited in Morris, *Engaging Urban Ministry,* Appendix C- 6, originally a letter to Morris, June 30,1996.

[25] Ibid. Italics added.

[26] Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (New York: Harvest/HBJ Book, 1955), p. 70, cf. pp.221-222: "When I am not present to myself, then I am only aware of that half of me, that mode of my being which turns outward to created things… to lose myself among them… (Recollection) brings the outward self into line with the inward spirit, and makes my whole being answer the deep pull of love that reaches down into the mystery of God…. In order to be recollected in action, I must not lose myself in action. And in order to keep acting, I must not lose myself in recollection."

account of actual community organising in Canada, *The Power to Make It Happen,* was based on the events of these two decades. At least in the Canadian scene if not North America, it remains the single best volume on how mass-based community organising works. Nonetheless, Hili reflected and worthy of elaboration:

> One *difficulty in long-term community organizing* is that the Christian Resource Centre is there principally to provide programs. There is a mix of services such as emergency food, clothing, coffee drop-ins, use of phone, advocacy and referral, and summer camping, and longer term work, like community organizing and developing housing. Sometimes we do the services with a heavy heart. It is important to keep ourselves honest and to keep reminding ourselves that while we are doing hands-on, short-term work, it is not what we should be really doing. If, because of the immediate need, we focus on the short-term, we should not let ourselves become comfortable in it. We must keep reminding ourselves that we should move out of it, or try to develop the service in such a way that the users themselves could manage it, take it on as their own, and even create jobs for themselves….We *sometimes pay lip service to empowering people*. At other times, *we make an effort but don't have staying power*, and it becomes too *hard for us if things take too long to happen*.[27]

Hili mentored key staff. One remained for many years. Another former Jesuit, Phil Nazar became rooted in the CRC and since Hili's 2008 retirement, performed especially in the field of housing. It is fitting that two former Jesuits became indispensable CRC staff. They brought a finely-honed discipline into the rich and recently re-discovered contemplative-action stream of Christianity. A former Regent Park minister, the late Bob Lindsey, intentionally cultivated a Jesuit-United Church congregation connection throughout the 1960s between the neighbouring Our Lady of Lourdes parish and Regis College Seminary for Jesuits and they collaborated in ministries of mutual benefit, both the parish and the Seminary, the students and the priests and laity, with the surrounding communities.[28]

Hili was also the associate director to a recent ED, Debra Dineen. She recalled him summoning her to speak at a community meeting in 1990 at Regent Park on housing. Debra had leaned in her chair to ask Hili to ask the Legislative Housing Critic

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[27] In *The Word on the Street*, ed. by Morris et al. (Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1990), p. 117. Italics added.

[28] See B. Morris, "Profile on Bob Lindsey" *Touchstone* Vol. 34 October 2016 No. 3, pp. 50-56.

a question. Instead, he invited her to ask it herself, deeming it important. She recalls: "When Carmel encouraged me to ask the question, it was as if '*you* have a voice: *use it*' arose in me. It is being empowered."[29]

Hili was also a mentor to Michael Blair, as he was for Metson for more than two decades. Hili was the eyes and ears of the community to the CRC head person and, likewise, to the communities around the CRC. He was a key representative of the ministry to the community, including its heritage and integration with the once separate United Church congregation. Creatively, both Hili and Nazar shared Sunday morning and mid-week spiritual responsibilities, though Nazar eventually took this over completely. Hili confessed that each weekend, while with the CRC in actual worship spaces and human faith communities, he discovered how to integrate worship and activism under Nazar's leadership. Adopting and adapting some of the early church's reported practices of common food and fellowship sharing and the honouring of equality, Nazar sensitively facilitated an informal circle of people whose style of participatory sharing became the form of worship service. It used locally produced or retrieved and taped music and there were prayers of the people as well as the use of lectionary readings. Everyone was given ample opportunity for sharing from their reading of the texts and a chance for an end of the week Sabbath renewal. This was then followed by sharing of food, each contributing as possible but no one turned away.

Nazar also has risen to the challenge of what the CRC's community role was to be, particularly in the aftermath of significant re-development pressures. It seems no small feat to "build lives and create community!"[30] This time, unlike being completely displaced out of its space when St. Jamestown high rise flats rose out of the ashes of once working-class homes and poor people's apartments or single rooms, the CRC has been a welcome partner to Regent Park's re-development. The site will remain the same at 40 Oak St., and "Forty Oaks" will witness forty oak trees being planted as a sign of

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[29] In an interview of September 2010, Morris with Dineen and Nazar; used with permission. Italics added.

[30] Ibid.

the CRC's steadfast presence, then and in the future – i.e., a move to respect precedents and hope that a ministry's fresh adventures will also be remembered.[31]

4.2.2. Third Period in CRC Ministry: 2002 to 2013

When the time came for Metson to retire as the founding ED of CRC (after 39 years), the task of a replacement was a challenge. Metson's observation of the place-less-ness of the poor in Metro Toronto society is worth considering in this narrative. "We (i.e., CRC in midst of inner-city) don't fit the pattern down here. I don't think you need a million-dollar building to be the church in a community." Further he says of the church: "We are not comfortable with the poor, like Christ was. The church is still a microcosm of society – the 25 percent of the bottom aren't in our churches. The structures don't work for us, just as society's structures don't work well for the poor and homeless."[32] However, the then Baptist minister Michael Blair arrived having spent much time in prison chaplaincy work and also possessing the experience of what it meant to have been a West Caribbean immigrant to Canada.

Blair was given a flexible role to engage the CRC in new directions and a much more hands-on and present ED. He notes:

> When I arrived the Board basically said that I needed to re-vision and re-mission the agency. They were *concerned that it had lost its way*. That gave me some freedom…It helped that John was still around…so from an organizational/structural side, I could have access to them, I also relied on the staff such as Carmel and Phil to offer some perspective. But I spent lots of time with people in the community and other EDs getting their perspective on the community and their impression of the CRC.[33]

When Blair left the CRC only five years later, people spoke of him with fondness and particular gratitude for being an avid listener and a supportive ED to his staff. Blair also benefited from his colour in a multi-cultural/racial Regent Park – 90 different dialects among 7500 people, over 69 acres. Blair brought a diversity of

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[31] Parallel to the admonition, yet again, given to the prophet Jeremiah (29:7) that the exiled people seek the welfare of the cities they inhabited since in such welfare or shalom was theirs too. See further *Remembering Our Future: Explorations in Deep Church,* ed. by Andrew Walker and Luke Bretherton (London, UK: Paternoster, 2007).

[32] Metson, in H. McCullum, "No Place to Call Home," op. cit, p. 30.

[33] Blair e-mail to Morris, October 18, 2010, italics added; used with permission.

experience to an equally diverse and constantly changing area. He had to provide a level of guidance out of the CRC that now faced a whole set of un-tested challenges, because it needed a focus for its role in the midst of the City of Toronto's re-development plans, pressures and power politics that seldom represents the poor. But then, the CRC has had to face pressures from the first period in St. Jamestown with its constant dislocation and redevelopment to the second period in the Don Vale neighbourhood with its enhanced gentrification. And now, into the third period, the CRC faced a major change of leadership with the pending retirement of its veteran community minister worker. They faced the taxing question of whether to continue with its ministry. "Never without a struggle to survive in this work," Hili confesses.[34]

Through all of these phases, the CRC has sought to work with people in diverse, changing neighbourhoods and districts. Nazar wrote: "We have talked recently about "our preferential option for the poor" but it certainly is not exclusive, and never was meant to be (I think). For example, we have not only worked with tenants but also landlords."[35]

Writing of the challenge for the CRC to re-invent itself in the midst of "Canada's biggest public housing project starting all over again," *United Church Observer* editor, David Wilson, visited the site and CRC's particular urban ministry. He made these observations:

> The constant flow of people in and out of the centre – witness the 150 people who drop in for lunch every day [2006 figures] – underscores its vitality and its ongoing role as a community focal point. But like Regent Park itself, the CRC's building is tired and outmoded. The decision by Toronto City Council to change the fundamental make-up of Regent Park gave the centre and its stakeholders occasion to look at the CRC's very own future. Rev. Doug Norris, minister at Toronto's Rosedale United, a former president of Toronto South Presbytery and a member of CRC's board of directors, says the questions were as basic as: *Should we stay here at all? After considerable soul-searching the answer was yes*. Norris says that these were echoes of the biblical story in which the

[34] Hili wrote to me about one such funding crisis moment for the CRC. "[…] the block grants committee (rather a small committee) has decided against giving the usual $25,000 to CRC. Without it of course the CRC will fold up. The Board of the CRC has appealed the decision: I can't see how Presbytery could deny money to CRC, now, after it had recommended $25,000 in one of its last meetings." Hili letter to Morris, November 8, 1979; used with permission.

[35] Hili e-mail communication to Morris of March 23, 2011; used with permission.

prophet Jeremiah buys property in besieged Israel as a gesture of faith that the Jewish people would some day overcome their hardships. *"By staying, we could be an incarnational presence," says Norris. "We would demonstrate our faith in the outcome of a rejuvenated Regent Park by staying anchored there."* It was obvious that a new building would be crucial to the centre's future there, and it would have to reflect the centre's ongoing service to the poor, as well as its commitment to remaining a worshipping presence in the community.[36]

There is an answer to one of the key questions for these case studies: what animates, nourishes, and sustains a faithful public and prophetic witness? A measure of success is present in the CRC's origins and recommitment, 1964 to 2006. A rhetorical question arises for its staff, board, volunteers and supporters: are we serious or not, and if so, do we need a fresh mandate to raise a lot of fresh money to build? The incarnation motif and prophetic acts of public witness – raising and pressing the public-prophetic question of whose interests are served by entrenched inequalities – endure as they enable the CRC faithfully to persist. Another key component is the continuing presence of trustworthy leadership and the real willingness of both board and accomplished embedded veteran staff to work with the new staff coming on stream. This includes the whole Regent Park district, which consists of a diversity of classes and thus no longer just for the welfare and working poor. Executive directors come and go (though uncannily, only three in CRC's history since 1964) and historic places of identity come and go, along with the desperate search for stable and fresh development funds. But what is the cost of this to the CRC's historical and recent ministry purposes?

Of all nourishing and sustaining possibilities – i.e., practices which may help provide renewable resources for what contributes to a favourable, enduring ministry and its projects – prayer looms large for Carmel Hili and for Michael Blair (who writes on this theme as a monthly, day-long retreat discipline when with the CRC).[37] It was also so for Phil Nazar. Nazar who booked off quarterly three-day weekends at his former Jesuit farm in Guelph, Ontario, for sustained bouts of contemplative solitude. To do this, he traded holiday or statutory time. He further adds this ingredient into the weekly "diet" or mid-week worship discipline that the CRC hosted out of its then temporary

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[36] D. Wilson, "No one ever said Remaking Regent Park would be easy" in *The United Church Observer*, June 2006, p. 22. Italics added.

[37] By way of written and oral communications on prayer disciplines, to the author, Morris.

interim work space when its historic building was being demolished and rebuilt. As expressed in all of the cases, we may think of prayer as meaning both an engagement and/or as attentiveness. For the CRC, prayer is present even if, again, implicit or latent. As Franciscan Priest and regular blogger, Richard Rohr attests:

> Without prayer, we're trapped in our heads, our opinions, our righteous selves. Maybe we'll be doing the right thing, but from an egocentric place, not a place of unitive consciousness, the place where all things are one. In other words, we'll be doing our own agenda instead of God's.[38]

Such prayer is evident in the CRC's engagement of its work, especially in these challenging re-development and fund-raising times. The CRC is attentive to what it now takes to carry on and complete its fifth decade of aiming for the mission purposive origins to its work and, what along the way, has kept it going. Perhaps above all, prayer resides in a cry for "help" – be it with or without words, in worship in mid-week worship sittings of whatever size, or in deliberate acts of asking for help. To convey further the meaning of his chaplaincy presence, Nazar reflected on these combined duties of chaplain and housing manager. "It fills out my work, makes it fuller… keeps me honest with the meaning…the how and the why I do what I do (which I can forget quickly being at my desk). Helps keep me aware of why I am here."[39] This is similar to the view of his predecessor Carmel Hili who expresses only the tip of much theological reflection in these words:

> We have to see the poor in God's light, and get strength from that. If I can give, I can also receive – I get strength from that. When you begin to see people putting their lives together again, developing the freedom to make choices, to develop relationships – I rejoice and celebrate that.[40]

Along with prayer, one discerns traces of justice advocacy. Charity is abundant in the plethora of the CRC's programs and services. Yet, the CRC appears to be aware of Augustine's axiom, that "charity is no substitute for justice withheld."[41] Although charity might be a part of a lengthy and hopeful process that leads to an outcome of advocating for justice, Nazar cautions:

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[38] Richard Rohr, in a December 11, 2010 Advent Meditation via his daily meditations cac.org.

[39] Interview excerpt of September 2010: Morris with Nazur; used with permission.

[40] In McCullum, "No Place to Call Home," op. cit, p. 30.

[41] Via http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/s/saintaugus148531.html [accessed December 11, 2010].

> One of the things that is true is that the drop-in, though for a time a place to draw people from for co-advocacy work, has become a monster. When I first arrived, there might be anywhere from 15-35 people eating lunch each day. Up until our last months at the old site at 40 Oak, we were serving 200 people and more – and there has been little opportunity to draw some energy from those people for advocacy work as life has become harder and people have as well. *Immediate needs have trumped long-term goals. Physical hunger overwhelms the rage against justice and working for change.* There seems to be *too much in the way.*[42]

When there are the practices of listening, including the use of a concrete place of a ministry (that is more than mere street chaplaincy work) that signifies a ministry's stable presence, then advocacy may move a step beyond mere charity to the hopeful possibility of a "hand-up" step out of abject poverty to a further affirmation of dignity. When such a helping hand moves to accompany someone in need and in search of a resolution, then the work of justice is evident and hope is nurtured. One could evoke Jurgen Moltmann's thoughts on the practice of hope. That is, when anguish and despair in one's life conditions are experienced, then hope may well come to "stab inexorably into the flesh of the unfulfilled present"[43] to provide fresh options. Indeed, to remain steadfast there must be options.

> [F]aith, wherever it develops into hope, causes not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience. It does not calm the unquiet heart, but is itself this unquiet heart in man. Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present […]. That we do not reconcile ourselves, that there is no pleasant harmony between us and reality, is due to our unquenchable hope…This hope makes the Christian Church a constant disturbance in human society, seeking as the latter does to stabilize itself into a 'continuing city'.[44]

Combining these insights with the complementary affirmation that hope needs helpmates (Tinder's *Fabric of Hope* and Lynch's *Images of Hope*), it can be affirmed that the CRC's favoured expressions of charity and advocacy bear witness to a welcome presence of hope. Hope contributes to favourable outcomes when it invites the accompaniment of justice. There is a cautionary note. The current collaboration of the

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[42] Nazar interview with Morris; used with permission. Italics added.

[43] See Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 20.

[44] Ibid. pp. 21-22.

CRC with the city and other levels of government for sorely needed funding to stabilise its redevelopment plans, could well stifle its prophetic voice. This would mute the church's call to be Moltmann's "constant disturbance." Nazar helpfully comments:

> I see […] the *fear of being compromised by government funding that we are handcuffed in our prophetic call*. Nevertheless CRC has rec'd [sic] government funding ever since before I was around [for the drop-in, rooming house work, etc.] and I have not heard a drop in the volume of our voice. We have recently contracted with Fairlawn United to hire a full-time Community Advocate to "rage against the darkness" of injustice, as it were.[45]

Though not intentionally a justice ministry network like the Streams of Justice case study (to be discussed in Chapter 6) there have been occasions when the CRC has specifically lent its witness to justice. This has taken the form of lending its community voice to support if not also to enable others to speak their voices from the margins. Indeed, this is precisely how the current ED, Debra Dineen, was "found" and summoned by Carmel Hili. Commenting on this significant moment, Hili shared in an "exit interview" these thoughts. He added the theme of connections to that of speaking out: "I took her to the Cabbagetown Business Improvement Association to speak on behalf of the Regent Park residents, a turning point in getting Regent Park included in the Cabbagetown festival." He adds: "… Although there will be a loss of connections with my departure, they are more than compensated for by the number of connections Debra has brought with her." And finally, Hili, likely thinking of Phil Nazar, states: "I am anxious to share my connections with my successor."[46]

This has taken the form of appearing before legislative committees all along the way, whether the 1960's special committee on youth or the 1980 Legislative committees on rental accommodation, rent levels and, finally, the inclusion of vulnerable single roomers into the Landlord and Tenant Act which had been denied to roomers for generations. Justice-making has taken the form of challenging incumbents or would be elected Members of Provincial Parliament or Members of Parliament on their social policies and, while remaining non-partisan, endeavouring to hold elected

[45] E-mail communication of March 23, 2011, Nazar to Morris; used with permission.

[46] John Deacon, from an October 14, 2010 e-mail to B. Morris citing from his March 26, 2009 unpublished notes of a staff appraisals and exit interviews; used with permission.

politicians and bureaucrats responsible for policies on which agreement has already been reached. As noted by Dag Hammarskjöld, this is to hold those in power accountable, responsible for their exercise of power – all of which, easier said than done, is part and parcel of the vigilance and advocacy necessary for justice work [47] Hili has added further this hindsight reflection:

> I will say: an intentionally and specifically justice ministry that has been and is present with and among and in solidarity with disadvantaged people and communities [...] but sometimes sidetracked by pressing needs that should not wait [such as drop-ins, food banks, food programs and so on]. I have mentioned […] the danger of hanging on to money for short term need programs that allow the organization to pay for other costs such as admin. In the past, CRC traveled light with not even the premises it used belonging to it. It will [be] different from now on when CRC will be working out of a large building with a lot of its energy invested in programs within it and the immediate surrounding neighbourhood. Would it lose its spunkiness and flexibility to speak on social issues as an organization or through its members and staff? Hope not.[48]

There is a question of whether CRC has been a kind of "parallel structure." This term can be understood to encompass three aspects: 1) an alternative to traditional inner-city ministry; 2) an alternative to local churches and a Canadian successor to the EHPP's twenty years of exemplifying an alternative; or, 3) a counter-association parallel to the established church at the time. In general terms, the CRC has been attending to the possibilities of un-masking alienation and de-personalisation in mass society and the injurious impact of being up-rooted as a result of redevelopment.

For example, CRC sought to demonstrate alternatives when it came to lending concrete support, on many levels, to two ex-convicts who, again, on their prison release followed through on their set of obligations arising from their incarceration slowly to organise Operation Springboard. The project, in turn, moved back and forth from plain transportation services (charity) to advocating that respectful changes in visiting policies of loved ones to their inmates be honoured and improved for the sake of post-prison

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[47] Hammarskjöld, *Markings,* trans. by L. Sjoberg & W. H. Auden (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 65.

[48] E-mail response to a draft of this narrative on the CRC, Hili to Morris. Italics added; used with permission.

release. And, to evoke the third theme of this thesis' triad, to engage the creation of supportive space that *hope* for lasting change be possible and, where evident, sustained.

Hope was combined with justice for Springboard's co-founders in their later work. As noted above (Weil and Merton), prayer could be perceived as a dedicated way of attending to one's concerns or the concerns presented by the situation at hand. Thereby a level of intercession or holding another's situation in patient and even persistent focus may occur.[49] Once these tasks were imagined and committed to, a relentless pursuit followed. Laboucane moved from Toronto to Winnipeg and engaged in sustained community organising. Later he took the same passionate drive on to Edmonton. That piece of work led to the present Greater Edmonton Alliance, which, in turn, now inspires the Metro Vancouver Alliance. Both efforts were patiently nurtured along the lines of the IAF model of Saul Alinsky (referenced in the Chapter II Literature Review and Chapter III's Theological Grounding). Bailey moved on to Winnipeg and worked in both church-based half-way homes and a local community ministry (via Young United Church in urban core Winnipeg). Although he then chiefly wrote and taught creative writing for a living in a variety of modes, he never forgot his CRC-animated opportunities to reflect on his deep trial and error life and prison experiences – in a word, his praxis.

Finally, it is instructive to hear Carmel Hili on the practice of the discipline of hope, which is a favourable disposition in working toward a purposive future if not an eventual fulfilment. The psychologist, also a Jesuit, William Lynch, points out that hope is a relative term, not an absolute and is thus in need of helpmates to be practiced.[50] Hili adds:

> I *hope* that we are always caring for those on the margins, the homeless,
> the refugee; that we are always working with people whose hope for the

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[49] Among others, see John A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London: SCM Press, 1963) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer *Life Together* trans. by John W. Doberstein (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1954). See also T. Merton's journal entries in *A Year with Thomas Merton,* ed. by J. Montaldo's (New York: HarperOne, 2004), pp. 145, 155, 159, 357, and *Through the Year with Thomas Merton* ed. by Thomas P. McDonnell, entries for 5/31, 7/25, and 8/10.

[50] See Wm. F. Lynch, *Images of Hope: Imagination of Healer of the Hopeless* (Toronto, ON: Omega-Mentor, 1967/65), pp. 23-24.

future is clouded; to ever be looking for practical expressions of care, support and advocacy; [that] politically speaking we never have tried to vilify anyone – firmly believing that people in positions of power are good people and could be persuaded to make decisions that were fair to poor people if they understood the issues; [while] we have to continue to encourage marginalized people to take the lead in instructing the rest of us on the complications poverty presents for the people's present health and well-being; et al.[51]

It remains to explore an ethics of the fitting response's set of questions, along with a narrative analysis, to help frame this above body of material.

4.3   Fitting and Favourable Responses

From this brief case study, it may be clear how the CRC responded as a result of the perceptions of Rosedale United lay persons as they first compared the stark living conditions of the inner-city areas with their own affluent residencies. There was indeed something unsettling, if not anguished that was aroused only then to be animated by the capacity of hope for a different future, all of which stirred people out of complacency. Hope was able to assist taking action in a new inner-city ministry to the south of their comfortable residences and stable, affluent life-styles. As a later Board member confessed when asked what core faith convictions had been moving and sustaining him, he responded with the mandate of the prophet Micah (6:8) which expressed his own enduring triad of justice, kindness or integrity, and humility.[52]

It seems that these pioneering lay people felt a mandate to help implement aspects of their Christian faith, – with themselves as initial researchers and fund-raisers, then volunteer board members, and by delegating the ministry work via hired professionals – which can be recalled from the perceptions which emerged as they related their wealthy Rosedale enclave to that of the impoverished areas to the south. They perhaps learned to be modestly bold and critically cautious – that is, courageously

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[51] From John Deacon's notes, in CRC staff interviews of March 2009, shared with Barry Morris. Italics added; cf. John's own continual lay ministry, again as noted elsewhere, via his blog <http://www.homelessguide.com>.

[52] Tom McCauley sharing this pivotal creed in personal conversation; used with permission.

active but with self-critical degrees of humility[53] – about what it means to stand faithfully with one's God and to practice ways and means to be on good terms with one's neighbour and strangers in their midst.

In light of what others were doing to respond to what was going on, the CRC sought from the beginning to discern the meaningful presence of other workers or volunteers in the field or community. They tried to integrate the existing assortment of social, police or probations, and emergency welfare services under one roof to try to enable a less bureaucratically cumbersome response to a poor person or family's needs. The CRC responded beyond mere stop-gap or first aid relief (see Hili's remarks above[54]). In light of the inadequacy of established services, where the expectation may well have been "come to us and we would try to fix" the current problem, what has been called in some social ethics and liberation theology writings a "hermeneutics of suspicion" was transformed into a "hermeneutics of retrieval." To this end, Thomas Ogletree's comments on such an interpretive move warrant noting:

> For a Christian ethic in particular, critical interpretation must attend to the work of suspicion, testing the impact of conventional wisdom – especially when it is given a sophisticated, rational form – upon "outsiders" and members of the under class, for those who are "least" among our brothers and sisters bear to us the presence of Christ … suspicion leads to a fresh look at possibilities [via retrieval] mediated by the meanings which make up the life-world itself.[55]

In the case of Operation Springboard's origins and work – a public and prophetic witness – a favoured ministry response would be that of working faithfully with otherwise ill-trusted ex-convicts to assist them, then establishing an alternative supportive base for them. This also meant creating a network of their family, friends, further ex-convicts, and members of the surrounding community.

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[53] See David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), p. 489.

[54] Dineen professes: "Our commitment to the revitalization is vast, and all lead to the reduction of poverty. We are building a new facility that will provide 87 units of deeply affordable housing… Additionally, CRC has a long history in the provision of food and recognizes food as a social convener. We know everyone needs food but not everyone has access to food, and to that end we continue to lead discussions with our partner agencies and the residents to explore how we can provide food differently. Our vision is that no one should ever need to use a food bank again," in *The Leaflet*, November 2010, p. 2.

[55] Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stranger*, p. 118.

A third and final dimension to what is going on is that of moving beyond the application of core faith convictions in view of questioning whether the mere application of inherited forms or confessed traditions suffices. That is, the CRC's plethora of program services, emergency meals, daily drop-ins and one-on-one intensive listening and sometimes, advocacy for one's social rights would rarely – in terms of Niebuhr's theology of justice – contribute to the unmasking of how charity or philanthropy hinders the challenging of prevailing power arrangements. Such unmasking surely takes focused, disciplined and relentless pursuit. Ogletree's "hermeneutics of hospitality" is appropriate for consideration. Briefly, this perspective requires a fresh response to otherwise dismissible situations because they are strange or lie beyond inherited and safe expectations.

> To balance and limit the recollection of our own heritage, we also have need of a hermeneutics of hospitality, a readiness to welcome strange and unfamiliar meanings into our awareness, perhaps to be shaken by them, but in no case to be left unchanged.[56]

McCullum adds comments, chiefly on Regent Park:

> Ultimately the resolution of the housing crisis in Canada depends on all of society reordering a troubled system of values. Some people struggle merely to survive, others thrive all too easily. In a middle class church – with our fear of the unusual, the strange, with our love of good order and control, our hatred of what we perceive to be abnormal, our fear of the unknown poor – how can we be faithful to the homeless? How we handle these contrary forces, contrary to the Word of God, will decide their future and, perhaps, the future of our own souls.[57]

The CRC was faced with wholesale redevelopment of the area with an option to adapt and serve, or move, or even close down. Its situation evokes Hannah Arendt's notion of the function of action as that which interrupts what otherwise would happen predictably.[58] As a minority presence – nonetheless a seemingly trustworthy presence amid the vastly changing and anxious setting of re-developing the whole Regent Park district – the CRC had much favourably to offer. This was aided and accompanied by two creative Boards (one policy and one Honorary). There thus arose voluntary labour,

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[56] Ibid, p. 119.

[57] McCullum, "No Place to call Home", p. 30.

[58] H. Arendt, *On Violence* (London: Penguin Press, 1970), pp. 30-31.

offering the kind of energy that seems not to cease until a task or project is accomplished. Thus, Jannie Mills speaks of her role as both a CRC Board member and past member of the now sold (in 2005) St. James-Bond United Church. She helped to negotiate the sale proceeds of her church to purchase and establish four social housing projects in order to demonstrate a witness to social justice. "It's been a very long process (seven years so far) with immense number of hoops to jump through. (But) it was good stewardship (of our resources)." She refers to the 2012 opening of the CRC's own social housing project, a five-story, 87-apartment development, which aims to provide "safe, permanent, secure and affordable housing," out which the CRC mission of "building community" can grow.[59] Debra Dineen elaborates:

> We are in the midst of change, and it's not easy, continuing the good work we do each day. Yet at the same time planning for our future in the new building takes time, patience and unlimited energies. Ensuring that the building is well resourced to provide the supports to the newly housed men and women who will live at 40 Oaks, and those who will need to be looking at how we financially sustain ourselves. Part of the future success of Regent Park and the residents of 40 Oaks will rely on our ability to provide new services, along with the existing work we do.[60]

Having outlined the activities of CRC, consideration must now be given to the evidence amassed for the fourfold lens of listening, place, organising, and stability. There is certainly evidence of a capacity to endure. Like other urban ministries diversity in funding has been developed, drawing on church as well as governmental and foundational grants. One could ask if there is a possible conflict of interest – even an unhealthy dependency or co-optation, as Bretherton cautions – between the CRC and the City of Toronto. As a recognised social agency – rather than as a church – it might find its activity restricted by external governmental forces which might be inclined to control the budget and even set boundaries on social advocacy for change and political activity thereby. This might mean the loss of a critical, prophetic distance from valued and various check-and-balance sources – that is, a sufficient independence to be bold advocates for change and not merely trying to bring small, interim relief to poverty and

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[59] Jannie Mills, in a radio interview of January 11, 2011, CBC Toronto 91.1FM.

[60] Dineen in *The Leaflet,* November 2010, p.1.

homelessness. The latter has been more of a long-range hope though there is evidence that the CRC strives for a vitally balanced funding strategy and outcome to be in place.[61]

There is evidence of listening in the life of CRC's ministry. This is present as a result of hosting on-site drop-ins and, via a form of street chaplaincy, a ministry of presence. There is also via the activity of such presence a bona fide practice of giving due attention to others as well as between staff, volunteers, and board members. This is possible especially through the CRC's in-house, volunteer or employed practitioners. There, prayer is noted as a form of an attentive engagement, that which stretches the understandings of prayer that we are evoking. But to press, is prayer evident enough to warrant an endorsement of the CRC as a basically non-worshipping ministry other than its noted mid-week chapel times? Is a current, mid-week small cadre of worship gatherers sufficient for their intercessions – as the exercise of listening contributes – to be a source of leaven for the wider ministry? In urban ministries that consistently encounter the realities of poverty and its outcomes of indignities and inequalities, it is important to ask: when would intercessions ever be deemed to be "sufficient"? Intercessory prayer could well be a mode for staying the course of ministry activity amid one discerning the "traces of God in a frequently hostile world"? [62]

There are, thirdly, indications of efforts to engage in organising. Organising listens for and then seeks to attend to the sighs for justice; this is especially so as the CRC works to display a third generation's resiliency. The CRC has endured for more than double the years that its inspiring example set in the twenty-year history of the EHPP. One further wonders if what led to the demise of the EHPP could critically serve the CRC. Research would assist. Thus, from the Union Seminary PhD dissertation of Benjamin Alicea, *Christian Urban Colonizers: A history of the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York City, 1948-1968,* such factors are noted as the loss of key leaders from the group ministry; an all-white and professional board of directors; a felt de-prioritisation of Biblical mandates and grounding, a prayerful engagement,[63] and a move

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[61] As expressed in former board member Tom McCauley's optimistic e-mail indicating hope for a more solid foundation for CRC finances, September 9, 2010; used with permission.

[62] To evoke Diogenes Allen's apt title: *Traces of God in a Frequently Hostile World* (New York: Cowley Publications, 1981).

[63] See especially William Stringfellow, *My People is the Enemy*, pp. 85ff, 96ff.

by the then supporting denominations to engage city and country-wide issues like racism but at the cost of being too financially focused on local parish concerns. This latter reality can be linked to Carmel Hili's departing caveat as he too struggled with the local/regional tensions in prophetic ministry. In his words:

> We must resist the temptation to become provincial […] we must work to ensure our vision exceeds beyond the immediate, so that our focus is always on those living on the street, advancing the cause of the poor everywhere and not just in Regent Park [...] [that is] growth will lie in taking the issues specific to Regent Park and expanding it to a broader constituency so that we remain on the front edge of care and advocacy.[64]

Almost every urban ministry experiences creative tensions within and outside the parameters of its mission statement. There is the tension of local ministry in all of its labours of love with the counterpart of the wider issues that relate to such local needs but cannot be locally resolved since they are regional, national, and even global in terms of source and impact. [65]

Meanwhile, the terms of place and stability seem evident enough in the fact that CRC has endured. The CRC has had to listen as part of a struggle to be an integral part of Regent Park's redevelopment plans with its mix of classes and income groups. The conscientious retention of the "40 Oaks" address in Regent Park, complete with the new planting of forty actual oak trees symbolises hope, as former key CRC staff persons Phil Nazar and Debra Dineen attested at the time. As thus once stated on the CRC's website:

> The CRC decided in 2003 to participate aggressively in this transformation of Regent Park by acting boldly and *making the best use*

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[64] Hili, in John Deacon's March 2009 notes of Staff Interviews; used with permission.

[65] See also Lowell Livezey's summary comment on the parish value of the EHPP from its inception, first of all citing co-founding pastor Don Benedict: "'We wanted to return to Protestantism the idea of serving everyone in a given geographic community rather than staying with the concept of church as the central place of worship attracting like-minded people from anywhere'." Livezey adds further: "So these pastors moved in, seeking to create a ministry that was not simply located in East Harlem, but was built with and for the residents of East Harlem and for East Harlem itself. Of necessity, the project secured resources from several denominations, benefiting from the ecumenical spirit of the times," "Church as Parish," *Christianity and Crisis*, op. cit, p.1176. To further note this inevitable tension, local parish and larger Metro forces and loyalties, see Benedict's Chicago City Missionary Society's essay "Structures for the New Era" in Stephen Rose, ed. *Who's Killing the Church*, Chicago City Missionary Society, 1966, pp. 42-48.

of its footprint to build 40 Oaks – a centre for *Building Lives and Creating Community*. In 2004, in keeping with the CRC commitment to work with the Community, the Board formed a Development Committee.[66]

It was strategically chaired by Paul Dowling, an active lay person in the UCC who brought to bear to this phase of CRC's redevelopment challenges some 30 years of housing experience.

A further witness to endurance and an accompanying provision of hope may arise from noting and employing biblical resources – frequently appealed to by urban ministers and/or their boards when searching for any helpful precedents for current warrants for being assured or challenged in one's urban ministry.[67] One such biblical assurance, among many, is found in Paul's letter to the early Christian house churches of First Century Rome. It attests: "Knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us."[68] It seems a little more than coincidental that retired clergy with social gospel leanings – and a desire to live purposefully with what remains of their life – gravitate to a place like the CRC. The late Stuart Coles exemplifies such a standpoint, being a long-time minister in the Presbyterian Church and, because of the relative freedom it provided, the UCC. As an ardent supporter of the CRC,[69] he summarised the CRC's relationship with Regent Park United Church in this way. Acknowledging his age and now residing more on the "edges" of the CRC, he affirmed the importance of

[66] Toronto Christian Resource Centre.org. [This is no longer website accessible but noted during research in 2011]. The "Building Lives/Creating Community/Together" mission statement remains though revised, adding as well social *inclusiveness* and *cohesion* as values. Italics added [accessed October 14, 2013].

[67] One thinks here of the Methodist or Wesleyan authoritative quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason and experience; appealed to less in recent years but employed implicitly in this thesis. See further an implicit use of the quadrilateral in Tex Sample's *The Future of John Wesley's Theology: Back to the Future with the Apostle Paul* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2012), especially Chapter Five's "Justice in Wesley and Paul." Finally, Michael Bourgeois' draft document "What's in a Name?" makes predictable use of the quadrilateral in unfolding and elaborating the nature and meaning of the "Christian" in the CRC to include Biblical and traditional warrants – with complementary use of reason and experience – for practicing charity, advocacy and justice. (See note 24.)

[68] Romans 5:3-5, NRSV.

[69] Phil Nazur's summary images of Coles, for a Toronto June 22, 2013 memorial service include: "bull/pussy cat, prick/salve and prophet/gentleness"; e-mail communication to Barry Morris, June 26, 2013.

the *senior and manager partnerships* theme of the CRC's merging with Regent Park United Church – then, as now. Coles added: 1) that the 1970s document, *A Dream Not So for the Drowsy,* was key for grasping the nature of the urban reality facing the church, then as now; 2) that the CRC was a pioneer of what it means to face the urban reality, then as now; and, 3) and that in this ministering with the "victims" of the powers, the CRC has been, and remains, instrumental.[70]

4.3. Conclusion

Is the CRC a success story? If so, how can this be measured? What may have prevented or curtailed success for the CRC, thinking especially of the five caveat temptations and the charity/justice tensions (from previous chapters)? The last question sheds light on the first three. There is evidence of a certain degree of *commodification* or the use of people-as-statistics for fund-raising purposes and to justify the very purpose of the ministry as for when it the challenge to justify a ministry arises at annual general meetings and the typical year end rationalisations of purpose to the board and membership. And, there is some thematic evidence of *clientelism.* This could occur by way of favoured patronage. That is, there could be exercises which have users of the ministry, chiefly as "clients," to help keep the CRC to be viewed positively by the higher courts of the United Church, its core of broad-based funders, and its government funders. The employment of a ministry's users as one's own "clients" may also serve to justify itself to any relevant financial powers that pertain to legitimising a ministry and its fairly constant bid for an overall acceptance. This can occur by way of using – even padding – statistics to express a semblance of "success," where the higher the number, the more acceptable the ministry and if government funded, all the more so. More deeply, the CRC's significant community and outreach workers Hili and Nazar, at the time of this study – both former Jesuits who clearly respected elements of that order's discipline – confessed ongoing challenges to enable or facilitate efforts at self or mutual help. They also professed an ongoing need to practice the kind of balance that fosters personal and community measures for change (use of statistics as numbers of users) and

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[70] Via a March 4, 2011 phone call, the now late Stuart Coles with Barry Morris; used with permission.

were this absent, an expression of personal and community meaning as in first person
"success stories." There are also intimations that the CRC could encounter a temptation
to pacify its donors, including the state or government and thus is likely subject to *co-
optation*. Phil Nazar illustrates this in a comment that some of the work may have been
"compromised by government" involvement and thus he perceives the CRC to have
been "handcuffed in (its) prophetic call." That its funding is diverse and not solely
dependent on public funds reduces the weight of this reality. Its 40 Oaks housing project
might be inclined to practice a level of *communalism* or, in the provision of affordable,
social housing that "all this is *basically just for our own* in-house programs." Again,
Nazar confesses that an otherwise successful drop-in which grew from a couple of
dozen to 200 people on a daily basis, had "become a monster" in its necessary
caretaking functions and maintenance. The willingness to exercise a prophetic role,
beyond mere emergency and service responses to poverty, thus became "side-tracked by
pressing needs." This is countered by the CRC's continuing commitment to outreach
activities, a significant level of inter-disciplinary cooperation and social advocacy for
the marginalised. The late Stuart Coles attested to this in his profession that the CRC
sought to forge "a ministry with the victims of the powers." This illustrates social
ethicist Tracy Trothen's suggestion of criteria for success that, not alone goes beyond a
number count,[71] by employing the "Jesus narratives" and particularly a "solidarity with
the marginalized" and accompanied by "faithfulness and the capacity to love."[72] There
is little evidence of the fifth critical caution, *cowardice*. Perhaps individual staff or
volunteers have felt a loss of nerve from time to time and regretted not exercising more
courage on occasion. Carmel Hili acknowledged that the CRC has "paid lip service to
empowering people – make an effort but don't have staying power." And, former
executive director Michael Blair spoke of being hired with a caution that the CRC might
have "lost its way." As a whole however, the CRC's housing project exemplifies a
courageous effort – *contra* temptations to cowardice – to implement the very CRC

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[71] See S. Bessenecker, *Overturning Tables: Freeing Missions from the Christian-Industrial
Complex* (Downers Grove, IL: IVPress, 2014), especially "freeing the prophets from the
profits," "competition in the kingdom," and "measuring the long haul," pp. 90-92, 155-156,
180.

[72] T. Trothen, *Winning the Race? Religion, Hope, and Reshaping the Sport Enhancement
Debate* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2015), p. 120. See also Scott Bessenecker,
Overturning Tables: Freeing Missions from the Christian-Industrial Complex, pp. 179-182.

motto of "building lives/building community." This contributes a mark of stability and for an enduring, trustworthy place. We recall then Board Chairperson, Doug Norris, while a minister with the founding Rosedale United Church to the CRC, asking, "Should we stay here at all?" and responding, "After considerable soul-searching the answer was yes." Organising is a third characteristic of Bretherton's vital ingredients for building vibrant civic institutions, and we can note in this case study that all of the above could not have become a reality in the CRC's urban ministry apart from some dedicated organising over time and by way of collaborative efforts. Though short of the "staying power" that Hili confessed a hope for – since it has not come to the same perceived fruition that intentional broad-based community organising has sought – it has nonetheless contributed to such activities and enduring projects as the 40 Oaks project, community gardens, interfaith and multicultural involvement, and hence the CRC continues to represent for the wider church a worthwhile ministry favoured to support.

Nonetheless, even if success is understood on the one hand as the numerical outcome of tangible results such as stable and increasing budgets, adding staff and volunteers, and enhancing its list of commendable projects and programs – and even as success on the other hand is understood as less an empirical norm and more that of a qualitative measure – then thus far, it can be affirmed that the CRC is a candidate for consideration as a successful or favourable urban ministry in urban core Toronto. While not perfect, the CRC illustrates a purposive fulfilment. It is a process towards fulfilment of working "with people, to help them discover a sense of self-worth and to activate within them, that innate ability to change situations and conditions around them for the better, both in their own lives and in society." Subject to the five cautions outlined above, and corresponding to expressing the four ways in which an institution can contribute to the health and social justice of its district and by extension, to its city, the CRC seems to convey the marks of a successful, that is, purposeful urban ministry. To be sure, there is an abiding charity and justice tension that remains ever present, even as it is frankly acknowledged by its once core leadership staff. An ongoing case study would want to monitor if this critical awareness of a charity/justice tension continues – including when charity may move to some practices of justice and yet when charity could remain a convenient substitute of justice withheld, even if passively or benignly.

We will return to aspects of this in the comparative chapter, following the next two case studies.

Chapter 5. Victoria, BC's Open Door, Our Place and Dandelion Societies

Some urban missions or ministries draw from biblical passages for their credo and statement of purpose. The literature review drew attention to such biblical passages as the often-used prophetic credo of Micah (6:8) and its triad of justice, kindness and humility. It is likely that there is no single passage for the origins of the OD (which then became OPS and then, to complete this case study, by way of its lead staff person retiring and then renewing his vocational call, a stand-on-its-own Dandelion Society). But if there is one that gave an animating vision, it could be St. Paul's "hymn of love" from 1 Corinthians 13 and its founder's paraphrase of it for the context of urban Victoria.

- Though we speak with great eloquence over radio and television but have not love, we are just noisy gongs and clanging cymbals.
- Though we travel by car and by jet around the world to attend conferences and seminars:
- Though we explore the depths of the sea and the surface of the moon:
- Though we turn to our computers to solve the problems and mysteries of the world:

Though we have all these things, but have not love, we gain nothing.

- If the hungry of Victoria continue to starve
- if those lacking decent clothes are not clothed
- if those mentally ill are not given care
- if decent affordable housing is not found for the homeless
- if loneliness is seen as someone else's problem
- if children are considered unacceptable when parents look for housing
- if no one is available to listen and to befriend

All is in vain.

Without love, all our knowledge and technology and power are worthless and may even be a curse. So share dignity, hope, justice and love – and the greatest of these is love. [1]

5.1. Overview

The following is a case study of a Victoria, BC urban core ministry that began as an outreach mission from a downtown First United Church. Early on, the OD established itself with its own staff person – who had painstakingly researched for a model of ministry that might "work" when other forays had apparently come and gone or failed. He worked with an assortment of locally recruited lay volunteers and as it developed and the founder passed on his legacy to a successor, it eventually merged with another downtown mission to form yet a second, differently named mission, the enduring OPS. Its mission purposes as noted below consisted of being a ministry of presence, out of a concrete place, and attentive to developing ways and means (organising) by which street persons, homeless or under-sheltered, could experience measures of dignity via employment (even if temporary), improved housing (even if in a shelter), and an affirmed or enhanced identity from meaningful involvement in a place they could relate to as their own. A third manifestation emerged when the long-serving executive UCC director, Al Tysick, tried to "retire." However, within a short time period he felt compelled to reengage his unique street ministry; this time as a ministry distinct from the continuing OPS, named the Dandelion Society. The following historical account and biographical profile of a key staff person seek to do justice to these three phases. The emphasis on the latter, as in all three case studies, lends weight to a biography-as-theology approach.[2]

5.1.1. Origins and Purpose

OPS, its predecessors, and one of its offspring, have constituted a significant urban mission for over twenty years in the heart of the provincial capital, Victoria, BC.

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[1] Paraphrase of I Corinthians 13:1-8 for a 10-year Celebration Service, with 200 friends to thank volunteers, donors and supporters, in *History of the Open Door 1986-1996* prepared by the late Lawrence Moon, September 1996 (unpublished).

[2] See "Methodology" Chapter 3 and therein note 11.

It is a major presence of the UCC in the city though it no longer depends solely upon United Church funding and volunteer support. The DS is a more recent Victoria, BC outreach ministry. As elaborated below, it began shortly after OPS's retiring executive director,[3] Al Tysick returned to his vocational passion of ministering on the streets. While on a different scale, both urban ministries contribute significantly to bringing relief to the homeless, the addicted or the otherwise burnt-out or "rusted-out" people of this city (whose lives become simply and sadly weary and prematurely exhausted). It is highly likely that without OPS, Tysick's current DS street ministry would not exist. Due consideration is thus given primarily to OPS but DS will also be reviewed in what follows.

Our Place is a representative, dedicated consolidation of the church's "best practice" in urban mission. It flows in the social gospel tradition in the face of steadily decreasing social services by the government. At virtually all levels of government it seems assumed that the church is as intact and as financially stable as it used to be. Thus, the urban church – it is boldly presumed around especially a capacity to provide food and emergency aid of all sorts – is to be counted on to step into the funding and service delivery reductions, thus to deliver to the poor even when the government itself cuts welfare spending.[4] At the time of writing, Our Place's website and newsletters report that fifteen hundred are served meals on a daily basis. Alongside this, some 600 receive clothing and even hot showers with soap, shampoo and clean towels.[5] The needy are able to make use of telephones, computers for internet access, and counselling for

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[3] "Retired" only in the sense of leaving OPS, applying for a church pension, and now feeling freer for his own urban ministry choices (less of the cumbersome administration obligations of many years). Eager for continuing a ministry and within weeks of retiring from OPS, Rev. Al began the Dandelion Society (DS) using a late model Van for carrying food, clothing, medical supplies and himself as often as when with OPS (virtually every day). Tysick stems from previous ministries in Ontario, one of them consisting of outreach and drop-in work with street people and single parents in poverty. The DS commenced on July 15 2011, gaining its charitable status in 2012.

[4] See Graeme Smith's notion of the church/religion's vicarious role, over virtually centuries of assuming the common good for the vulnerable poor (from the once state's responsibility), in *A Short History of Secularism* (London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 2008), pp. 127-131.

[5] A 2015 financial statement of OP states that its budget to be in excess of $5 million with an excess of revenue over expenses of $266,000. OPS listed on its website as a member of Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce. They also serve 1200 meals a week; 60 showers per day; and, inter alia, provide meaningful social housing for 45.

crisis or emergency situations. More than fifty people are "case managed" – that is, persons treated as their own "files" and monitored follow-ups – on the streets (health); and they are encouraged (or, naturally come) to interact for mutual support, to gain tips on where else to find resources for basic needs. Onsite longer-term supportive housing might eventually be available for at least some of the hundreds who are homeless.

Though large in size, in scope and in number of staff, OPS began with the ultra-modest ministry of the OD – the latter merging with the UR to form OPS. This was the desire of the Diaconal Minister the late Lawrence Moon in 1985-86. Over three years, Moon had diligently researched how other urban church ministries responded creatively to the core issues raised in the inner-city. In effect, he asked one of the persistent questions evoked throughout this thesis: what indeed is a fitting if not favourable response (for purposes of a "successful outcome") to what is going on? This quest was further facilitated by Moon's chairing of a Victoria Presbytery committee during these 3 years, giving him regular access to core decision-makers of this higher court of the UCC.

Rev. Allen Tysick, joined in July 1992 over-lapping with Moon in the last summer of his ministry. Metropolitan United Church and First United Church had made a decision to amalgamate. The Metropolitan United Church that housed the OD was sold to the Conservatory of Music. The OD, therefore, had to look for a new location. It found lodging first in an abandoned building. But then the opportunity came through the Victoria Gospel Chapel to purchase property next door to the UR. A year later, the St. Vincent de Paul Society was erecting a new building and invited the UR and OD (as well as an entity called the "910 Club"[6]) to discuss possibilities of joining together. Those discussions ended when St. Vincent de Paul declared that they were looking for renters not partners. Both the OD and the UR decided to keep exploring possibilities for amalgamation. Both chairs of the board, Dr. Robin Krause and Rev. Larry Scyner – Tysick recalls[7] – were visionaries and dedicated to amalgamation. Tysick notes that

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[6] Al Tysick comments: "The 910 club is run by the Roman Catholic Church here in Victoria. When the upper room and opened door first began talks about amalgamation the 910 also was a part of those discussions for various reasons however they decided to stay on their own." Email to Morris, August 18, 2016.

[7] E-mail of Tysick to the author, Morris of March 30, 2007.

February 2006 was the day of this amalgamation meeting.[8] The then new chair of the board, John Ronald, led both groups into the final decision that they would amalgamate.

In the beginning and prior to this merger, the OD decided to lodge itself in the old Metropolitan United Church. Eventually, however, the OD had to move on. In 2005, the OD merged with another previously established inner-city Victoria ministry, "The Upper Room," and made plans for a much larger venue to do mission. As Michael Hemmings notes, this was a 7-year process and an "extremely positive" example of "organic change."[9] An adjacent older style of inner-city mission, the Victoria Gospel Chapel was, as Don Fletcher describes, comprised of a number of elderly conservative parishioners from greater Victoria, who admired the UR's work[10] and offered to sell their building at a reduced price. Thus purchased and with further help from First Metropolitan United Church, a legacy from another church (Belmont United Church), and funds that the UR had put away, when then federal government assistance became fittingly available through its occasional initiatives to help the homeless. They were also assisted generously by the congregation of the Victoria Gospel Chapel. Chevalier's overview summarised their original mission in the following terms: "[...] to provide a Christian presence in the inner-city through social service, social action, involvement in community programs and projects, advocacy work and through relating the Good News of the Christian faith to the human experience."[11] Fifteen million dollars were raised for the new building at 915 Pandora St.: $5 million from the federal government, $5 million from the provincial government and $5 million from OPS. The *Victoria Times-Colonist* put it this way:

> Our first operations began in December of 2007 and by the time the official ribbon cutting ceremony was held on June 24, 2008, all of our programs and services were under one roof. The new facility provides

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[8] E-mail to Morris, August 18, 2016.

[9] Michael Hemmings, an untitled and unpublished paper on the merger of Upper Room and The Open Door, for the Public Administration Faculty at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, April 7, 2008, pp. 4, 7; used with permission.

[10] E-mail communication of January 3, 2011, Fletcher to Morris.

[11] Rebekah Chevalier's "The Other Victoria's Open Door" in *Mandate*, a United Church publication of 1988, Spring.

over 40,000 square feet of highly functional, purpose-built space in which to assist the homeless and disadvantaged of our city.[12]

To afford and manage a considerably larger budget – earlier exceeding $3 million per year by $300,000 (see also note 4) – OPS had to establish its credibility, including with the street people and agencies relating to them, in a patient way as it had not previously been used to such operational largesse.

The OD's founder states that its mission is founded on "unconditional love given in non-judgmental way." He depicts his over-all and hoped-for philosophical-theological perspective this way: "working together we make it possible."[13] Moon's frequent signature to letters ended with "In His Service: Together." Moon shared with this author in 2009 that prayer had been the indispensable dimension to this ministry. It evoked the image that we could be "electric wires" but not the "electricity." Moon's memories of the ministry are worthy of mention. Here is one early example:

> The first person to come up the stairs was a young man named Eric. He asked if we could have a prayer. Standing in the big empty room we put our arms around each other's shoulders. As I was collecting my thoughts, hoping that my prayer would be meaningful, Eric suddenly started to pray. What an experience! It brought home to me the fact that I, as a representative of the Church and the Open Door, was **really** there to be **with** people. The direction given by God that first day has been a beacon to us all the past ten years.[14]

5.2. Precedents

In the evolution toward a new Victoria urban ministry, there were precedents from other urban ministry projects which were made evident in Moon's considerable research, undertaken as a participant-observer, and on which he reflected deeply. For example, as depicted in the Chapter 1 literature survey, the 1970s document *A Dream Not for the Drowsy* drew upon information from dozens of urban ministries across the country.

[12] Via an Our Place Society press release and featured on its website in its "2009 Annual Report" Overview (para.2) <https://www.ourplacesociety.com/sites/default/files/uploads/pdf/2009_ops_community_report.pdf> [accessed November 25, 2016].

[13] Both statements from L. Moon's own 1986-96 informally published 10-year "History of The Open Door Inner City Ministry: 1986-1996," September 1996.

[14] Moon, ibid., n.d., n. pp., bold in original.

Moon consulted widely with "experts" and other church workers in the field – that is, ministers as well as lay leaders and workers as well as urban theology and ministry students. Such people were sought out for their intellectual, administrative, historical, prophetic, and sustaining input. In particular, the national UCC's then experimental fund-raising initiative "Ventures in Mission", made it possible. While initially intended to bolster and extend retirees' pension funds, the initiative was expanded to enable seed funding for new ministries. Hence, Moon and his Victoria team applied for and received 3 years of support. This at least covered his salary and some administrative expenses. This was later extended to a 5-year commitment.[15]

Fortified by initial funding and "guarantees" for an initial 3 years of pioneering ministry, the endorsement of the Victoria Presbytery, and the collective will of an Inner-City Church Council (composed of the above three United Churches and respective representatives), Moon and his associates set forth on an experimental form of urban mission. He wanted a "development of terms of reference for an outreach worker and of a program to meet such needs." These became modestly stated goals that included: a due process (and transparency) of decision-making and covering all the conditions or bases of protocol so to comply with and satisfy the funding criteria of the agencies which supplied grant support. The courts of the (United) church were necessary but not sufficient to set forth all this. In addition, a strong element of charismatic or magnetic leadership with a dedication to the mission purposes was also necessary – these were not easily "purchased," but crucial to initiate and sustain the ministry.

Out of Moon's 3 years of direct or on-the-ground study of other urban ministries, in July of 1986 several long-range goals were articulated as a virtual manifesto. These goals included – but were not limited to – the hope of providing a steady worker, with supportive volunteers, to understand, cope, and try to change at least some of the conditions if not root causes of poverty they encountered. The OD founders and initial steering committee also wanted to encourage a sense of ownership and involvement, by and with the people being served, in the church's overall mission. From the out-set then, there were three themes: an actual urban ministry worker with

[15] Ibid., no page; Cf. L. Moon, "The Door Is Always Open" in *Mandate*, special edn (Toronto, Ontario: The United Church of Canada, Mission and Service Fund, 1989), p. 4.

supportive volunteers from out of the three founding mission entities; a mandate to extend the biblically and prophetically rooted call to do justice as well as to practice acts of mercy and hospitality; and inclusion of representative participation from street people and sponsoring churches in OD's actual work. This was easily stated but the goal especially of a shared or mutual "ownership" was difficult to achieve. This goal was (and remains for virtually all urban ministries of which the author is aware and has researched) not easy to achieve – let alone approximate – as one article in the January 2001 issue of *The United Church Observer* depicted OD's mission purpose: "ministering to broken people on the street" (at the time, some 200 daily).[16]

There were and are relatively few sources, written or published, or in fact oral, expounding this urban ministry. Those available sources would include: Moon's 10-year reflective history of "The Open Door" and a rare "The Door Is Always Open" reflection;[17] my recollection of visiting the mission in its earlier years in its initial place of ministry, on the second floor of the then hosting Metropolitan United Church; my own research to seek some corroboration from others' remarks, and any descriptive articles (such as those cited); and comparing some of these with a third party's assessment, particularly noting Michael Hemmings' more formal study as part of the University of Victoria seminar of the consolidation of the OD and the UR, into OPS (see note 9). All these sources suggest that the above mission statement purposes contributed to help with this urban ministry's mission, resilient capacities, and enduring intentions to carry on as urban ministries as "works-in-progress." In Moon's words, published in his 1989 Mandate article:

> God has surely been in this ministry from the very beginning. Amazing things have come about, have fitted into place, have made it possible for The Open Door to be a reality" [...] [as] "We are there to befriend, to listen to, to gather together in community, and to care for each other as best we can.[18]

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[16] Keith Howard, "The prophet they call 'Rev. Al'," *The United Church Observer*, January 2001, p. 28.

[17] L. Moon, "The Door is Always Open" in *Mandate*, a Mission and Service Fund Special Issue, 1989. It is rare, for Moon wrote little himself and was modest in giving interviews.

[18] Ibid, p. 4.

Lawrence Moon seems an exception among pioneers of urban ministry because, having inaugurated the OD, he then retired at the once standard age of 65. Many other recent urban ministries' founders have stayed on well past this age. What certainly assisted the OD was the ministry of Moon's successor, the Rev. Allen Tysick (generally known as "Rev. Al"). In a vivid portrayal of the mentorship that Moon provided to Tysick, the latter came to confess and profess:

> The loss of Lawrence is heavy on my heart. He was my teacher, mentor and friend over these years. He always had time for me and I called on him often over the years. He was the creator of our ethos to this day "unconditional love in a non judgmental way." He is the man that brought Mary and my family to Victoria. Without him, Our Place would not be. Over a year ago, I called him to seek his guidance once again when I was considering leaving Our Place and beginning the Dandelion Society, and returning to the street where both he and I began. He was so supportive and prayerful as always. … Let us believe and work for justice in memory of Lawrence.[19]

This testimony of Tysick's illustrates the nature of how one's biography or life witness conveys a basis for the mentor and successor's theological convictions. It was thus fortunate that their leadership over-lapped. Rev. Al benefited from many of Lawrence's gifts, to which he added his own competencies. He has since, as previously noted, dedicated himself to commencing yet another new urban street ministry, the "Dandelion Society" ministry. Of this he writes:

> I have, all my life been so tied to an agenda, it's nice to have the time to just sit with a lonely person and just listen to them and be with them. I also try to leave time in the week for open space, for the ability to allow, to let what happens, happen.[20]

Herein, there are implications for the challenges of characterizing success. For one such as Tysick, a passion persists for the drama of street life and its persistent, not always hidden, wounds. On the other hand, out of his prior success as an executive director with a large OPS mission [with his role in its frequent publicity and especially at the year-end fund-raising, media supported campaigns], there are hints of dissatisfaction as if feeling restricted, or even stifled, by the administrative role and its daily demands of accountability and efficiency.

[19] Tysick to Morris E-mail communication, September 5, 2011; used with permission.
[20] August 21, 2011 e-mail; see further the DandelionSociety.ca dedicated website.

Nonetheless, the common dedication of Moon and Tysick to Victoria, BC's actual street people, their willingness to invite and capacity to involve volunteers, their instincts and aptitude for constant fund-raising, and a commitment to share their fears and hopes with the wider church all constitute factors which can be said to contribute to their success. What further attests to a sense of their contributions toward a favourable outcome in the ministry – especially for those of us seeking understandings – are the following markings. As one probes, thus, there are the scarce published writings of the late Lawrence Moon which have been alluded to while also noting his attested remarks in *The Word on the Street* volume (unique to recent Canadian writings on urban ministry).[21] Tysick's otherwise sparse and scarce occasional comments have largely come by interviews, edited reflections, and the publication potential of his personal journal entries which seem akin to Henri Nouwen's notion of the "wounded healer." In addition to Tysick's past soulful offerings to his former OPS board of directors, Sunday sermons for purposes primarily of fund-raising, and with interview radio or TV clips, his personal output for this case study has had to be sought. These referenced and intensely focused journal entries depict his operational philosophy and especially express the spirituality of an urban minister by considering his own reflections on the subject. While some urban ministers have spent significant amounts of time engaging some form or level of ministry on the streets, I know of no one to date or anywhere else, at least in Canada, with the concrete consistency of Tysick. What all of this seems to provide is a basis for characterising success as that which endures and especially for what provides the content or glue to secure the possibilities for success over the long haul – that is, again, what contributes to favouring a stable ministry or successive set of ministries in urban core Victoria, BC. It is stable because it has attended to the practices of listening, cultivation of meaningful (hospitable) places, and organising so to enable make it to (actually) happen. For Tysick, his current place and mode of ministry is the "Dandelion Society" so named for its hoped-for capacity for endurance, since again, the flower or weed, he affirms, illustrates a tenacity for growth, even breaking through cement.

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[21] The *Word on the Street: An Invitation to Community Ministry in Canada*, ed. by B. Morris, H. Stevens, and A. Urquhart (Winfield, British Columbia: Wood Lake Books, 1990). For Moon's remarks, see especially pp. 21-23; 45-46, 52, 56-58, 88-89, 126-127, and 148-149.

5.3. Recurring Issues

It might be instructive to draw on one of Tysick's journal entries. The following one is lengthy but illuminating for what it discloses about the resources on which he drew in order to consider his steadfast commitment to his ministry 'through thick or thin'.[22] This is written as a prayerful meditation, which is typical of Tysick's writing. It is entitled (from original) "YOU THINK I WOULD GET USED TO IT."

> It is the tenth of November, there will be no more pleasant nights; rain, wind and ever dipping temperatures will define the next several months. In this city of unprecedented affluence, condominiums selling for 1/2 a million dollars is common place. The beauty of the inner harbour, yachts docking for the winter yet this morning I have seen 56 men and women sleeping in doorways, homeless, destitute, hungry, lonely, mentally ill, addicted, choose your illness or the combination there of and I saw it all every morning on the streets. One might think that surely after all these years, 31 in all that I could get used to it. Considering my prayer life always asking for strength and courage; from God: considering now that I am long in the tooth; I have being [sic] around homeless for a lifetime. When one is, however, in the midst of God's blowing winds […] in the shadow of the cross seeing his face in one of his many disgusting disguises, seeing the nailed, smelling the blood, hearing the cries of the suffering, nothing can prepare you to stand there […]. The discernment, the dialogue, the theological reflection can only happen, after God has shown His face. There is another homeless man in another doorway, not even covered by a blanket. As I enter, I smell the stench of his body, I lean over to touch his shoulder and then I noticed his hand swollen, cut, and dry blood very evident between his fingers. No he has not been nailed to the cross but his suffering is just as real. His rejection by the state, by the church, by the police and by all, that walk by him in silence are just as guilty as Pilate himself. I cannot get used to it, no I cannot harden my mind or heart. I feel so responsible for it. I confess my deathly silence, my complacency, my willingness to stand with the oppressor. Yet each and every time I am honoured to stand in the presence of those who suffer, I am always moved to compassion, it is their suffering that causes me to question my faith and lack of faith. It is amidst the stench of suffering and poverty that God's voice to me is the loudest: it's not a pleasant self ushering voice, you know "Jesus loves me, this I know" voice: No this voice is deeply challenging, calling out for engagement, it

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[22] One thinks of H. Richard Niebuhr's mode of affirming God's presence – or the Spirit's if one prefers – in what bears down and sustains one, if it does not, alas, defeat or slay the person; also calling one to act as if on/in any action as God Herself acting with and upon one. See *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 61-68, and James M. Gustafson's introduction therein.

ministry, it is again the ability to endure faithfully (to his grasp of what God means for, and in, his vocation).

Thirdly, Tysick is consistently self-critical and occasionally prophetic in his criticism of public, corporate, and religious institutions that they can only be justified when they serve those in need.[25] However, many people he encountered on an early morning walkabout, for individual ministers and institutions alike, there can be "no rest until all See Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, p. 11. She also aptly names narrative analysis making use of a "cross-disciplinary" approach, p.13.

is complete and no peace unless all are included."[26] From my own urban ministry experiences, observations, and readings, many urban ministries and staff seem to consider such regular walkabouts, especially beginning in the early morning hours, to be above and beyond the "call of duty." It seems enough to have a facility present on a come-and-see basis. But a consistent dedication to go out and seek the marginalised or de-institutionalized has marked Rev. Al and Our Place as somewhat unique. However, to remain at this level of expended self-critical energy is to expect perhaps the extra-ordinary. As he confesses: "I cannot get used to it; no I cannot harden my mind heart to it. I feel so responsible for it. I confess my deathly silence, my complacency, my willingness to stand with the oppressor." Thus, while noting a prophetic posture in Tysick's modus operandi, he is quick, often, to confess that he is inextricably linked nonetheless to those "powers" (to speak Pauline-like) that can bear down and burden the very street people he seeks to meet, possibly befriend, and somehow serve – including, again, to help reduce the load of what has come to oppress them.

Fourthly, the sentence "each and every time I [...] stand in the presence of those who suffer, I am always moved to compassion," reveals Tysick's openness to being moved as well as a willingness to suffer with and walk alongside the vulnerable. He expresses solidarity with both the people themselves and against the oppressive system of which he and they are indelible parts. This commitment is consistently portrayed in much of his writing. One thinks of a January 2007 (The United Church) *Observer* reflection:

We're all panhandlers here: a grubby quarter or cool half-million: it's all relative. To wit, "sat beside John to comfort him, as happens so often, he

[25] Cf. "Only he deserves power who every day justifies it," Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, trans. by L. Sjoberg and W.H. Auden (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 65.
[26] Ibid., p. 35.

comforted me. "How are you, Rev? You're looking tired" were the first words out of his mouth. "Oh, I'm good," I assured him. Then for some reason, I told him about my panhandling and my attempt to raise close to a million dollars. "Just one minute," he said. Then he began to empty his pockets. Old cigarette butts, crumpled, dirty pieces of paper, an old cookie. And a single quarter. "Here" he said, handing it to me, "it's all I have but it's a good kick-start for your panhandling." It was all he had [...].[27]

Finally, these journal reflections seem to embody intimations of Tysick's daily discipline of prayer and, as a result, his vocational identity. For him, there is an active sense of prayer-as-engagement. Here, one may evoke Robinson's *Honest to God* rendering of prayer, as also that of engagement[28] – and a complement to Tysick's not always secure or wholly self-confident ministry, as he often attests. Prayer, as a form and level of engagement with those people and situations in the sphere and scope of an urban ministry's mission, may mean not only a willingness to "show up," to be present, but an attentive and earnest wrestling with the "principalities and powers" that can sometimes bear down and oppress people. Yet, he remained open to familiar and strange people outside the mission's confines so to respond, time and again: that is, to be ever a beginner, and ever thus renewed from states of plain discouragement and weariness. Here, an otherwise tired and discouraged minister or lay worker or volunteer could be further strengthened and sustained in the determination which is clearly required for a ministry's purposes. The DS's volunteers and part-time staff attest to the grounding value of street ministry or chaplaincy. This may well be strengthened by way of a retrieval of Thomas Merton's *Contemplative Prayer,*[29] with its emphasis on preparing oneself carefully and caringly for an enduring ministry. Perhaps not coincidentally, Tysick comments: "In prayer that night I thanked God for the lesson he gave, for the challenge He presents, for the Questions not answered."

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[27] Tysick, "We're all panhandlers here," *The United Church Observer*, January 2007, p. 21.

[28] See John A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London, England: SCM Press, 1963), pp. 91-94.

[29] See Merton's *Contemplative Prayer* (New York: Image Books of Doubleday, 1971), p. 37 and passim, as well as a private journal October 1949 entry: "We must expect to make mistakes all the time [...] be content to fail repeatedly and *to begin again* [...] for the love of God" in *A Year with Thomas Merton: Daily Meditations from His Journals,* ed. by J. Montaldo (New York: HarperOne), October 27 entry, p. 313; italics added; cf. March 31 entry: "To go beyond everything [...] and press forward to the End, and to the Beginning, to the ever new Beginning that is without End."

It is perhaps unsurprising that Tysick's journal reflections are regularly used in board meetings, monthly newsletters, weekend sermons, and national church publication interviews or profiles! This mode of communication seemed essential to his consistent effort to communicate with this source of his accountability – that the ministry be considered and practised at a level of mutual accountability. Nevertheless, as Al pondered his retirement options, including leaving OPS entirely, he pined to be freed for spiritual care and chaplaincy. He also wanted to be freed from year-round fund-raising in order to ensure that OPS matched the government's annual share, for a total of $3+ million (OPS's 2015 annual financial audit recorded revenue of $5,030,369 with an excess over expenses of $266,646).[30] Tysick has often facilitated as many as two funerals or memorial services per week, which is extraordinary compared to many a minister's load of perhaps five to ten per year (via my awareness of colleagues). One surmises that he laboured steadfastly to favour a consistent rather than occasional or sporadic move to maintain a presence for church and street chaplaincy in the lives of Our Place users, staff, volunteers, board members and the public at large, though the street people were (and remain) uppermost in heart and mind.

To complete OPS as a case study on its own, but anticipating further comparisons with the urban ministry cases of Chapter 4's Toronto's Christian Resource Centre and Chapter 6's Vancouver's Streams of Justice, this section concludes by asking what nourishes and sustains its ministry such that favourable conditions for success, thought of as a purposive outcome or even, fulfilment, are possible.

5.4.   Supportive Sustenance

From the out-set, the source of strength for this urban mission and especially its street ministry has been chiefly its ministers; it remains so in view of the case studies' emphases on the genre of biography-as-theology which disclose their abiding convictions. Realistically, this should include their life partners – as consistent supporters, along the way, of their spouse's ministry, in reality, as co-ministers. Lawrence's life partner of many decades, Evelyn, died and just two years before his

[30] See OPS website <https://www.ourplacesociety.com/media-publications/annual-reports> [accessed May 18, 2016].

own death. She has been given due credit in Lawrence's 10-year history of the OD. Allen's life partner, Mary, has complemented her extremely hard-working husband. In the 2010 summer, she had the good sense to insist on an "away" vacation for a solid month in France for the whole family, thanks to the generosity of extended family (although this also included a visit to L'Arche founder Jean Vanier). The founding minister, Lawrence Moon, and his charismatic successor, Al Tysick, helped to provide some "sparks from the fire" – to evoke the book title of poems of the late Vancouver urban core historian and narrator-activist Sandy Cameron.[31]   To press the title's metaphor, it seems that the light and warmth of fire remains alive from when it is evoked with a recalled life of the "saints," as on All Saints or Souls Days – also, when recalled via the ordinary and old faithful laity of faith communities right across the country. Recalled via the witness of liturgical theology (with a focus on these annual days), such people have provided an encouraging example, or a virtual theology of a life witness for steadfastness, to help sustain both a Moon and a Tysick. The latter's dedication drew from the former's example of faithful public witness – both urban ministers at least occasionally were freed for prophetic perspectives and actions. And the predecessor exemplars – now Lawrence Moon among them – must include not only the "dearly and faithfully departed" often referred to in annual meetings or eulogies but also, to be practical, those recent and retired Board and volunteers who offer encouragement by way of serving on the board, working committees, task forces, behind the scene fund-raisers, brokers to wider and larger resources, representative spokespersons, Victoria Presbytery liaison persons to OPS. At the time of writing, board members have expressed gratitude for what was already in place which led to the consolidation of Our Place's antecedent ministries (the OD and the UR). The accumulated funding, including ongoing church commitments, their building assets, and the enduring, regular volunteers-in-the-flesh all combine to indicate a sustaining credibility in the present and hence, one could comment, favourable conditions for "success" in the future.

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[31] Sandy Cameron, *Sparks from the Fire* (Vancouver, BC: Lazara Press, 1998).

5.4.1. Prayer

Prayer of course is conceived of and practiced in various ways and levels. Prayer-as-engagement could include, by way of Centering Prayer or Christian Meditation practices, a discipline of listening to and resting in God, as thus noted.[32] Prayer has been a vital source of both Moon and Tysick's nourishment. Indeed, prayer is one signifier of that which is favourable to express these ministers' staying power or steadfastness for the long haul. Tysick's prayers could be thought of as a form of covert or latent contemplation – that is, a form of mindfulness or meditative prayer in terms of what one seems to draw upon, deeply from within.[33] As with Merton, we intuit this from the meditations found in his journal. By contrast, Moon seems to suggest that what buttressed and nourished his original passion in creating the OD appear as overt or manifest praying. There is some evidence of the latter manifest praying in pieces of one or more of their occasional writings or interviews. Moon demonstrated overt or publicly intentional prayer from the very first pastoral act he was called upon to exercise with the very first person entering the OD (as mentioned above). Not surprisingly, prayer was accentuated in this published profile of Tysick on the question of discouragement and a kind of monastic-like stability or staying power to endure:

> He cites his morning time – the hour of prayer writing in his journal, reading the Book. He reads it cover to cover. Each day when he stops, he makes a mark so he knows where to start tomorrow. When he gets to the final verse of Revelation, he flips back and starts "in the beginning" at the first verse of Genesis. At night, before he heads home, he tries to take a half hour to give thanks for the day and the ways in which God has drawn near during the day. Should we call him a saint or at least an inspirational leader? "I'd prefer you just say a sinner that falls short."
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> And then he bounces, like a ball on the pool table at the Open Door, to another story. "You know once, on an incredibly rainy West Coast day I saw a man take off his shirt to cover up a guy who was lying in the gutter

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[32] See Thomas Keating, thought to be the founder and teacher of Centering Prayer (CP), with its instructive title, *Intimacy with God: An Introduction to Centering Prayer* (New York: Crossroads Publishing Co., 1994/2003). The phrase "resting in God" is a summary depiction that comes to me via a colleague, Rose-Hannah Gaskin.

[33] Gerald May has expressed: "Remember that any prayer you might say consciously is but a wave on the surface of the great prayer being prayed deeply in you by the source of love every moment of your life." Excerpted from his *The Awakened Heart* via Inward/Outward, June 29, 2016 <http://inwardoutward.org> [accessed June 29, 2016].

having a seizure. He didn't even know the guy. That shirt was all he had. He walked away shivering in the rain, bare back.

"Now that – you wanna talk about saints."[34]

5.4.2. Hospitality

The organising of actual hospitality, onsite and on the streets, is something which contributed to sustaining the ministry. In other words, organising a place of ministry to be a welcoming "zone" (safe and thus trustworthy) or a sphere of non-judgemental acceptance, may well implement what it takes to keep someone alive with a sense of dignity, thereby reducing the ministry's temptation "to use" persons as statistical pawns or at least minimise lonely persons' sense to such an extent that "there is no place where we can be vulnerable without being used."[35] There could be, as well, a fostering of shared meaning for those urban mission supporters, who behind the scenes, can be helped to relate to the phenomenon of marginalisation – at least empathically. Here one thinks of the urban ministry's board of directors, any associated volunteers, and funding supporters who may have had personal experiences to empathise with and add to a sincere reading of the news or research on what it means to be and remain poor.[36] Here, an urban ministry's effort to nourish the staff and volunteer efforts required to be put into organising any of the hospitable resources and actual place for exercising hospitality helps to provide a basis for a sense of "success." There is significant literature on the subject (Chapter 1), but to practice and sustain hospitality is a clear challenge. According to Hemmings, in his study of the OD and UR's consolidation into OPS, otherwise "trapped resources and creativity were released." Thus, "the two founding entities were able through their partnership to attract and acquire significant funding from a number of sources, including the federal and

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[34] Keith Howard, "The prophet they call Rev Al," *The United Church Observer*, January 2001, p. 32.

[35] Henri Nouwen, cited in Henry B. Freeman, *Unlacing the Heart: Connecting with What Really Matters* (Brevard, NC: John's Press, 2015), p.48 (original source being *A Spirituality of Fund-Raising* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2010), p.49. Therein, Nouwen adds: "The roots of loneliness are very deep and cannot be touched by optimistic advertisement, substitute love images or social togetherness."

[36] E.g. see Mathew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Property in the American City* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2016) or for statistical overviews, in the Canadian sphere, see *Income Inequality: The Canadian Story*, ed.by D. A. Green et al., Vol. V The Art of the State (Montreal, P.Q.: Institute for Research on Public Relations, 2016).

provincial governments and churches." These represent ways and means to provide stability. Later he adds:

> if the Upper Room (UR) and Open Door (OD) had not been involved in partnership, their people would not have been able to take advantage of these wider connections and opportunities as they arose [...] governments were seeking partners to create positive change around homelessness, and so came to the UR and OD.[37]

To appreciate some of the organising labour put into this consolidation, it is worth noting observations by Don Fletcher, a former Upper Room board member, to the effect that:

> The contribution of the UR to the alliance has been significant. David and Al came up with the dream. The building committee was comprised of members from both the OD and UR working closely together. As well, much of the success stemmed from the direction of both board chairs at the time working together with Dave and Al. Early resistance to the alliance by some board members was eventually overcome as the benefits of the project became clearer.[38]

The sense and ability to tap into the gifts of others seems crucial – "others" as those volunteers whose valued – and hence favoured – presence is a life witness which contributes to a degree of success. They represent those chosen for their willingness and capacity to be meaningfully present over and above mere financial offerings. This is evident in the origins of the OD, right to the current challenges of it merging to become a new OPS until it pondered the move into becoming an "open" society (thus not merely limited to insiders or nominees from within the founding churches and their sphere of contacts). There is risk here, in that such a move may distance Our Place from its traditional church base of "inner support" and semblance of "control." It seems that they must try to hold the tension between breaking new ground and maintaining an organisational cohesion.

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[37] Michael Hemmings, an untitled and unpublished paper on the merger of Upper Room and The Open Door, for the Public Administration Faculty at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, April 7, 2008, pp.14, 17.

[38] E-mail communication Fletcher to Morris of January 4, 2011; used with permission.

5.4.3. Community as 'Family'?

Alongside the place of hospitality, OPS has been undergoing a prophetic kind of self-scrutiny over whether it is more an institution than a "family." The concept of family, also employed by the DS, has crept into the vocabulary of some urban missions or ministries as a way of personalising an otherwise impersonal, bureaucratic work and wider fragmentised community and even urban situation. It is thus important to ask if being "a family" is really possible on a large scale and with any consistent basis. Also, is it capable of being present by way of the faithful practices in fulfilment of an urban mission's purposes (and if so, in danger of becoming an idolatrous phenomenon[39])? Former board member Don Fletcher – a key player in the consolidation and transition period for the original OD and the UR drop-ins and facilities – expressed a concern, when interviewed by the author, that Our Place above all should not "lose its soul." A key volunteer recruit (from the street) and one who became a pivotal staff person, Bob Frank, expresses this concern when he reflects on Our Place as a "family" under fiscal stress. He wonders about the optimal size of the operation that he attends to in his capacity as a building maintenance person. Past chairperson, Dennis Anholt, cites founder Lawrence Moon's *raison d'etre* of "loving unconditionally and acting non-judgmentally" as being the axiom for countering or at least minimising the pitfalls of institutionalisation. One assumes that this early Moon formulation for ministry remains crucial. Anholt's editorial writings in the *Victoria Times-Colonist* have expressed the hope that Our Place will be minimally institutionalised (assuming that institutionalisation is a given for any large entity to survive). This task is one of avoiding or reducing otherwise dehumanised modes of inter-relating to the urban mission's drop-in and in-house or regular users. More positively, Anholt writes of OPS as a "hub of hope and belonging." He was, at the time of the comment below, struck by how hope – which if authentic, is more than mere wishful thinking – needs to be rooted in and arise out of the acceptance of people. Implicitly alluding to and combining the elements of listening, place, organising and with a realistic nod to stability, he thus writes (and employs the first names of typical OPS users):

[39] See Janet Fishburn, *Confronting the Idolatry of Family: A New Vision for the Household of God* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991).

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> "Hope" and "belonging" are indefinable terms. Probably you understand them best when you have neither. We believe a caring community must always endeavour to end the loneliness and isolation of the vulnerable in our midst and support, wherever possible, human relationships and belonging. We also believe that belonging can set in motion hope and initiative for a better life. We want to extend the benefits [that] Topper, Bill, and Ruth found with us [and] others in the community who need a sense of hope and belonging.[40]

Our Place's board came to express concerns about the future. Where Our Place was once chiefly sponsored by the founding United Church (with Presbyterian Church and Anglican Church contributions) – locally, regionally, and nationally – it was felt necessary to become a public, non-profit, and registered charity institution in order to attract the supportive involvement of the wider and non-religiously-aligned public. That is, mere church support could no longer be adequate to support the ever growing and expanding OPS. It serves more people, requires more funding, and adds and replaces older board members with those beyond the church, and even with those beyond the Christian Faith. Past chairperson Anholt spoke of the difficulty of securing the on-going funding and resources as well as personal commitments. Nevertheless, it has been the active presence of Our Place as a street ministry and social advocate for the marginalised that provides a prophetic witness to be expressed. To be sure, Rev. Al's ministry signifies just such a voice because it also arises from among the poor. Our Place's building and activities dominate Pandora Street. When news coverage indicated that perhaps the ministry was also a part of the problem since it leads to so many street people gathering out in the open street, the board was quick to counter the charge. Anholt again protests:

> There have been many articles and letters to the editor about the problems of Pandora [Street and area]. Our Place is often mentioned. It's natural we are cited, as the troubles happen on our doorstep. But – and I cannot state this emphatically enough – Our Place is not the problem [...] Issues on Pandora are complex. Listen to health and social service professionals who deal with this problem daily and your head spins. Issues related to mental health, housing, drug addiction, poverty and

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[40] D. Anholt, "A Hub of Hope and belonging" *Times-Colonist* supplement, November 2009, p. D5; originally c/o <www.ourplacesociety.com/print/media_articles/279> [accessed August 27, 2010].

more are visited upon the individuals camping on Pandora. For many, these matters are layered one on top of another. These are poor and desperately sick people whose pain is beyond the scope of any one agency [...]. We are part of the solution. We are the community centre for Greater Victoria's homeless and poor. People come to Our Place for sustenance, warmth, a shower, a toilet and, importantly, for fellowship. We are often their only home, where they find friends, safety and sense of belonging.[41]

What Anholt expresses here is a rebuff to the syndrome of "blaming the victim" – often exacerbated by the phenomenon of gentrification in central suburbs of most cities. Instead, he probes more deeply into seemingly intractable poverty issues while bearing witness to the hope that OPS is indeed "part of the solution."

From the informal discipline known as the "ethics of the fitting" or "response ethics" there are questions that could now be applied to OPS. The following brief answers serve as a hint of what will be the deeper task of discerning how it is that Our Place serves favourably as both an intrinsic case on its own and yet sustains the argument of this thesis. In other words, what particular themes does this Victoria urban ministry provide that illumines those favourable ingredients for a long haul or meaningfully enduring – and hence, successful – ministry?

5.5.   Fitting and Favourable Responses

It is recalled that the "ethics of the fitting" approach poses some core questions. To the question of "what is going on?" It could be expressed that the OD, OPS, and DS ministries took note of the gentrifying of the inner-city (alas, toward impoverishment) of urban core Victoria. When we analyse the pieces of the participant-observation research of OD founder, Lawrence Moon (which led to the further organisation of peer and inter-agency input and accountability), then its subsequent Our Place can be depicted as moving to respond to some of the most basic needs of homeless people. These consist of food and clothing; the means of becoming clean; the offer of varieties of counselling; facilitating forays into "stepping up" levels of possible "straight life" (such as connection to future employment via on-site mentoring and apprenticing);

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[41] Dennis Anholt, "Our Place Part of the Solution on Pandora: Letter to Editor," *Victoria Times-Colonist*, formerly accessible in *Our Place Bulletin, Media Articles* – November 1, 2010, p.1.

offering continuing participation in alliances or coalitions to explore such systemic issues as lack of affordable housing and adequate social assistance rates; and in general, hosting a basic ministry of presence in Victoria's inner-city. Besides these demands, Our Place seeks to involve those socially sensitive people in greater Victoria who are open to a faithful public witness leading to involvement in urban ministry. Former board member Don Fletcher depicts these combinations of services as intending, in his words, a resourceful "hand-up" – that is, by way of an act of solidarity, an enabling mode of self-determination rather than a mere "hand-out" mode of ministry, which can fall short of interaction.[42] He adds that the merger of the OD and UR ministries has contributed a legacy, which may well act as a momentum for future creativity. That is, "the two organizations complemented each other with the OD providing a history of a drop-in centre and the UR providing a background in housing and the provision of meals."[43]

Secondly, we move to consider another pair of questions raised by "response ethics," namely "what are others' responses to what is going on and in light of this, what has been Our Place's fitting response?" Our Place moved over a generation and a half to make available out of two separate locations and histories, a large, centralised building that could be present for both staff/volunteers and the "users" (often, aka: "family"). They risked practicing a meaningful atmosphere if not an enduring place of hospitality. The staff, with volunteers, tried to work with flexible or otherwise freely available ministers to be available to OPS's purposes and functions and, at the same time, be available to educate and possibly animate the wider church to support OPS. Not least, though likely most ambitious of all, they wanted to bear a faithful public, prophetic witness in word and action. The Church is mandated by the gospel to stand at all times with the least, the last, and the lost. Our Place could possibly be indicted for an apparent lack of due attention to *doing* justice. I am tempted to suggest such an observation, while however sympathising with the sheer workload of OPS and its accompanying

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[42] See Ann Voskamp, "We Must Trade Charity for Solidarity" adding, "Every one of us can start changing headlines when we start reaching out our hands. What if we gave up charity for solidarity? What if we gave up giving from the top down and gave ourselves in reaching out, less the vertical and more like the horizontal beam of the cross?" <http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2016/october/ann-voskamp-broken-way-we-must-trade-charity-for-solidarity.html> [accessed October 7, 2016].

[43] E-mail communication of Fletcher to Morris, January 4, 2011.

tendency perhaps to be cautious of any funding sources being publicly challenged (i.e., challenging establishment powers on root causes of poverty and homelessness with which they could well feel complicit). On the other hand, the late founder Moon dreamed of that horizon of hope (that "God be all to all," as I Cor. 15:28) – evoking a Pauline and Moltmann image[44] – when care for the poor would include care for the elimination of poverty, to the extent even that he and the then Door Is Open be put out of existence.[45]

To an extent, the third question of what then is the "fitting" or "favourable" response of an urban ministry such as OPS's has been engaged. To press further, to be a fitting response to its urban core context and with wider funding challenges on a year by year basis, this would require that Our Place maintain a sufficient stability or capacity for a meaningful endurance. Then, there would be a capacity and resilience to honour its current and desired levels of commitment as a now major Victoria mission institution. Along with the under-girding of what this ministry needs to do to honour its "soul," Our Place must pay heed to what the late biblical scholar Walter Wink aptly names as the "angel" of any institution in terms of its inner and outer vocational purpose.[46] OPS's angel is the summons to be steadfast to its founding and sustaining purpose, lest its inevitable institutionalisation contribute to the sacrifice of its founding and animating soul. This is an enduring temptation – given its size, its large and increasing budgets – as is the need to pay heed to its funders and court new ones in the struggle for survival. They have somehow to compensate for what is likely to be declining church support. They have to resist tendencies to believe their own publicity at the possible cost of not engaging in critical self-scrutiny. They could be pressed to secularise through extending board membership with the possible cost of losing in-depth church input and

[44] See I Corinthians 15:26-28 and Jurgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation,* trans. by M. Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001).

[45] See Moon's remarks in *The Word on the Street,* p.149: "[...] that the socio-economic conditions that make inner-city ministries needed will no longer exist [...]."

[46] See W. Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Galilee Doubleday, 1998), especially pp. 4, 30: "What distinguishes the notion of the angel of an institution is the Bible's emphasis on vocation. The angel of a corporate entity is not simply the sum total of all it is, but also bears the message of what it ought to be," akin to Reinhold Niebuhr's grace-based Serenity Prayer with the imperative "ought" as the core of the 2nd petition ("grant us the courage to change the things we ought to" not only "what we can" as the popular version expresses).

participation. They may become routinised once they have lost their founding and successor charismatic EDs (so difficult to succeed or replace).[47] Last though not least, possible challenges from smaller and perhaps more flexible urban ministries who vie for both street-level inter-personal attention and prophetic posturing to the powers that may undermine their project. Indeed, though unlikely to be an intended aim, Tysick's founding and practices of the Dandelion Society come into play. His passion to return to the streets and a full-time chaplaincy therein had been at least partly curtailed and perhaps even thwarted by his executive roles (administrative and fund-raising) with OPS.

The four terms that characterise an urban ministry's capacity to contribute to a meaningful public and even prophetically responsible society have been noted above (that is, listening, place, organising, and an enduring stability). To be more explicit, it is helpful to name and reference the five cautions or key temptations of which any urban ministry would need to be self-critically aware for the sake of its continuing capacity to provide a constructive faithful witness. Not in any particular order, *co-optation* seeks to discern the presence of that relationship whereby a ministry might be compromised in its relations with a funding body such as the state or the government. All Canadian registered charities are restricted in the extent that they can exercise advocacy roles, beyond what the government deems to be the main if not sole purpose of a charitable society, namely the practice of recognisable charitable activities or services or programs. To the extent that both OPS and the DS provide this – consistently and devotedly – it could be said that their ministries are safe. It could also be said, however, that it has become "instrumentalised by the state";[48] that is, a ministry's prophetic function of speaking truth to those in power can come to be reduced or muted, despite

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[47] Hard to replace and thus succeed is a charisma, as indicated I surmise in Al Tysick's successor's very short duration as the then new executive director of OPS, Sandra Danco. In an e-mail of February 13, 2011 (to B. Morris), with the then board chair Don Storch, he questioned the challenge of replacing Rev. Al, based on Danco's depth and suitability of experience. Alas, she departed from OPS within a few months to be replaced by OPS commandeering the interim executive director of Vancouver's First United Church Mission, Don Evans, to come to OPS for at least a year, following which, he has been hired permanently. Evans continues to hold Tysick in high regard and tries to practices an "open door" working policy with him.

[48] L. Bretherton, "A Postsecular Politics? Inter-faith Relations as a Civic Practice" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, June 2011, Vol. 79, No. 2, p. 355.

the ministry's occasional exercise of advocacy and/or assisting in organising support, as in the Spring and Summer of 2016 OPS and DS support for Victoria's tent city occupants[49] and their own proposals for safe and affordable housing (not limited to BC's capital city of course)[50].

Clientelism and *commodification* are possibly evident in OPS and DS's regular fund-raising campaigns, especially for and during the Christmas and Easter seasons with particular emphases on the weather conditions that impact the homeless street people. Therein there are cited the number of people actually assisted in the form of blankets and meals issued, possibly referrals rendered, and memorials conducted all combine – with some other aspects – to convey the breadth of help the above ministries of this case study have provided (along with showers, counselling, advocacy and referrals, recruitment and honouring of volunteers, monthly newsletter profiles of a person's story, etc.). The cautionary challenge to the regular reporting of statistics is that the very persons being served could become translated into convenient numbers, a means to the end of the ministry surviving for its own sake. Critically expressed, ostensibly each person served and even upgraded to volunteer and occasionally board member has a financial figure attached to them, so that it is as if their apparent worth is something like $2.95 a meal, giving the contributor a tangible dollar return. Constructively and rhetorically expressed, if otherwise general statistics are personalised so that a potential donor is presented with a dollar calculation as to how much is needed to help this person with an actual meal, then does this favourably assist survival to the person and the ministry?

Communalism, we recall, conveys a sense that there are within the orbit of an urban ministry a component or parts of the ministry that could be re-configured as "family." This intimate term might convey that detached or unattached persons are

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[49] That is, people living in their own or borrowed tents, as homeless people and with some of their allies taking possession of public land to attest to the wider need for affordable and adequate housing. The DS expressed sympathy if not solidarity by regular visits, attending daily on-site meetings, and Tysick choosing to live at tent city for days at a time. OPS expressed support by becoming a means by which additional supportive or emergency housing shelter could be provided, adding staff via government funds thereby. See also note 55.

[50] See, e.g., Kelly Sinoski, "Drugs, lack of shelters fuel rise of tent cities" in *Vancouver Sun*, September 27, 2016, p. A3.

somehow such a welcome part of a ministry that it becomes more for them than a mere institution or business-as-usual style of practising ministry – with the penchant use of numbers to justify its existence and funding. This counter-move is conveyed in the mission purposes of OPS, "hope and belonging" and that of DS, "hope lives here." Nonetheless as a caveat, when a "family" designation is used which selects and names "some" persons as part of an "in-group" – which by definition and then likely behaviour contrasts to an "outsider" population since all users of the mission might realistically be considered a part of the ministry's family – then there could be an imposition of limits. That is, this intimate kind of labelling could result in an unintended diminishment in a serving of and advocating for the needs of poor people that are simply beyond the "family" designation, status, or acceptance (because such people outside of familiarity or personal trustworthiness, might remain as "strangers" and even feared).[51] Then, one asks, is there much other than a convenient, mere identity group being honoured here (in the face of the biblical commands to love thy neighbour, stranger, and even an enemy outside of the gates or kinship sphere, demands)? There remains an inevitable tension between those deemed part of the "family" – also thinking of a popular UCC hymn, "Part of the Family"[52] – and those, at least initially and until a level of inter-personal relating might be possible, who are *not* part of the family.

Finally, the presence of *cowardice* needs exploring. It is surely evident in the above description of OPS and DS, that to commence such ministries a considerable amount of nerve was – and is – needed. A considerable presence of courage is needed to sustain such ministries when, instead, an Al Tysick could have conveniently slipped into mere retirement. Perhaps due to his personality but more particularly due to his abiding sense of vocation as a minister called to the city streets, is there not a sense of favourable conditions for a steadfast ministry being possible because of a willing commitment to endure?

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[51] See Kelly S. Johnson, *The Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007).

[52] See James K. Manley, "Part of the Family (Come in, Come in and Sit Down)" in *Voices United: The Hymn and Worship Book of the United Church of Canada* (Toronto, ON: United Church Publishing House, 1996), #395.

All of the above caveats could be expressed critically and constructively (as has that for commodification and clientelism). With the help of Bretherton and the author's own modest additions there is a check and balance on what makes for success in the sense of a purposive fulfilment. There are those conditions that favour outcomes that approximate the marks of success understood as making the best out of the realities or limitations that a ministry really faces. But a shared urban ministry cannot be content with merely accepting such limits which are always present and often in multiple forms, a ministry is emboldened to push back the cutbacks to funding and thus limitations of budgets as well as the fears of threats to annual reviews of registered charities' reports to the Federal arm of the state. Rather, there is evidence of a pursuit of possibilities. It is as if the full implications of the grace-based serenity prayer need be activated – that while indeed grace is prayed for to accept the things that a ministry cannot change, courage is also prayed for so that what can be changed ought to be changed, and of course a wisdom to distinguish the one from the other. How to be set free for such an undertaking constitutes a goodly part of the case study analysed in the following chapter.[53]

5.6. Conclusion

There are intimations in the above list of cautions and challenges as to what and how this urban ministry illustrates, exemplifies, and illumines the nature of success in its words, and deeds, in order to exercise a faithful public and, prophetic witness. This thesis contends that it is the creative and conjunctive leaven of practising this witness – i.e., with the assistance of the elements of listening, place, and organising in the service of a meaningful endurance – that provide a favourable presence and hoped-for long-haul ministry. Such elements in turn provide the stable conditions for what constitutes a successful urban ministry.

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[53] Again, the original form and content of the grace-based serenity prayer, via the original author's daughter; see Elisabeth Sifton's detailed elaboration on Reinhold Niebuhr's prayer, *The Serenity Prayer: Faith and Politics in Times of War and Peace* (New York: WW. Norton, 2003), pp. 7, 11, 111, 292-93, 340, 342, and 349.

To get to such a long-haul commitment with a faithful public and prophetic urban ministry seems to require something tantamount to being aroused by and drawn into a conscious- and conscience-arousing event or series of events – and, being willing to be renewed by such. In other words, this constitutes what might be called a set of conscience-arousing moments which could be named, as via the late Catholic Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, as a "contrast-awareness" or more formally as a form of "negative dialectics"[54] – or, what some Liberation theologians and pastors have called *conscientisation.* This term combines "consciousness" and "conscience" and helps to account for why and even how the process of animation works – i.e., an urban ministry's founder(s) is(are) awakened via social conscience and biblical imperatives. They feel moved to seek ways and means to organise a meaningful if not enduring response for a ministry. To sustain the nature and content of such a faithful witness however – to approximate the conditions for stability or endurance – a worship component seems vitally necessary. To this end, while neither OPS or Tysick's off-shoot of the DS host regular, weekly worship services they are on call for numerous memorial or funeral services, annual Vigils (such as Christmas or New Year's Eve silent vigil on the front steps of the capital city's Legislature). One of the three spiritual chaplains of OPS, Julianne Kasmer, expressed their worship presence in this way:

> We do NOT have a regular worship service at OPS, though *we offer far too many memorial services and occasional services throughout the church year* – usually communion centred services at Thanksgiving, Christmas, during Lent, Holy Week and Easter. We have a weekly Bible study on Wednesdays. We also have an aboriginal healing circle and respond to grief and pastoral/spiritual needs on a one to one basis. We have three Spiritual Care staff, one of whom is First Nations and another who is a Unitarian with an extensive background in multi-faith chaplaincy.[55]

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[54] See *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter (New York: Crossroad, 1984), especially pp. 18, 45, 54-59.

[55] Julianne Kasmer, e-mail of September 8, 2016; used with permission. Italics added. Rev Al Tysick of DS adds, "Those that asked for prayer in the street I kneel down with them and we share prayer together. I do communion on the street corner with anyone that asks. I do a more formal Good Friday service for the homeless once a year. I perform approximately two funerals a week for the homeless. Worship prayer and thanksgiving are part and parcel of the Dandelion Society." Email of September 7, 2016; used with permission.

To conclude this case study narrative, former chairperson Anholt outlines such a conscious awareness moment of righteous indignation which is also linked to an empathetic personal-and-prophetic confession:

> Poverty is a terrible business. Every day is a struggle and it's easy to lose sight of the hope that things will change for the better. Isolation and lack of social supports compound the misery for many, especially the homeless. I've never known poverty. I've never known a day when I didn't look forward to tomorrow or a time I didn't feel welcome. I grew up in a loving family. But, more than this, I also feel part of my community, my province and my country. I participate fully. I belong. I am very fortunate! Imagine not having any of this good luck. Imagine being homeless and thinking no one will help you, that no one cares about you. Imagine feeling everything is stacked against you, even people you meet on the street. Imagine having no choices. You're stuck. All avenues are blocked. Add to this hunger, loneliness and isolation. You've got no family or community to lean on. You are destitute and alone.[56]

The plethora of challenges of this BC province's capital to urban ministry continue – from what thus inspired and evoked the OD of Lawrence Moon and his successor Rev. Al, and the eventual merger of OD with the UR to become OPS. As noted, Tysick carries on with the DS for a renewed or hitherto confined and only occasional advocacy of justice.[57] Among myriad activities and works of mercy, his Dandelion Society ministry has included a recent immersion in his work as a *de facto* chaplain with downtown Victoria's long-lasting and ongoing tent city occupation by the homeless and their supporters. There is in this public and prophetic witness of the DS evidence of a move from charitable responses to poverty to the intentions of advocacy for justice. On the issue of affordable housing for the homeless and poor in general, this could mean – and indeed, has meant – the DS pressing for meaningful social-affordable housing and,

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[56] Dennis Anholt, "A Hub of Hope and Belonging" in *Victoria Times-Colonist,* a supplement article, November 21, 2009, p. D5.

[57] While tempted to elaborate further on Rev. Al's post-retirement and relatively new urban ministry which doubled in size in less than a year, I resist other than noting the Dandelion Society's quarterly *Community Report*. The Fall 2013 issue characteristically professes the value of street ministry and now adds the element of advocacy (only implied in OPS): "In everything we do, the Dandelion Society advocates for the humanity, the rights, and the desires of the individual" (attested in due respect and process, fair treatment by way of fostering trustworthy relationships especially in Tysick's months of offering himself as an onsite chaplain to Victoria's Tent City amid the fierce criticisms from groups such as Not In My Back Yard's "Mad as Hell" and even church bodies that once supported tent city).

even then, further illustrating a move to the deeper, wider claims and mandates of justice making-and-keeping. How this has been possible for Tysick's small, flexible ministry will be the subject of our comparative chapter on all the case studies. One sure indicator is this urban minister's steady street ministry and an exercise of a virtually prophetic freedom, given the less encumbered size and perhaps less restricted obligations made by, and back to, its donors. What has been possible is for Tysick and others in collaboration with him to exercise a posture different from his previous stint with OPS (less administratively bureaucratic and more personal and "hands-on") and yet with regular or seasonal pleas for support so that the DS's ministry be more than merely a daily round of checking on the homeless and serving them with emergency hand-outs.[58] In any case, none of these attempts to bear a public and prophetically faithful witness is easy especially for small and virtually solo ministries. This then is the chief focus of the next and final case study.

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[58] See thus a Tysick letter to the Anglican Bishop of Victoria: "Pray for me as I will go to live in Tent City: not for the poor but for the Church. I wish to try to make it clear to God's children that as a faction of the Church moves out another faction of the Church comes eat and sleep with them. In life and death beyond, God is with us; we should not fear… So I write you for pastoral care, for your understanding, and for your prayers." Email, Tysick to Morris, May 22, 2016; used with permission.

Chapter 6.   Vancouver's Streams of Justice

The following case study is important because of its capacity to shed light on the tension between providing charity and seeking justice. It seeks to explore the point at which such a tension might be creative but also when it illustrates a collapse of the need for a check and balance for when charity does not or will not move to justice advocacy and organising or when justice measures slip back into mere charitable responses to the consequences of inequalities. Since naming and demonstrating this tension is central to the purpose of this thesis – and implicit to the other purpose of demonstrating what constitutes success in terms of a favourable (purposeful) outcome to urban ministry – a case study is needed. This could illumine the difficulty of managing how charity could move towards a consistent advocacy for justice-making and justice-keeping but also how it is that charity can become a substitute for justice in the context of urban ministry.

6.1.   Origins and Purposes

The Streams of Justice (SoJ) name is drawn from the biblical prophetic text of Amos 5:24 "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream."[1] From the beginning, SoJ sought to distinguish itself from the work of charity,

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[1] Elaborating, "The 'stream' envisioned in this passage is one that doesn't dry up in the hot summer months, but flows constantly throughout the year. As such it nourishes and sustains the life of the community and its members. So too social justice is something that must be constantly practiced if communal life is to be nourished and sustained. The biblical notion of justice is centrally concerned with the protection, support and care of the most vulnerable members of the society, those who are particularly exposed to abuse, violence and exploitation, and susceptible to deprivation of basic resources. Consequently, it is not limited to fairness in legal and judicial matters, but entails equitable access to resources, sufficient economic means for meaningful social participation, valued input into collective decision-making, ensured personal dignity and mutual respect, and non-exclusionary community practices." From streams of justice.org website, dated February 20, 2007. [accessed November 23, 2010].

especially as this tends to become overwhelming work and even a substitute for the work of justice. This is elaborated below.

Streams of Justice (SoJ) grew out of month-long Tuesday evening seminars, held during October, on the nature of poverty and homelessness in greater Vancouver, BC, over the course of two consecutive years (2006-7). The operating base was, and remains, the Grandview Calvary Baptist Church (GCBC) in east end Vancouver. This church is adjacent to one of the busiest, multi-cultural, cross-class and secular City districts. Helpfully, GCBC has had its own story narrated in two recent publications written by its long-term lead minister, Tim Dickau.[2] From these seminars, the commitment emerged both to understand what constitutes justice and to work for it in practice. A group of people emerged who wished to continue the discussion and to explore how best to pursue "justice" in this particular setting. They took as their lead the prophetic sense of inclusive justice for all. While the biblical prophets remain core to the understanding of justice, the original founders of SoJ did not restrict their activity to Biblical thinking and exegesis, but also sought justice in real situations by relating to others who held common cause, some of whom hailed from different class backgrounds and held little or no religious commitment. In this SoJ was similar to the EHPP, the new monasticism, and Reinhold Niebuhr's story of participant-observing during his 13-year Detroit pastorate.[3] Though enriching and engaging for many of those involved, this was neither a quick nor easy process. It was a process parallel to that which led Merton to his reflections based on decades of contemplative prayer, letters, journals, and hundreds of articles and other publications.

SoJ would not – indeed, could not – have emerged without the prior social engagement of its two co-founders and a circle of trusted friends, largely through association with GCBC. Thus, Dave and Teresa Diewert thought long and hard about their years of living, working, and engaging in a myriad of volunteer activities (from

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[2] The chief source is T. Dickau *Plunging into the Kingdom Way*: *Practicing the Shared Strokes of Community, Hospitality, Justice and Compassion* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011 (based on and up-dated from his D.Min. Thesis for Carey College, by a similar title in 2010).

[3] See previously cited literature on the EHPP and the New Monastics in Chapters 2 and 4 and Reinhold Niebuhr, *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* (Chicago, IL: Willett, Clark & Colby, 1929) and *The Reminiscences of Reinhold Niebuhr* (Columbia Oral Research Project, 1957 [microfilm]).

preparing and serving food to supervising a weekly shelter for the homeless in the church basement.) This occurred in the immediate neighbourhoods around East 1st and Commercial Drive (the location of GCBC) to arrive at the conclusion that justice must be the governing priority for their churchly activity. They had established considerable credibility among some neighbouring churches and social agencies by providing hospitality for the homeless or street people in their own homes. Much of this occurred in association with GCBC's own particular and delegated Crossroads Community Ministry at the time, and its own benefactors' investment in providing houses for the purpose of hospitality for referred political refugees and for persons wishing to use stable housing for personal change. The Diewerts served these hospitality and wider community facilitating roles while also raising a young family. They integrated community ministry with their professional lives – Dave as a Biblical language and studies professor at Regent College at the University of BC and Teresa as a guidance counsellor and social studies teacher at nearby Gladstone High School. Crucially, they had roots in the GCBC which must be named as one of the key sources for founding and resourcing SoJ. As with the other case studies, there really is a case to consider SoJ to be within GCBC as much as, mutually, the other way around – that of GCBC itself as the founding base and ongoing resource for SoJ's sessions and enduring work. As narrated below, SoJ cannot be written without also understanding GCBC's presence and its own enduring faithfulness – including its generous flexibility on use of space, equipment, publicity, and above all, the morale and credibility provided by this host church's own spiritual practice and legitimacy.

6.2. Context of Grandview Calvary Baptist Church (GCBC)

In case studies, there can be cases embedded "within cases"; these are units within the case study under scrutiny (also called "multiple-case designs").[4] We recall from the case studies of Victoria's OPS (Chapter 5) and Toronto's Christian Resource Centre (Chapter 4) that they too arose from "embedded" precedents. Without these

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[4] See Robert E. Stake, "Qualitative Case Studies" in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, ed. by N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008), p. 130. See for "multiple case study" Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: design and methods*, 4th edn (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2009), pp. 53-56.

"parental" sources, there is little doubt that they would not have arisen at all. Such is the situation for SoJ. It arose from the activities and commitments of GCBC. Not all of the past and present SoJ participants would realise this[5] because SoJ could presently be perceived to be a stand-on-its-own network. However as narrated below, it makes frequent, flexible and generous use of GCBC. SoJ simply would not have arisen had there not been an active support base provided by GCBC. It may well be that, one day, SoJ will be put to the test regarding its capacity to endure apart from the concrete support of GCBC.

The story of GCBC is quite remarkable. From an ageing urban core church on the verge of closure, a dedicated young couple arrived in the 1980s to engage in ministry. They sought to discover and strengthen the surrounding community's needs, concerns, dreams, and hopes for GCBC's immediate and wider spiritual community grounded in traditional faith while attuned to being open and willing to serve and to learn; to explore and experiment; to host multiple ministries of hospitality; and not least, to raise the profile of the church in a context where traditional churches were experiencing serious decline. Tim and Mary Dickau virtually plunged into their GCBC church ministry and participated in the social life of the area. They arrived with a modus operandi, an incarnational ministry that had not been seen before in this area. This form of ministry with its emphasis on place and the listening that attends to it is very much evident as well in this thesis' Chapter 4 case study on the Toronto Christian Resource Centre (and again a formative influence of the EHPP therein). Dickau writes:

> That decision to live in Grandview-Woodlands was pivotal in learning to be at home in and, later, to love our neighborhood. It is difficult to imagine how we could have developed the sort of natural networks and shared life together we did if we had lived in a distant part of the city, something I discovered many of the clergy whose churches were in our neighbourhood had chosen to do. It is equally difficult to imagine how smaller churches like GCBC can overcome the fragmentation so intrinsic to our culture and begin to live out of a kingdom vision without sharing in the life of the neighborhood. […] choosing to live in the neighbourhood of the church building declares that they are willing to

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[5] Based on my own eight-plus years of participant-observation of and within SoJ.

embrace this particular place, an expression of incarnation reverberating from Christ.[6]

Thus, the Dickaus dedicated themselves to involvement with parents' groups, while meeting their own parenting support needs at the same time, to providing on-site meals and their GCBC space for over-night shelter for the homeless. These activities connected them with other churches from greater or metro Vancouver. This included involvement in and eventual chairing of a major Grandview Woodlands Area Service Team (the only church to be involved from the district). They have helped to organise spiritual direction which has included the contemplative disciplines of Centering Prayer and Christian meditation,[7] and mutual support groups. Eventually, they established and still maintain two community support houses, with live-in staff, for political refugees and another for street people seeking transition, an alternative to a life based in addiction or poverty. Perhaps above all, they offered a welcoming invitation to those outside the orbit of institutional Christianity to become part of a Christian Church in an urban environment where mainstream churches in the face of secularism and spiritual but not religious options, had been in retreat. The similarities with the EHPP and its sense of a call to re-embrace the otherwise abandoned inner-city are clear.

Tim has also supported, re-energised and led the Vancouver East Ministerial Association, a group which meets monthly and brings together an average of 20 pastors and church workers. When gathered, they discuss both local and global issues. They begin each meeting with a round of introductions and then in small groups, endeavour to name a positive indication of the Spirit's presence in their life and ministry as well as a time or moment of despair. Following this, each person prays for the others in the group. The rest of the time, usually over 90 minutes, is dedicated to discussion of a central concern guided sometimes by previously (e-mail) sent questions on a topic. The November 25, 2010 meeting offers an example. "During the past year our members

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[6] Dickau, *Plunging into the Kingdom Way: Practicing the Shared Strokes of Community, Hospitality, Justice and Compassion* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), p. 9. Cf. Doug Norris' incarnational profession in Chapter 5's CRC case study.

[7] See for both disciplines and their methods, the monastic or monastic-like writings of seminal writers as Thomas Keating and many spin-offs <http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/category/category/ centering-prayer> [accessed September 26, 2016] and for Christian Meditation, John Main's teachings <http://wccm.org> [accessed September 26, 2016].

have… working to help the poor, including the question to the attending church leader or staff, "how have you been involved?" A second question further complements: "What is the leading edge or next step for your church in your involvement with the poor… for empowering the poor or seeking a more just city?"[8]

No case seems to lend itself immediately or automatically to be a direct analogy to another urban ministry situation. Thus, without an apparent working precedent, GCBC became what it adventuresomely could. "Plunging into the Kingdom Way: Practicing the Shared Strokes of Community, Hospitality, Justice, and Confession" evokes the title of Tim Dickau's book, which also suggestively narrates GCBC's story over a then twenty-year period. This set of mission purposes has a sound chance of occurring because of key persons and families providing tangible and sustaining support. In particular, a family of wealthy commercial developers was a faithful supporter of GCBC. They have been for the most part a worshipping component of GCBC; they have provided significant financial aid in order that the church could develop a program of establishing community houses. The Dickaus' ministry heralded a renewal of church and community life for an otherwise steadily declining and even dying church. Their partnership and teamwork was indispensable.[9]

The dedication of persons and resources combined with the sense of it being a critical moment led Dickau to speak of several trajectories.[10] These include a movement

[8] Personal notes and recall from attendance, then and there. Reproduced with permission.

[9] Specifically, John Dominic Crossan's studies note the presence of benefactors or sponsoring patrons for the organising support with the early Christian movement as in his *The Birth of Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1998), pp.424-427. See also Wayne A. Meeks' *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), Chapter II's "The Social Level of Pauline Christians," espec. pp. 52f. and Jerome H. Neyrey, ed. *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), espec. Chapter 9's "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts, espec. pp. 247-264. Finally see Joshua Rice's *Paul and Patronage: The Dynamics of Power in I Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Papers, 2013) for detailed elaborations on Roman influenced forms and levels of patrons, benefactors, and social-political-religious conferrals of status and Peter Brown's *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton University Press, 2012), Chapter 15: "The Roman Rich and Their Clergy." Reta Halteman Finger discerns equalitarian thrusts in at least Paul's Corinthian correspondence, "Paul's Letter to the 1%," *SoJourners*, Vol. 41/No. 6, June 2012, pp.26-29.

[10] See Dickau, *Plunging into the Kingdom Way*, respectively for these four trajectories pp. 8-13; 52-54; 76-79; 80-99.

from isolation to community in the possibilities of shared life, within and around the church's spheres of involvement; from homogeneity to diversity, by way of the involvement of an increasing inter-cultural district and provision of hospitality to political refugees; from indifference to engaging the wider community by way of in-church and extra-curricular community practices; and, from charity to advocacy to justice practices. Dickau's elaboration on these four trajectories requires wider conversation among urban ministries, including the caveat that each of them could become idolatrous if they become disconnected from the governing image of his book title, the *Kingdom*.[11] Out of such a context, the Diewerts, in turn emerged and they too have animated, continued, and deepened the prophetic social ministry of SoJ (as elaborated below).

SoJ is basically a network. That is, it is an informal and non-institutional but regular gathering of essentially like-minded people dedicated to bearing a strong and specific witness to social justice. They offer this to the organised church and to others with either church backgrounds or interested in what the organised church has to offer by way of affirming the need for and practicing social justice in the community and city at large. As such, it is more than an ad hoc interim gathering, but it is not formally structured as an institution would be. While its long-term future cannot be guaranteed, SoJ's present status remains stable. It can be counted on to be available week in and week out. What characterises SoJ as a particular network is its non-institutional or informally organised involvement of people to meet, engage, and relate to social issues thereby connecting and even integrating otherwise isolated or compartmentalised pockets of people. To do this requires the intentional seeking after social justice. It entails learning to embrace multiple issues and affirming a shared vision and purpose in mission. These flexible sets of practices must nonetheless be sufficiently widespread and rooted in multiple concerns in order to involve varieties of people on a continuing basis. And, this basis must be sufficient enough to be seen, heard, referenced and come to be trusted so that their deeds come to approximate if not embody their words (i.e., to "walk the talk" as addiction recovering 12-step groups are prone to express it). What characterises SoJ as a spiritual community as well as a loosely structured network are

[11] Ibid, pp. 115-118 ("These Trajectories as Idols").

these features: it is a *body of people* (versus "virtual reality") that *meet over a long period of time* to engage in *deep conversations* (and *deeds*).[12]

Basic to this ministry is the intentional emphasis of SoJ to distinguish justice from mere charity. This is an intentional step of unearthing and exposing the experienced inadequacies of charitable and even emergency aid responses to inequality and the outcome of poverty; it is also a set of strategies to try to move beyond such mere charity, to at least next of all, that of advocacy or supporting a rejected or marginalised person to press for redress of his or her ignored, even denied rights. As frequently expressed by its co-founders (see below) and out of years of serving food and providing emergency shelter to the wider community's homeless and those suffering addictions from their GCBC base, SoJ intentionally made the move from charity to advocacy for these people's basic needs and rights. Such a move arose step-by-step from a business-as-usual mentality as traditional caregivers offering a weekly soup line at the church (GCBC) to a deeper, more consistent emphasis on justice. That is, rather than by mere charity responses to the raw inequalities of poverty indicated by high rent burdens in substandard housing or mere single rooms, less than regular nutritious food, unreasonable delays for entrance to detox and treatment programs, and an adequate minimum wage (let alone an actual "living wage"), justice became a more pressing need. While this has not been a smooth, natural evolutionary process, it has evoked a crisis of conscience – *conscientisation* – as SoJ endeavours to bear a prophetic public witness to both its host church (GCBC), the member churches attenders, and with help from the mass media, to surrounding communities and cities that are part of greater Vancouver.

The move from charity to justice arose, one observes as a participant-student observer,[13] is a contrast between past and present-evoking events – i.e., a contrast accentuated when what appears to be normative is confronted and challenged to be

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[12] I am indebted to the CBC Ideas Series on "After Atheism: New Perspectives on God and Religion" for one of the interviewees' three italicised marks, except for the fourth, here used (recalling James Carse's summary in episode #4 of the week's presentations) <http://www.cbc.ca/books/2012/05/after-atheism-ideas-explores-new-perspectives-on-god-and-religion.html> [accessed September 26, 2016].

[13] Again, this observation came about by way of my own participant-observation in many meetings and social justice actions with SoJ.

unfair by what is the reality. This may lead to the decision to take action or support another group's action in favour of social justice all of which arises from a distinct comparison and contrast of the prevailing context and how things could be. From such a contrast, there may arise a prophetic witness and an accompanying call to provide change for people's poverty, their marginalisation if not also their exclusion. SoJ's founders had to decide either to continue with mere charity, offering some measure of relief to people's poverty, or move to identify root causes of poverty often masked by charity measures (recalling Niebuhr). Advocacy can assist with this when representing or accompanying someone in coming to know and assert their rights. But if left here only, the root causes of inequality and poverty could well be left un-attended. To move a step further, advocacy could be more of a prophetic practice in as much as it challenges that which postpones or prevents the practice of justice as a fair treatment to all. Meanwhile, some urban church ministries might evoke and remain content on the pretext that charity is necessary and will always be needed; it is the best that urban ministries can do given the economy and the limited resources available. In general, there is a sense that keeping justice humane, realistic and in creative tension with charitable responses to immediate human needs is difficult. It is all the more difficult because poor people, some volunteers, and urban ministry organisations themselves could end up feeling "used" by the efforts to organise for the goals of justice-making by way of broad-based social change. That is, people could feel "used" when the organisational end goal is employed in justifying the means used (such as year-end numbers of people attending a ministry's place to justify renewed funding though little may have ever been done in that year to assist people beyond abject poverty). For purposes of maintaining a ministry's integrity, it seems risky and a practice of commodification expediently to "use" people for their convenient, numerical presence for a ministry and for the sake of an annual report by way of crunching "numbers."[14] Nonetheless, SoJ's emphasis on justice lends itself to be a *par excellence* case study. No other comes to such a clear and dedicated focus on justice and what it takes to make

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[14] See Karl Barth for his critique of the practice of philanthropy precisely for its tendency to use people as means to a cause in *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. IV, Part II, eds G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. by Bromiley and Peabody (Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1958), p. 438.

justice a steadfast discipline amongst all of our Canadian urban ministries, para-ministries or church-connected networks (as far as this author knows).

6.3. Diewerts' Coming to Justice

This SoJ case study opened with the prophet Amos' statement about what an understanding of justice entails. Dickau's interview with Teresa and Dave Diewert for his Doctor of Ministry thesis helps to focus this concentration on justice and how it arose from actual situations and the trials and errors of ministry. Thus, charity and advocacy are part of the continuum. The following lengthy but illumining body of thought expresses how a movement within one's consciousness and conscience (*conscientisation*) occur. Diewert reflects:

> I think when you look at these three – charity, advocacy, justice – you see the futility of charity and, in my mind, another form of bondage – it is just another dependency that becomes engrained – there does not seem to be any movement from it. For me, giving people things is important on one level, but you are never going to get out of that if you don't go to the justice part. The advocacy part I find really difficult because advocacy is me still in this helping role, and I haven't found that to be very helpful – I don't think I have really helped anybody by giving them places to look up or access to different places and different times when I have advocated for other people it hasn't gone very well. In some ways, I feel like my role – my place – more and more I am coming to see in this position of obvious privilege is to change that system to make that less and less the case. And because of the things that we have been thinking about over the last couple of years, really coming to see the injustice of the system – it is systemic. So I feel like this is our role – is to point out the systemic injustice and to change that. Because the guys on the bottom – no one is going to do that – no one is going to listen to them, I feel like really needs to come from the place of privilege – we need to be exposing our privilege – because this stuff doesn't do anything – it perpetuates in my mind all of it [.... I]t feels really slow and I can't imagine my involvement in seeking justice and seeking change in the system is going to have a huge impact.[15]

Later in this interview Dave Diewert reveals his grasp of the meaning of justice which remains a work-in-progress through SoJ's activities, his own writing, and other

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[15] In Tim Dickau's unpublished personal interview papers and transcribed notes for his D.Min. thesis research, with Teresa (and Dave) Diewert; used by permission, pp.7f.

inter-disciplinary involvements (as a biblical scholar and a wide-ranging community activist). For him, justice has

> […] to do with distribution of power and resources in a community – [and] how that is so central to biblical vision. And think of the prophetic tradition and then seeing ways to participate and so […]. I think we need to understand why it is – why the response to social issues is mostly at the charity and advocacy level – and approaching the need for systemic change – there is real reticence and reluctance and less enthusiasm. […] charity and advocacy […] responds to immediate needs and there needs to be some of that obviously – […] people are cold or hungry – there needs to be some immediate response […] but if those responses are not done within the larger movements towards justice then it feels really futile.[16]

How did the SoJ co-founders, the Diewerts, come to justice? Major clues arise from this same interview. Their story is similar to that of Nicholas Wolsterstorff who spoke of how he came to and stayed with the justice theme. In his academic life, he had seldom attended to justice. But he encountered concrete and enduring evidence of injustice and undertook an engagement with social justice activists in his academic investigations. These thoughts have been articulated at the American Academy of Religion's annual meeting in 2007.[17] In a similar instructive fashion and thus worthy of its length, Diewert shares:

> our movement into the whole trajectory [of from charity to advocacy to justice] came from some initial things of Teresa when we were in Toronto going to Nicaragua with this group called Witness for Peace – so there it had to do with war and violence. A big issue – it wasn't charity – it was bearing witness to these sorts of injustices and atrocities. And then when we were in Israel and the Palestinian uprising – a whole political struggle with the people under occupation and those are our wake-up calls in a way and because of that I think it started us off thinking within a certain framework although we didn't know what to do with it – it was disturbing more than anything and we came back to Vancouver, I started volunteering downtown but when you volunteer at that time in the early 90's all you could do was volunteer with charities… in places that were offering services […] offering advocacy, but your role was just to

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[16] Ibid, pp. 8-9.

[17] "How I got to Justice and what Keeps me There" a November 2007 plenary address, to annual meeting of the A.A.R. published in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (Vol.76, #3, 664-679) cf. his *Hearing the Call: Liturgy, Justice, Church and World*, ed. by Mark Gornik and G. Thompson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), especially "Why Care About Justice?," pp. 95-108, and "How My Mind has Changed: The Way to Justice," pp. 430-438.

facilitate that …because they were all social agencies and had charitable status and so on, that those were the lines. And then along the way meeting up with some who were outside of that and who wanted to do something more like street-level politics or political awareness work of some structural things and we started to get involved in that and that was making more visible some of the issues of homelessness and health issues and hitting the streets with placards and doing vigils outside of Woodward's or whatever it was, and I think in that movement towards participating in some other projects and initiatives and then watching from the inside some of the power dynamics of the system […] beginning to probe and read and understand some of the larger issues and then connecting with groups that are doing that. And partly that meant to some extent staying out of or not confining or even limiting or even participating in church-based charity kind of initiatives but doing some stuff off the beaten path of that.[18]

Dave Diewert further relates how this movement led him and Teresa to determine the value of their central involvement in GCBC's house drop-in, called Crossroads. This home held weekly suppers and, in colder months, offered over-night shelter for the homeless.

I think that involvement here with Crossroads and out of the cold – just over time – the kind of futility or frustration maybe of endlessly feeding more and more people who need shelters and asking the question – why is this happening – beginning to look at some of the larger social and political, economic trends – why are so many people being left out. Then, I think continuing to probe and explore that dimension of it, seeing maybe with fresh eyes the ways in which the justice component which has to do with distribution of power and resources in a community [to come back full circle to the above, first stated, operative depiction of justice].[19]

6.4. Abiding Justice Successfully

How do we account for the way in which SoJ co-founders, Teresa and Dave Diewert, have sustained their ministry? Not surprisingly, Dickau asks them this very question: "what does sustain you and give you hope in what you are doing?" Teresa responds first.

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[18] Diewert cited in Dickau, unpublished personal interview papers and transcribed notes for his D.Min. thesis research, p. 8.

[19] Ibid, p. 8.

I am all out of hope […] I have to live in integrity and my integrity says that this is the way to go and the stuff that we have done through streams of justice […] There is a little glimmer – there is truth, there is integrity, there is realness in the relational and actually trying to get at exposing that injustice – God was all about it, and is all about that. [… Jesus] was constantly with the poor, the oppressed, he was constantly calling the powers into question. So, let's imitate that. For me having a deep sense of the truth of that keeps me going in the long run. In the short run it is just being able to connect with Dave and talk to him about things and connect with other people and talk to them. […] having a sense that they support me and are for me kind of sustains me.[20]

There is much here to exegete. Teresa appeals to core values and spiritual convictions. This seems authentic because her thoughts arise out of an unrehearsed conversation recorded in an interview. Integrity is a key virtue;[21] it expresses her desire to "be real" in significant relationships where all involved strive to be understood and supported. She appeals to Jesus' teachings and, implicitly, his presence in the biblical word and in walking the way, all the while living the "kingdom way," described in Tim's book title *Plunging into the Kingdom Way* with its suggestive sub-title *practicing the shared strokes of community, hospitality, justice and confession.*

Dave also responds to Tim's question "what does sustain you and give you hope in what you are doing?"

The only meaningful way to live is to live towards the truth and even if it feels like going *against the grain* […] then it is pretty awkward and going against your own personality traits and habits to some extent. So, I feel the resistance and the struggle to imagine otherwise is a right one and a noble one even if it feels like you are fighting the long defeat. […] I move through waves of real discouragement and on the edges of despair – waves, a crest of lots of energy – let's get it going. It is partly I think the frustration that I will always inhabit because I am more a thinker and a visionary than I am actualizing it […] I just live through these waves and ups and downs. The other thing is that knowing that

[20] Ibid, p.11.

[21] See A. McIntyre's *After Virtue* (University of Notre Dame Press, 3rd edn, 2007) reflections on integrity as a key virtue. He writes: "[…] there is at least one virtue recognized by the tradition which cannot be specified at all except with reference to the wholeness of a human life – the virtue of integrity or constancy" (p. 203).

there are people around that understand to some extent and are supportive of it. […] that give me energy and keep me going.[22]

Again, there is much to exegete in order to discern basic themes. For one, there is Dave's commitment to the "truth," which expresses and reflects the prophetic notion and content of speaking the truth to those in power.[23] Evoking Merton's confession, as a complement thus:

> The true solutions are [...] those which life itself provides for those who dispose themselves to receive the truth. Consequently our task is to dissociate ourselves from all who have theories which promise clear cut and infallible solutions and to mistrust all such theories, not in spite of negatives and defeat, but rather trusting life itself, and, nature and, if you will permit me, God above all.[24]

To press further, there is Diewert's realistic, perhaps eschatological sense of the long haul, where there are no guarantees of "success." Indeed, he already is coming to terms with this reality. This is similar to Niebuhr's own fundamental affirmation of what it means to engage in social justice struggles, that is, not to give in because justification by grace through faith enables continuing activism.[25]

Finally, we note Diewert's keen sense of support and being supported that, as a founding participant in SoJ, I believe to be crucial and not coincidental. On one's own or as a couple like Teresa and Dave, it is no small feat to endure for the long haul in social justice endeavours – on one's own, the battles are draining, discouraging, and

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[22] Dave Diewert, in Dickau's unpublished personal interview papers and transcribed notes for his D.Min. thesis research, p.11.

[23] The term arose with the Quakers or Society of Religious Friends in March 2, 1955 in a document entitled "Speak Truth to Power" <http://www. quaker.Org/sttp.html> [accessed June 21, 2013]). See also William Sloane Coffin's use of this phrase, in "Consecration Sermon: The Good Samaritan" a sermon (listserv.virtueonline.org/pipermail/ virtueonline_listserv.virtue [accessed June 21, 2013]) which reads: "I would hope that Christians would see that the compassion that moved the Good Samaritan to act charitably – that same compassion prompted Biblical prophets to confront injustice, to *speak truth to power*, as did Jesus, who, though more than a prophet, was certainly nothing less" (italics added). There are also references in The Gospel of St. John, see especially John 8:31; 14:6, 15; and I John 4: 18f.

[24] Merton, "Letter to a Bystander" cited in *Raids on the Unspeakable* (New York: New Directions paperback, 1964), p. 61.

[25] See Niebuhr again, as in a classical section of *Nature & Destiny of Man* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1964b), Vol. II, Chapter IX, section V, p. 284.

prone to loneliness, weariness, and perhaps worst of all, cynicism.[26] The Diewerts have somehow found a way to surround themselves with veterans, many of them church couples, and some from outside their immediate GCBC community. One thinks of a retired Baptist minister couple Bob and Judy Doll; still active clergy person Al and teacher wife, Mia McKay; and, peers to the Diewerts, Calvin and Jill, as well as younger couples like Nathan and Eva, and the Diewerts' daughter and son-in-law Erin and Kurtis Peters, who is also a Biblical scholar. Bob Doll shares this representative summary on what SoJ means to him: "My one sentence answer: Streams of Justice presents me with the opportunity to discuss local and wider justice issues and to take dramatic steps to present them openly to the wider public."[27] Adult education professor Michael Welton calls this process "unearthing"; that is, the creating of a public sphere for "citizen deliberation,"[28] which is, to encourage and to help enable safe, trustworthy and adventuresome spaces for expressing what otherwise might be limited to private journals, unpublished papers or sermons and silent vigils, as important in the service of a faithful public and prophetic witness.

Other themes to develop this case study arise from these participants' reflections as well as my own participant-observation; the actual but scant published references to SoJ need the complementary remarks of those who have been a part of this network's origins and development. One thinks, first of the Diewerts' references to the church and especially their own GCBC as a base for SoJ's functions: for regular and frequent meetings, teach-ins, rallying points, and a primary point of reference. They also speak to the church critically – like those prophetic voices that speak for the church as well as from those persons or networks within the church who feel moved to speak back to their

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[26] It is no coincidence that one of Teresa Diewert's favourite resources is Myles Horton's *The Long Haul: An Autobiography* (Teachers College, Columbia University, 1998) – and no coincidence that he was in close touch and mutual support with Reinhold Niebuhr his former Union Seminary teacher, as alluded in the book.

[27] R. Doll e-mail to Barry Morris, November 27, 2010; used with permission as with previously mentioned persons.

[28] Personal communication and see Welton, *Unearthing Canada's Hidden Past: A Short History of Adult Education* (Toronto, ON: Thomas Publishing, 2013).

church as a self-critical member. Such persons speak the truth to those in power in society and thus to the church, their church included, as well.[29]

Secondly, as one thinks of where knowledge and ideally, wisdom arise for an urban ministry network, it can often be a slow and painful process. However, from trial and error (*praxis*) there may arise a confident process similar to what in a former generation the Canadian UTC called a process of reflection and then action, and again, further reflection on the whole process in order to gain positive insight. Here too, the Diewerts' sense of experience is simply "that name which we give to our mistakes" (and willingness to learn from them).[30] SoJ make mistakes and seems able and willing to learn from them. Here, action for SoJ could further be likened to Dag Hammarskjöld's profession of action being the path to holiness.[31] Here, one could think of the downtown east-side poet Bud Osborne and his dramatic way of expressing the heart of the issue from the point of view of people in the struggles, including his own. He writes about the Diewerts offering genuine hospitality, even "sanctuary," for Osborne coming at a raw time of his ailing physical, emotional, and spiritual health. In turn, he helped to inspire and animate the Diewerts' forays into moving from charity to advocacy of justice. Indeed, for about a year, Osborne and Dave collaborated to open a downtown east-side storefront "ministry." It was low-key and flexibly available for earnest reflection on social issues, where people could relate their lives to Biblical themes and to Osborne's poetic works in progress.[32]

Finally, there is a clue to Dave's further, mature reflections on the justice theme as in his response as a panel speaker. The writer thus recalls a 2009 reflection, almost in the form of a creedal statement, wherein Dave addresses the "Living Justly" theme. On one level, he posits a Biblical grasp of justice:

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[29] Thinking of such past generations' social ethicists as Paul Ramsey and John C. Bennett proffering, respectively: *Who Speaks for the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1967) and *The Radical Imperative: from Theology to Social Ethics* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1975).

[30] Attributed to both Oscar Wilde and John F. Kennedy via quoteseverlasting.com /quotations/2013/02/18/3111/3111 [accessed June 21, 2013].

[31] Hammarskjöld, *Markings* (New York: Knopf, 1965), pp.122, xxi.

[32] See Bud Osborne's writings such as *Oppenheimer Park: Poetry by Bud Osborn, prints by Richard Tetrault* (Vancouver, B.C., no date), and Bud Osborn and Richard Tetrault, *Signs of the Times* (Vancouver, BC: Paneficio Studios and Anvil Press, 2005).

> Fundamentally, biblical justice is centrally concerned with the protection, support and care of the most vulnerable members of the society, those who are particularly exposed to abuse, violence and exploitation, and susceptible to the deprivation of basic resources (e.g., women, children, foreigners). And the practice of justice was not left to the goodwill of citizens moved by the precarious situation of their neighbours; it was grounded in social structures that were embedded in covenant commitments.

Dave carries on with the SoJ distinction of justice being different to charity. He observes:

> […] Torah instructions regarding social practices make it clear that justice is not the same as charity. Charity can be practiced while structures of inequality are maintained; in fact, charity is dependent on such inequality for its very existence. Charity is a way to manage social problems without a necessary commitment or strategy to eradicate them.[33]

Here, one notes how similar the above is to Reinhold Niebuhr's consistent critique of charity or benevolence which could serve to allow those in power not to combine power with goodness.[34] Both Niebuhr and the Diewerts challenge us to practice justice: to care for the poor by striving to eliminate poverty itself.[35]

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[33] Both quotations from *Living Justly*, winter of 2009, an unpublished paper via Tim Dickau e-mail to Morris, August 17, 2011; see also Dave Diewert's paper delivered to a Spring, 2010 session of a Religion in Citizenship workshop at the downtown Simon Fraser University campus what? where?, entitled, "Religion and Citizenship," wherein he affirms, drawing on Amos and his prophetic context and trajectory, so like V.S.T. Old Testament Professor Patricia Dutcher-Wells view of the prophets: "[Amos'] prophetic tradition is a powerful current of resistance and dissent. In its passion for justice, it decries the machinations of state power and advocates for those most vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and violence. It advocates justice that is not limited to fairness in legal and judicial matters, but entails equitable access to resources, sufficient economic means for meaningful social participation, ensured personal dignity and mutual respect, and non-exclusionary community practices… I [thus] wonder about the possibility of what might be called 'prophetic citizenship'… for those rooted in religious traditions that preserve a heritage of prophetic activity, citizenship of this sort ought to be continually fostered and fervently practiced."

[34] *Inter alia*, see R. Niebuhr, *The Self and the Dramas of History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 186.

[35] See Chapter III's theological grounding, especially section on Niebuhr and sub-section on "Triad Intimations and Urban Ministry Implications."

6.5.   Fitting and Favourable Responses

It is appropriate to press what SoJ's responses have been to what spurred the network to come into existence in the first place. Has such a response been fitting or pertinent? Is the Diewerts' and SoJ's motivation to practice a focused social justice activity and with study, an authentic movement beyond charity? This has entailed their dedication to weekly soup kitchens, over-night shelters, downtown east-side storefronts, live-in hosting of a half-way house for street people yearning for stability and a return to health, all of which led the Diewerts to host month-long seminars on the whole nature of homelessness and poverty. Such "half-way houses" are viewed by GCBC members to be more a "live-in hosting of a community house, focused on opening space and a living environment for people in the neighbourhood, particularly those who had more urgent needs, including but not limited to, those who struggled with substance addiction and abuse, poverty, or other forms of social exclusion."[36] This, in turn, led them to suggest to meet more than annually. Slowly but surely SoJ was birthed: a distinct network or informal association of friends, friends of friends, GCBC attendees, Regent College students, attendees to the annual seminars of the Diewerts and their invited speakers or street resource persons or other networks to work for social justice.

As remarked above, SoJ is a network, albeit an established entity with its own regular set of meetings, liaisons with many other similar bodies concerned with social justice, and occasional website publications. These include: the downtown east-side's Carnegie Community Action Project which focuses on naming and redressing the causes of poverty in the urban core of the poorest postal code in all of Canada; Pivot Legal Society and its Red Tent Campaign, which illustrate the need to know and assert the legal or human rights contained in the Canadian Charter and United Nations charter of Human Rights; No One is Illegal which is dedicated to researching the marginalisation of immigrants and political refugees and advocating on their behalf; Metro Vancouver Alliance, as noted in the literature review (Chapter 2); Raise the Rates Coalition which has long attended to the chronic disparity between what gentrifying hotel or rooming house places ask as rent and what little income the poor have to pay; the Living Wage Campaign, which globally draws attention to what a typical family

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[36] Expressed by Kurtis Peters, October 6, 2012 via an e-mail to Morris; used with permission.

really needs to live adequately; and, new monastic movements like the world wide and Vancouver urban core "Servants Vancouver" which recruit, train and support young adults in ways to live with and serve the poor;[37] and, numerous ad hoc citizens groups advocating for community input if not control over their neighbourhoods. It is important to name these SoJ liaisons with key networks and advocacy groups to illustrate what encourages and sustains fresh networking challenges. Such measures of solidarity contribute to and draw energy for SoJ in its on-going activities and the desire to carry on.[38] Often, during occasional soul-searching sessions (sometimes monthly), SoJ has designated its *raison d'etre*, in the implementation of its social justice mandate, to be that of helping provide space and support. Practically, this has meant the provision of free *space* out of GCBC for other groups' meetings or panel discussions as well for SoJ's own educational and issue-orientated sessions. This also has meant offering *support* in the forms of pot-luck dinners, conveying and putting up community banners or placards on a particular issue or cause. This has meant issuing a call to SoJ's e-mail listserv network to invite people to consider showing up to give tangible support. Space and support combine of course, to convey a modest measure of solidarity in a faithful public and prophetic witness to what justice means and how it can be practiced.[39]

To the host of issues and concerns before SoJ, perhaps the most fitting or favourable responses have been where actions have been brainstormed, pondered, carefully considered, planned, and executed with elements of creative fun amid the utter seriousness of the moment on a deeply felt issue. And, to do this from the perspective of SoJ asking of itself what unique contribution could it make. In early 2010, SoJ conceived – with help from Biblical scholar and sister activist, Laura Dykstra (of

[37] "We are a community called to practice radical hospitality amongst those who are marginalized in our society" <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Servants-Vancouver/146668402012474> [accessed October 26, 2012].

[38] See Tim Dickau's *Plunging into the Kingdom Way*, as well as therein "Reshaping Desire," pp. 126-128.

[39] These remarks and the ones following are based on my participant-observations with SoJ, unless otherwise noted.

Sojourners fame)[40] – a Halloween weekend. In the aftermath of the winter 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, Olympia Village had become a virtual – though interim – "ghost town." Several hundred well-constructed, expensive units had been accommodating hundreds of Olympian athletes. However, precious little has happened since due to market conditions, a currently bankrupt developer (who already owes Vancouver City hundreds of millions), has not honoured pre-Olympic bid promises of offering a decent slice of the whole project for social, affordable housing. Hence, SoJ produced a leaflet on the whole issue, where its members dressed in playful ghost costumes and created a scenario illustrating the dynamics between developers, a poor family, and the pressures toward failure. At the Olympia Sky-train station, SoJ orchestrated a tableau to draw distinct attention to this issue on the Canadian Line (of Trans-Link, especially built in time for the 2010 Olympics). As another specific tactical manoeuvre of immediate activism and in the service of hoped-for, long-term affordable housing, SoJ members and supporters legally boarded several trains to hand out informative leaflets, in the hope of exposing the issue and, sparking a degree of political conscious-raising (again, *conscientisation*). Thus, the leaflet read:

> Vancouver is Haunted: by the spirits of those who have died for lack of housing and following three short panels of background statistics and information, extended the invitation for willing people to send in the whole leaflet to their actual Member of Parliament. We wanted to draw further attention to a Bill currently before the house to restore Federal Government cuts, which have made the building and management of actual social housing almost impossible.

The Trans-Link police and security quickly acted to bar those involved from continuing their protest, though by that time, the action was well underway. It continued at ground level, at the City Hall station. In a nutshell, the whole action helped to stimulate amongst the SoJ participants at the time a longing for justice on this issue. To do so in a manner which struck a meaningful chord with people willing to take a leaflet, offer a smile or spoken words of interest, and ask for more information on both the issue and SoJ itself. From the point of view of those of us participating and contributing to

[40] L. Dykstra wrote a monthly Biblical/Lectionary commentary column for Washington, D.C.'s *Sojourners* magazine and recently co-edited with Ched Myers *Liberating Bible Study*, Vol. One of Center &Library for the Bible & Social Justice Service (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011), see especially therein her "Riff, Bedbugs, and Signs: reading the plague narratives from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside," pp.50-59.

this public witness for justice, "playfulness" helped with the event, the serious elements complemented by the "fun" element (see note 39) – akin to what the Yippies from a previous generation injected into the "new left" or "young radical" drama of oppositional or resistant politics.[41] More seriously, SoJ has organised a few lengthy serious tent-ins or old-fashioned "squats" – occupying vacant land or closed down hotel sites – at strategic sites which are publicly owned and vaguely promised for eventual social housing but showing signs of being stalled or cancelled or even the poor's shanty-towns being uprooted (pre- and post-2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics). This has required an intentionally labour intensive and non-violent, disciplined action. The motive has been to witness to the need for justice by way of these kind of public actions which, while small and often falling below the mass media radar, aim to draw due attention to what could be and indeed ought to be the politically right thing to do. The public actions also seek to convey to allies that SoJ is serious in both word and deed (and indeed in public, dialogical spaces). SoJ endeavours to convey what could be and ought to be counted upon in an era of otherwise indifferent spheres and less public spaces.[42]

Other examples could be described, where SoJ has borne a public witness, staged its own bold action, and created from scratch lengthy plays on an issue of justice. Staging live performances in churches has offered the wider church the opportunity to explore an issue, have some fun, and yet be invited to probe deeply into an issue otherwise considered to be too complex. For many in the network, this would have been the first occasion during which they engaged in activism through the media of creative arts or drama. These activities have also provided the distinct opportunity to link two intentional moves of SoJ in many of its almost weekly meetings: namely, a "reading

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[41] One thinks of the late Abbie Hoffman and the earlier Jerry Rubin's co-founding of the Youth International Party (Yippie), as well as then neo-Marxist Humanists like "The Priest and the Jester" essayist, Leszek Kolakowski <www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/leszek-kolakowski-polishborn> [accessed October 9, 2013].

[42] From SoJ's website, under key concepts & practices they profess the role of imagination "….in order to see otherwise, it is crucial to awaken the imagination, to unleash its potential to envision new social possibilities, to postulate alternative structural arrangements, to view strangers and opponents as friends" [accessed June 22, 2013].

from the text" to "read the world" so that the biblical word may illumine the world as text.[43]

6.6. Favouring Purposive Fulfilment

How may one describe SoJ's responses to be fitting or pertinent to both the situation at hand and as an expression of its *raison d'etre*? Again, the "ethics of the fitting" perspective assists with its set of questions for probing a body of material. As Thomas Ogletree asserts, the levels of a fitting response would include that of not only seeking to *apply* Biblical and Church teachings on justice, but also that possibility of coming to *suspect* that, what is applied (love commandment), may be predictably applied to a situation but be inadequate if not in the uncritical service of what biblical and contemporary justice calculations could call forth (Amos' demand to "right-wise" otherwise unjust situations that love on its own could not redress, 5:24).[44] Regular SoJ participant Laurel Dykstra illustrates from her downtown east-side Four Sisters Housing Co-Op. She intentionally enriches her urban experiences with a point of view infused with biblical scholarship. Thus, she writes:

> Charity and poor bashing are substitutes for liberation. Charity proposes generosity from the privileged to response to 'misfortune', and poor bashing promotes restraint, discipline, and control by authorities. Both deny the capacity of Downtown Eastside residents to demand justice in

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[43] Cf. the work of Vancouver based dramatist David Diamond via his interactive plays <http://www.headlinesTheatre.com>; "Theatre of the Living" has it is also called arose from the theory and practice of Auguto Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed" in 1989 in Vancouver via Diamond [accessed June 21, 2013]. See also, Albert Hunt's *Hopes for Great Happenings: Alternatives in Education and Theatre* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co.,1976); Kalle Lasn's *Culture Jam: How to Reverse America's Suicidal Consumer Binge – and Why We Must* (New York: Quill and HarperCollins, 1999), espec. pp.111-121 "The New Activism (Fire in the Belly)"; and Madeleine Delbrel's *We, the Ordinary People of the Streets,* trans. by D.L. Schindler, Jr. and C.F. Mann (Grand Rapids, MI: Erdmans Publishing Co., 2000, orig. 1966), espec. pp.92f "Understanding and Action" and pp.71ff "The Dance of Obedience."

[44] See Ogletree's *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), chapter 4's "The Activity of Interpreting in Moral Judgment," pp.97-126. See also Morris, *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry*, op. cit, especially Chapter 5: "Justice via Niebuhr and Urban Ministry Implications," pp. 67-82.

the face of structural violence. Fortunately these are not the only stories told in my neighborhood.[45]

6.6.1. Suspicion

One surmises that Dykstra's involvement with SoJ stimulates and possibly sustains her attentiveness to her neighbourhood. Similarly, her SoJ involvement and downtown east-side living in the Four Sisters Housing Co-op contributes to her priestly vocation with the Anglican Church in Canada. As many of us have experienced, it is one thing to espouse concern for social justice and even preach about it; it is quite another actually to involve unpublished personal interview papers and transcribed notes for his D.Min. Thesis research, ourselves in action throughout the year rather than at specific points in the calendar such as at Christmas. The latter truth is good reason why a network like SoJ is indispensable. It systematically sustains a long-term and focused attention to social justice concerns.

6.6.2. Retrieval

There might arise a sixth sense intuition that the usual exhortations to exercise the biblical and social ethical commandments to do justice do not readily fit – perhaps due to issuing from the top-down place of an institutional authority and being more rooted in charity than in the demands and challenges of genuine justice. The hermeneutical move of *retrieving* what now is felt needed to be heard, affirmed, and practiced could help a SoJ participant or an urban minister. This could entail the help of intuiting and extrapolating from the deep longings of those people unjustly silenced or too vulnerable to be heard, yet as possible with the assistance of advocacy and organising, come to be justly included. Such an otherwise welcome inclusion of the poor may occur at generous time as Thanksgiving or Christmas and Easter but then really only included temporarily for that special calendar day or brief seasonal celebration. As Dave Diewert thus reflects:

> […] citizens infused by the prophetic spirit would be passionate and relentless in their pursuit of justice, and vigilant of those in positions in

[45] Dykstra, "Riff Raff, Bedbugs, and Signs," p.55. Cf. Doug Todd's "How Can We Help the Poor: Religious Leaders Debate the Charity Model… Discourage Effective Income Redistribution," *Vancouver Sun,* June 22, 2013, p. C5.

political leadership holding them accountable to the voice of the people
[…] people who dare to engage in alternative, subversive configurations
of social and economic structures, and who unflinchingly challenge
cultural norms that dehumanize or exclude people from meaningful
collective participation.[46]

6.6.3. Hospitality

There is a fourth level of a fitting response that Ogletree posits as *hospitality* to
the stranger.[47] Such hospitality is a working part of GCBC's mission statement,
operative strategies, and that which helped to spawn or foster the birth of SoJ. Such
hospitality is what grants to SoJ the very space from GCBC to meet and eat together.
Indeed, their hospitality points beyond the immediate situation; it evokes the recent
New Testament and Gospel exegesis of John Dominic Crossan on how the early
Christian church became flexible and adventuresome faith communities. These early
Christians seemed able to participate in what normatively Crossan discerns to be a
collaboration in the "reign of God" and, its wide range of implications (one need only
evoke Jesus' synagogue sermon opening and its due retrieval of the prophet Isaiah,
Luke 4:18-21). Crossan thus induces a social ethical mandate of a "collaborative
eschatology" to be in the service of what he summarily further names as "God's great
clean-up" or hospitable promise of bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth, as prayed
for and implemented by the disciplined practices of justice.[48] As a result, hospitality is
inclusively rendered – pastorally, prophetically, and eschatologically. To be sure,
Crossan's summary has not been unchallenged if only in the biblical scholarship of N.
T. Wright. The latter critiques Crossan's realised or virtually fulfilled nature of
eschatology, as if all that needs now to be done is the wilful exercise by human beings
of their social justice responsibilities. Wright further affirms the more central role of

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[46] Dave Diewert, from an unpublished, mimeographed *Religion and Citizenship* address, Spring,
2010, p. 5, at Simon Fraser University, downtown campus, Vancouver, BC.

[47] Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stranger*, pp. 119-121.

[48] See Crossan's *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), pp. 68-9
and 113; *The Birth of Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1998), pp. 280, 291-92, 422
and *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Beneath the Texts* (San Francisco, CA: Harper,
2001), espec. pp. 115-132 "In the Kingdom of God." Finally, see his exegesis in *The Greatest
Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer* (San Francisco, CA:
HarperOne, 2010).

faith communities' corporate and worship life which attests to the presence of God's kingdom and the ongoing prayer that God's will be done.**[49]**

Nonetheless, when Crossan speaks of Jesus' disciples as healing the sick and eating with them, he is arguing that the newly formed koinonia or fellowship-renewing-creative reality acquires the "right" to proclaim the "reign of God."[50]   He is also depicting, one might surmise, the nature of GCBC and SoJ's regular, intentional purposes and activities. Here one could also highlight William Stringfellow's emphasis on mission being the prime *raison d'etre* for being in ministry at all and not for the sake of endless service programs and political advocacy – as came to happen in the 1950s/1960s EHPP mission. When he was one of their storefront legal employees, he felt constrained to support the basic social services and social justice actions of the mission, he come to feel a creative tension with the worshipping body of the mission. But, an integrity of purpose was compromised.[51] As a participant-observer, I have been able to witness, at many points during a calendar year, the welcoming of street people to shared meals as part of SoJ's nutritious pot-luck suppers. In this context of "breaking bread" with others I was able to meet with the homeless poor to hear and discuss their concerns at study sessions designed for those so willing. With others, I was particularly moved on one occasion when an informal cluster of these street people addressed a large SoJ gathering – five speaking to some forty of us, following a bountiful meal. They shared their life stories to give us a sense of what had brought them to the streets and homelessness. Their stories gave us a sense of hopeful inspiration since it seemed to matter to pay attention, prayerful-like, and thus with those impacted the most in poverty,

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[49] See N. T. Wright's *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), see espec, pp. 45f, 189; also, Wright's interactions with Crossan in *The Resurrection of Jesus: The Crossan-Wright Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006). Finally, see Wright's "The Lord's Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer" in Richard N. Longenecker, ed., *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), pp.132-154.

[50] Crossan repeatedly professed this in a VST summer school seminar in July of 2006 entitled but unpublished "The Historical Jesus Then and Now: The challenge of the Kingdom God."

[51] See Stringfellow's My *People is the Enemy: An autobiographical polemic* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), pp. 85-99, to wit: "The Church is much tempted by conformity to the world… instead of honouring the integrity of Gospel for all societies, and for all sorts of conditions of men in all times and places. This temptation beguiled the group ministry of the East Harlem Protestant Parish" (p. 88).

to engage in the justice theme and to do so beyond a particular single-shot meeting time at SoJ's base of GCBC.

6.6.4. Favourable Intimations

It remains to discern whether the SoJ network provides evidence of a triad of hoping (for) justice prayerfully. Such a way of expressing these theological virtues indicates the possibility for success in the long run – that is, favourable conditions which make for sincere listening, a sense of stability of a place to minister or bear witness from, and organising for the sake of more socially just relations and societal practices. Justice is clearly the focused – indeed, disciplined – emphasis. Hope is that implicit factor that motivates people in ministry to engage or reconnect with those who from time to time move on. Sometimes, they return to renew or up-date the nature and content of what is going on since SoJ is their virtual reference group, certainly more than a mere person occupying a seat. Indeed, hope is present whenever SoJ participants show up, come back or offer support from a distance. There is surely evidence of hoping justice:

> Hey everyone, at our last gathering there was a good discussion on the future of SoJ and where people are at. There was a lot of support for carrying on as a group, and a commitment to keep it going. This energy now needs to be transformed into particular actions, projects, initiatives. There was a strong sense that we need to talk again about what we want to do over the months that lie ahead, and the table is clear for all proposals and ideas. So our next meeting will begin with a potluck, followed by a discussion of the future shape of our work. So come along and share with us in this conversation.[52]

But is prayer, as an attentive listening and grounding of one's being and that of the network, evident?

6.6.5. Prayer

On at least two occasions, SoJ invited a local spiritual leader and director to address large gatherings (of some fifty each time). Cathy Bentall, of the previously mentioned Bentall Family's funding of some of GCBC's community houses, has done

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[52] Dave Diewert, communiqué to SoJ network via an e-mail of January 12, 2011; used with permission.

this. SoJ had been asked to identify and explore the spiritual underpinnings and grounding for what we deemed justice work and witnessing to the need for it. A few of us also undertook to show up early and hold a focused prayer or contemplation session. But even then, we invited specific prayers for not only SoJ's work in general but for persons and those presently known to be ailing or in anguish. While this has not lasted, it struck a shared chord for at least a few of us, who remain aware of others' prayer disciplines and continue to wait for another two or three to step forward and model it. SoJ events, such as a major homeless and their supporters' "tent-like" city (temporary public shelters via real make-shift tents); this occurred right alongside Vancouver's City Hall during the 2008 week of homelessness and intentionally to expose the issue. This further included noon hour liturgies, wherein prayer was central for the purpose of solidifying mutual support (with the homeless and among the supporters). This was chiefly sparked by me with others I could gather to lead and to participate. It had surely helped that some of us had been engaging in annual Advent and Lent Vigils for the Silenced, and had also invited SoJ and/or GCBC persons to attend these meetings.

Several of the SoJ regulars partake in and come to practice prayerful disciplines in their personal lives for purposes of renewal and intercessions and in their church attendance with several active within GCBC itself. Not surprisingly, Tim Dickau notes the importance of prayer and includes it as part and parcel of the spiritual practices he narrates in his D.Min. thesis and his subsequent book *Plunging into the Kingdom Way*. Much like Merton, Dickau affirms: "Through contemplation, we realize that the search for God is a search for One who is already seeking us."[53] This dovetails with the full-time vocational Benedictine nun and spiritual writer, Sr. Joan Chittister, who bridges classical and new monastic perspectives. She reflects:

> Contemplative prayer […] is prayer that sees the whole world through incense – a holy place, a place where the sacred dwells, a place to be made different by those who pray […] Contemplative prayer […] unstops our ears to hear the poverty of widows, the loneliness of widowers, the cry of women, the vulnerability, the struggle of outcasts.[54]

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[53] Dickau, *Plunging into the Kingdom Way*, p.122.

[54] Cited in Robert Wuthnow's "Spiritual Practice" in *Christian Century*, September 23-30, 1998, p. 855. See also of course, Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions paperback, 1972).

One can intuit in both GCBC and SoJ practices of prayer that there is at least a form of attentiveness. Among other purposes and hoped-for outcomes this is what contemplation intends or aspires to: attending to the present with the use of a mantra, or a candle, or mindful and paced breathing or sustained concentration. Thus, Robert Waldron writes of both Merton and Simone Weil's focus on prayer as attention, citing Weil's "Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer" to apply to Merton. Waldron evokes Merton thus: "The voice of God is not clearly heard at every moment; and part of the 'work of the cell' is attention". Sounding more like Simone Weil, he writes, "I see more and more that my understanding of myself and my life has always been most inadequate. Now I want more than ever to see."[55] To be sure, an "absolutely unmixed attention" is more likely a specifically monastic discipline and practice – i.e., it seems to require an extraordinary time and granted space so to focus and remain so, often with an intentional, supportive community. Nevertheless, this provides an interpretative lens because the disciplined virtue perspectives that used to be thought normative for classical monastics are now being affirmed as possibly operative for ordinary and urban Christians, all this with thanks again to the proponents of the new monasticism and their monastic-like disciplines and also the example of being supported in a covenant-like community.[56] Both classic and contemporary monastics find sustenance by way of monastic-styled disciplines; disciplines which cultivate their intended life-long vocations and renew them so that they remain steadfast as they live them out.[57] The discipline and act of attention is reminiscent of what praying for justice hopefully conveys. The act of attention is reminiscent of John A.T. Robinson's notion of prayer-as-engagement.[58] The acts of sustained attention by way of attending to justice analysis,

[55] R. Waldron, *Thomas Merton: Master of Attention* (Ottawa, ON: Novalis, 2007), pp. 20 and 60.

[56] Among others, see J. Stock, T. Otto and J. Wilson-Hartgrove, *Inhabiting the Church: Biblical Wisdom for a New Monasticism* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2007), J. Wilson-Hartgrove, *New Monasticism: What It Has to Say to Today's Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), and A. Grimley and J. Wooding, eds., *Living the Hours: Monastic Spirituality in Everyday Life* (Norwich, England: Canterbury Press, 2010), espec. pp. 21-26, 82, 127, and 146-153.

[57] See "The Merton and the New Monasticism Check and Balance," Morris, *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), Appendix A, pp. 141-149.

[58] See Robinson's *Honest to God* (London: SCM Press, 1963), pp. 91-104. Cf. Marilyn Chandler McEntyre's *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), pp. 210-222.

education, animation, an enactment of issues as via drama, rallies, tent-ins or sustained immovable "squats," and endless conversations all can contribute to make up a sense of prayer-as-attention. To evoke Canadian social historian and theologian George Grant, thoughtful attention or attentiveness is to grant respect to the *whole* of an issue, idea, or movement.[59] To pay attention is also akin to the proverbial notion of *God being in the details* and such an attention that invites a willingness to become, and remain, involved in the issues worrying the surrounding communities and even globally influenced concerns. Out of such attending in the company of the committed, one is nourished and sustained. Waldron comments on both Weil and Merton:

> In a day when attention deficit disorders are pandemic, [Weil's] theory of attention-as-prayer astounds us. No amount of attention is ever wasted […] and it prepares us for prayer! Such a marriage of seeming opposites opens the door, offering hope to many of us when we feel we have failed in our efforts at prayer, we who have practiced techniques of breathing, repetition of mantras, and contorted ourselves into exotic *mudras* in order to improve our prayer-life, as well as purchasing prayer books that end up on shelves collecting dust, either unread or rejected as obscure, or too esoteric to understand and follow.[60]

6.6.6. Prayer with Justice

It seems crucial to affirm that attending to prayer should not be an alibi for one's inaction or the lack of intercession for unjust situations. This caveat might well account for the SoJ co-founders' occasional reticence around frequent and public uses of prayer in meetings or action events – lest piety become a feel-good substitute for focusing on injustice.[61] Is this a case of SoJ resisting the use of prayer – often, if not regularly – that could succumb to the temptation to retreat into the safer confines of subjectively

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[59] G. Grant, *English-Speaking Justice* (Sackville, NB: Mt Allison University, 1974), p. 93.

[60] Waldron, *Thomas Merton: Master of Attention*, p. 21, Cf. K. Norris, "Of Poets and Monks," *Christian Century*, p. 722.

[61] Among others, see Bonhoeffer with his biographer Bethge's elaborations on the risk and danger of evasive motives and self-serving substitutes for justice via prayer, especially the latter's *Prayer and Righteous Action* (Belfast, Ireland: Christian Journals, 1979); also see Merton: "The mystic and the spiritual men who in our day remain indifferent to the problems of their fellowmen, who are not fully capable of facing these problems, will find themselves inevitably involved in the same ruin […] suffer the same deceptions, be implicated in the same crimes […] deaf to the voice crying in the wilderness, for they will have listened to some other, more comforting, voice of their own contrivance" in *Through the Year with Thomas Merton: Daily Meditations from His Writings*, ed. T.P. McDonnell (New York: Doubleday Image Book, 1985), p. 176f., October 6th entry.

"feeling okay" or even "centered" but actually allowing one's attention to justice by way of prayer serve as a stand-in, a substitute for truly seeking and as possible, seeking to act justly? On the other hand, if prayer is seldom practiced, is it then a case of avoiding prayer altogether when it can be affirmed as an intimate and integral component of hope and justice?

6.6.7. Hope

Just as prayer cannot be divorced or compartmentalised from justice-making and keeping, so it also is with hope. While hinted in the above (p. 12), an energy of hope also underlies, pervades and leavens SoJ's very existence. To meet is to practice an act of hope, to trust that this is worthwhile or not in vain; such a shared hopeful activity and indeed long-range set of activities animates a measure of soul-searching and preparing for next steps, be they weekly, monthly, quarterly or beyond. Such a practice of hope could occur by way of time spent in "soul searching" as in one's sabbaticals, retreats, therapy or counselling session and plain personal time-outs (relating hope to prayer if only by way of stepping back to pause and reflect). SoJ has held retreats over a Friday evening and Saturday. This occurred at one of the shared homes purchased by the Bentall's family cluster for the wider GCBC and SoJ work (recalling the operative, background factor of the patron or benefactor). The key agenda was the sharing of stories. Rather than being rushed, the participants' stories held the agenda and contributed beyond. That is, rededicated efforts to carry on and sustain the balance of education, actions, and multi-media presentations on chosen issues or concerns. SoJ also desired to maintain the many liaisons with social justice organisations or networks. Here, one recalls Merton's frequently declared notion of monastics and other people of faith always being, in a sense, beginners or in need of constant renewal. Merton has added the helpful caveat: "Let no one hope to find in contemplation an escape from conflict, from anguish or from doubt. On the contrary, the deep, inexpressible certitude of the contemplative experience awakens a tragic anguish and opens many questions to the depths of the heart like wounds that cannot stop bleeding."[62] Such hope, combined with prayer and the work of justice, will undergird SoJ's next major issue engagement:

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[62] Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p. 12.

that of naming, addressing and, as possible, organising responses to inequality (by way of associations with like-minded social justice allies, as above, and an advocacy with them for organising pressure to bear upon decision-makers).

As earlier attested, inequalities have consistently engaged urban ministries – and of course, a core of significant social ethicists and theologians.[63] What SoJ is able and willing to undertake over the long haul remains to be seen, given the depth and complexity of what coming to terms with inequalities must mean. This will likely mean SoJ's enduring search for what it means to be in a service of justice advocacy and organising. This may well mean that it matters what SoJ is a part of and how it finds ways and means to practice integrity therein. A basic triad is evident in SoJ's embedded case of GCBC's spawned community houses; wherein *praying* (for) *justice hopefully* is intuited if not evident. One thus recalls a time when Lorne of Kinbrace (from a nearby refugee supportive house community, sponsored by the non-profit Salsbury Community Society, another outreach component of GCBC), addressed a special SoJ session. He closed the time citing their mission statement: to be welcoming by offering genuine space; to inspire trust in the believing heart of the stranger with an open heart; to enable relational transformation or a living together *beyond charity* mindful of what constitutes power imbalances; to celebrate entering the wonder of *hope*; and engaging in *prayer* by centering our whole selves in trust.[64]

As with the previous two case studies, it remains to take note of the four caveats or cautions lest a critical check and balance of this case study is neglected. In no special order, the engagement of justice requires courage rather than being content to play it safe in the midst of many contending temptations to do so. SoJ seems aware of the caution of being cowardly rather than taking risks and courting thereby an eviction from their valued place and base of operations. A history of personal relationships has helped to endow the Diewerts' trust with or confidence from the GCBC leadership. In addition, the presence of their adult children and their spouses in the life of this vibrant urban

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[63] Inequality basically engaged social ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr and to a significant extent, theologian Jurgen Moltmann, and contemplative critic Thomas Merton as well as all of their successors on into this generation of faithful public-prophetic witnessing. See the bibliography for examples of their consulted writings.

[64] An April 4, 2011 presentation to a SoJ session at GCBC; italics added.

church seems to have helped make evident a meaningful association of SoJ, itself, with its host church, GCBC. Such an exercise of courage – aided by the 12-step Recovery (from addictions) axiom that courage could be thought of as a fear that has said its prayers – helps to counter the other caveats as well. Being a family centered network in terms of the involvement of its core leadership there is a temptation to practice a form of communalism or "this is just for us" (and friends or convenient acquaintenances). There is similarly a temptation to think of those occasionally attending SoJ sessions – more in the beginning when poor people could be invited from the mid-week GCBC food programs or temporary housing shelters – as mere clients and thus the danger of clientelism. Finally, as for any social action or social ministry endeavour, there looms large the possibility of being co-opted by those in power and especially by those providing enabling funds, as minimal as these are for SoJ.[65] While never permanently put to rest, these three temptations are lessened by a willingness by SoJ to practice an open meeting format so that virtually anyone can attend and offer leadership. To be sure, those with the information and seniority of involvement tend to continue to exercise the leadership roles. The independent base that the host church provides to SoJ helps to offset the subtleness of co-optation. Were the founding and core leadership of SoJ on the church's payroll or were anyone on GCBC's payroll indebted or otherwise incumbent to the powers that be – as some of the laity might well be in terms of their commercial or business vocations. Perhaps over many generations, some people's livelihoods and their all-consuming working hours may be tied to and confined by their employers or stockholders' restrictions, even if tacit? If so, then such a temptation could be nearer at hand. If SoJ were to lessen its prophetic voice by way of and in advocacy and organising for the marginalised or "sinned against" and remain wedded to chiefly charitable practices to relieve the blows of poverty, then there could be, again, a slippage from justice advocacy into mere charity practices. This might be deemed to be a form of co-optation. If SoJ were consistently not willing to practice reaching beyond themselves – by way of steadily interacting with other causes and their coalition partners as well as regular sessions to attend and consult to the biblical prophets and

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[65] Occasional requests for voluntary donations are made from core members of SoJ and of course, as noted, the host church, GCBC, essentially provides rent-free space and generous uses of the whole church for meetings and often with meals.

their praxis mandates – then it could be assessed that SoJ practices are but a kind of communalism. That is, it would entail mixing in with people, now and then, as but clients and for the sake of their immediate assuagement, but little else. However, the above narration of SoJ attests to the presence of core theological virtues and an apparent attainment of these virtues by way of listening to people in need and those in need of paying attention to those in need. Over a decade of cultivating the art and practice of listening, there has arisen and remains for SoJ a challenge to nourish the mandate to do justice. And, to do justice by way of serious and self-critical organising. These all combine to make evident SoJ as a network accomplishing favourable outcomes toward, at least, a purposive fulfilment and hence, a semblance of "success" (as a part of its associated urban ministry with GCBC).

6.7.   Conclusion

A quick view of Streams of Justice indicates that there are in place elements of listening, place, organising, and stability or, endurance. Stability is rooted in place and as long as SoJ has a host church as its operating and legitimising base then it can be affirmed that SoJ's success on this score remains intact. It helps that SoJ is a small network and is able to work flexibly with a need for only minimal infrastructure and overhead. However, were SoJ to lose the host base and enduring place provided by GCBC then one could foresee an almost immediate destabilisation. Some level of meaningful endurance might carry on, as core members make use of their own homes, as is sometimes now the case. Meanwhile, the other two elements are discernible as a constant balancing act: listening is built into SoJ's modus operandi by way of regular check-ins and debriefings, especially following a major community or city-wide event; and organising is intrinsic to an event, forum, panel discussion, issue analysis discussion or hosting of a related organisation or network making use of SoJ's host church's premises.

The critical cautions which threaten favourable outcomes also bear mentioning. Again, as a small and flexible network, there is little discernible evidence, so far, that it has courted or succumbed to any of the temptations to be co-opted by the higher, government or state powers (it does not seek or accept finances). SoJ has not so far

treated the poor or relatively powerless in its midst, or among its occasional membership base, or spheres of participation, as being but commodities or clients to use as a means or as "fads" to displaying temporary signs of "success" as conveniently produced numbers. When the homeless, couch-surfing or under-housed people have been a part of a SoJ event (as above), they have been invited in advance, sometimes compensated, and always welcome participants in any meal. The SoJ founders' previous experience as hosts of over-night shelters with the making and serving of dinners seem to have reinforced a commitment to keep the theme, mandate and disciplines of justice uppermost in their social conscience and thus not invite or allow charity measures to alleviate poverty. Such a careful commitment means that temptations to be safe and palatable and thus to detract from a justice focus are minimised. Finally, there is a faithful public-and-prophetic witness evident in the now 10 years of SoJ engaging the challenges and demands of justice making and keeping. This body of time and accumulated experience thus has helped SoJ to contribute to critically and constructively renewing itself. This renewal has manifested itself as a discipline with justice analysis and a level of risk-taking work that sometimes requires considerable courage; it has taken more than mere business or charity practices that some of the mainstream churches tend to usually exhibit, albeit with evidence of some creative exceptions.[66] At the same time, as a long-time participant-observer – and further, as one engaging in no mere observation but with participant-action[67] with SoJ – those persons coming to SoJ events or stopping to converse at SoJ hosted rallies or vigils have been treated with respect, respecting an initial shyness or lack of an analytical view of what justice is needed because charitable and social service measures, while an inevitable

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[66] See. e.g., recent publications that I would not have foreseen in previous decades, other than what is favourably cited in Chapter 2's literature survey and the concluding chapter, namely, Scott Bessenecker's *Overturning Tables: Freeing Christian Missions from the Christian Industrial Complex* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014), ongoing reflections and publications via the new monasticism, and not all, Kent Annan's *Slow Kingdom Coming: Practices for Doing Justice, Loving Mercy and Walking Humbly in the World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016).

[67] "If we researchers want to help practitioners in (the) field, we should focus on systematic observation and analysis of projects intended to be participatory, under various conditions, and with favorable or unfavorable results," William F. Whyte, ed. *Participatory Action Research* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991), p. 237.

part of such people's experiences and expected church responses, are insufficient if not sometimes actual hindrances in the move from charity to justice.

It seems important to recall and now expand on SoJ's opening mission mandate (including Footnote 1):

> The stream envisioned in [the Amos 5:24] passage is one that doesn't dry up in the hot summer months, but flows constantly throughout the year. As such it nourishes and sustains the life of the community and its members. So too social justice is something that must be constantly practiced if communal life is to be nourished and sustained.[68]

After eight-plus years of steadfast existence and a myriad of suppers, meetings, demonstrations, seminars, tent-ins, website reflections, quarterly soul-searching sessions, and countless offerings of support to kindred social justice causes and networks, SoJ stretches and strains to focus on, and to mandate, a faithful public and prophetic witness.[69] A comparison with the previously discussed case studies will be instructive and now follows.

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[68] More specifically, a January 24, 2011 brainstorming and soul-searching session rhetorically expressed such: "1. Could we offer a place for people who had prepared for the meeting at City Hall? (shame the City for not listening); 2. How could we mobilize and encourage poorer residents of Chinatown to resist towers coming into their neighbourhood (without proper discussion/process)? 3. What kind of action could we do to help promote resistance and solidarity?"

[69] As thus announced: "The early impetus for the emergence of Streams of Justice was a series of sessions in which we brought together the currents of prophetic justice within the Christian biblical traditions and contemporary struggles against injustice and inequality. Now 6 years later, we are returning to explore these traditions as resources for the ongoing work for justice" a Dave Diewert e-mail to SoJ listserv, February 19, 2013.

Chapter 7.   Comparisons, Lessons, and Implications

In this concluding chapter, we need now to consider what constitutes success in urban ministry, and what challenges it, in light of the three case studies. As each case study received extensive descriptive and analytical treatment in the three previous chapters, this chapter will concentrate on the lessons learned from each case study and offer a comparison of them. It closes with a consideration of how the findings of this study could be useful, and what further studies might be helpful, in support of urban ministry and theology.

Narrative theory has assisted the interpretation of the three cases. Narrative theoreticians, such as Catherine Riessman, offer four analytical terms by which to measure the situation: *persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence*, and *pragmatic uses*. While these terms are helpful, by themselves they do not provide a sufficient basis for concluding that, if each one is met in the context of a particular case study, then they fully demonstrate the success of an urban ministry. *Integrity* has and could be added as a fifth term. Integrity is that which ties together the various parts of a case study to the thesis as a whole, forming a coherent, persuasive, and for purposes of future consideration, pragmatic discussion.

The first and fourth of Riessman's terms, persuasiveness and pragmatic use of the case studies, seem the most important. To engage these terms is to argue that the thesis and the case studies illustrate a convincing response to the research questions. The concerns of correspondence and coherence – i.e., consistencies between the research/interviewees and the writing – are best met in how persuasive the case studies illumine responses to the research questions. Later, pragmatism is addressed in terms of lessons learned from the case studies and how the thesis suggests possible avenues of further study of urban ministry and theology. These terms offer an implicit framework for this chapter, though the chapter draws on the four elements of listening, place, organising, and stability or endurance, as the characteristics which help constitute successful urban ministry. The five critical caveats of co-optation, communalism,

clientelism, commodification, and cowardice are also referenced, though the discussion is brief because these two clusters of factors were carefully considered in the case study chapters.

7.1. Engaging the Research Questions via Lessons of the Cases

Through an historical account of the origins of the cases from the point of view of the chief agents, a basis is provided for assessing the claims of whether or not the mission purposes of the case are met and, if so, how. Objective evidence sits alongside subjective claims made by these ministry agents. As the mission statements arose from an initial *conscientisation* moment or set of conscience-arousing moments, the testimonies of the original agents are worth recalling (see also Appendix B).

For the Toronto CRC, the first known written account of its origins – *Churches Where the Action Is* – includes two of the original protagonists' testimony. This is duly noted in the previous discussion as the central story-line of the ministry, namely doing something in response to the perceived inequities of neighbourhoods (the affluent Rosedale area and United Church base) to the inner-city impoverished areas that these lay persons frequently passed through on their way to work. Thus, the origin of the CRC was rooted in the felt call to act out one's personal faith, with the support of like-minded Christians, in the terms of what it means to be a "good neighbour" – or almost literally, to "love thy neighbour" and stop to help rather than remain a "passer by".[1] The CRC came about slowly but surely with this initial arousal in mind. It draws on precedents, even if loosely or indirectly, that included the EHPP and therein, the case study duly notes that established city churches had lost their relatedness to the inner-city or urban core areas but there were nonetheless encouraging examples of how this process could begin to be reversed. The later geographical moves of the CRC came to illustrate a fairly consistent adaptation to the changing nature of inner-city life as it, in turn, was uprooted and its people dislocated due to the pressures and dynamics of redevelopment and gentrification. This meant that while early mission responses of charity and enabling the sharing of information in an attempt to integrate social service delivery and

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[1] See thus Jesus' Good Samaritan Parable, Luke 10: 25-37.

efficiency seemed helpful (at least better than no response), it was not sufficient. The provision of a place to "drop into" and perhaps receive emergency assistance or referral to such (if available) was insufficient. It remained insufficient until an eventual listening to and involvement of marginalised persons who until then lacked the opportunity and skills to raise their voice and work for change. It meant that the CRC moved from mere charity to a semblance of advocacy for deeper and wider measures of assistance anticipating the quest for justice as a sense of at least fairness. Slowly, but with a degree of confidence, moves were made to offer space and tangible support for mutual help groups and, as noted, a bold endeavour to redress serious communication and visitation challenges to those in prison and trying to practice some level of hope that there could be meaningful, shared life beyond incarceration. It also meant that one or more CRC workers actively immersed themselves in and contributed to such mutual help groups which advocated for deeper change. Poor people groups were thus formed – in partnership with others in the wider community – and some pressure brought to bear upon politicians and civil servants responsible for policy formation and implementation. In summary then, this case illustrates a significant role of the key variables of organising – and organising a ministry of place for a concrete and enduring ministry of presence and advocacy – both via long-term listening.

For the origins of OPS and then its almost surprising offshoot, the DS, it is the account of OPS's predecessor, the OD that provides seminal clues. It was the work of a diaconal minister (Moon was not traditionally ordained) that animated the origins of the OD. Researching urban core areas in other cities, in the US and Canada, contributed to the establishment of these ministries, while through response ethics, consideration was given to what even a small church could do. Then, national and regional church statements of social policy concern further contributed a helpful rationale and legitimacy for the OD's mission – along with valuable funds raised by the United Church as a whole and especially provided for "new ventures in ministry" which came to include the OD. Yet, it took the perseverance of a Lawrence Moon and then, prior to his retirement, an understudy successor, Al Tysick, to put flesh on the bones of what constituted a mere drop-in space. The flesh of what the CRC study depicted as an incarnational presence – when the CRC chose to stay rooted in and ministering to the changing population of an area undergoing significant redevelopment – was also made possible. Our study noted the elements of street ministry, the creation of wider church

volunteers to walk beside the marginalised, and an eventual merger with other traditional forms of charitable ministries to forge a central urban ministry of significance. When an urban ministry arises basically from nothing (albeit host or sponsoring churches are significant) and is small in its origins – but nonetheless stays the course of fulfilling its mission purposes even if via a generally stated "unconditional and non-judgmental love" – there is then a mark of shared persuasiveness: the ministry comes into being and meaningfully, with appreciation, endures. In summary then, this case also illustrates a presence of the key terms of organising – and, organising for – a concrete and enduring ministry of presence and advocacy, both via long-term listening.

For the origins of Streams of Justice (SoJ), it seems remarkable that a motley association of people could arise and become a network focusing on the meaning and practices of justice, and meeting regularly, when they could easily have been deterred by the dedication of their host church, as well as virtually all neighbouring churches, to charity responses to poverty. Such a labour-intensive ministry could be subject – and indeed has been – to criticisms of self-righteousness. It could also be critiqued for too narrow a focus for too long a period given the exigencies of urban poverty and its persistent root causes and symptoms, which cry out for a compassionate response. Nevertheless, SoJ's three-fold focus on education, hosting of public events and forums, and above all, its determination to practice a range of justice-making activities draws due attention to why such an emphasis continues to be necessary. Over its ten years, with annual soul-searching retreats to examine its very *raison d'etre*, SoJ has illustrated steadfastness and illumined the nature not only of what makes for justice but also what thwarts its efforts. Continued charity measures – as those that really become substitutes for justice – thus became named. This poignant contrast of charity versus justice animated the founders of SoJ to commence its forums which in turn sought to organise for long-term change. This same disciplined emphasis has kept SoJ from becoming a much larger, perhaps more user-friendly network than it has. Of the three cases, it appears that SoJ has best resisted the critical cautions of co-optation, clientelism, communalism, commodification, and cowardice. This is, I contend, due to its relative independence from being under the thumb of any higher church court authorities with a freedom thus to speak and practice the truth to those in power. In summary then, this case illustrates a significant role of the key variables of organising – and, organising for – a sense of place or networking for a concrete and enduring ministry of education,

action, and reflection. It also expresses a significant, unique move beyond mere charity to that of advocacy, and intentional levels of listening, to justice. Herein, SoJ illustrates a chief factor inhibiting an outcome of success, namely a faithful public-and-prophetic witness is thwarted when charity responses to inequality and poverty dominate.

7.2.   A Comparative Summary

All three case studies illustrate the creative and committed presence of a founding minister, lay people, or lay couple. Each ministry relied on the decisions of conscientious people to work for change. None of the three cases were mere solo initiatives; they illustrate how groups of committed and dedicated people need to be mobilised in order to secure a concerted, shared effort. The cases further illustrate how, if realistic conditions for change are evident – given the festering and persisting conditions of inequality – then they could be meaningfully engaged if a personal-and-collective readiness is present (and willing). Objective conditions also refer to the presence of enabling resources. When financial resources and a sponsoring legitimacy are combined and applied by the founders or successors, a new and sustainable urban ministry or network can occur. There is evidence of realism in the work and hence a basis for enduring with stability. As one student of the relationship of success and hope expresses it: "Failure comes when our 'reach exceeds grasp' and we attempt to achieve something that we are unprepared for, or which circumstances prohibit, in the moment."[2]

Each of the case studies illustrates their own particular emphasis and yet they possess common features which incorporate ministerial resources for the long haul (a favourable ingredient for success). Thus, the CRC gained inspiration from the EHPP initially as a "working precedent." It began slowly and patiently, being related to other inner-city Toronto churches and social agencies. It eventually organised and spawned its own projects – notably but not only, we recall, Operation Springboard; a later offshoot, that of Self-Help, Inc.; a host of in-house and community services and programs

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[2] See "Success Nourishes Hope," Tao of the Zentropist, December 29, 2010. Online <https://zentropist.wordpress.com/2010/12/29/success-nourishes-hope/> [accessed November 22, 2016].

addressing insecurities in food, shelter, and potentially inter-cultural tensions and crises; and eventually, its own sponsored and administrated social housing project.

The OD and its later, merged OPS researched urban needs in Victoria, BC. It also began slowly and made creative use of established and under-utilised downtown churches as drop-in centres and as an office base. With the merger into OPS, the ministry became almost a large scale "instant urban mission." It grew considerably in size as the staff, volunteers, financial needs, and board of directors mushroomed. The merger, we recall, meant centralising two previous urban missions and moving to seek and receive government largesse. Inevitably questions were raised regarding the possible impact that size and government (or state) funding would have on the mission and operating styles of these missions. Thus, the DS emerged by way of the one veteran street chaplain, Tysick, who did this by virtue of his involvement in the first two ministries. Herein is evidence of factors that favour successful outcomes, albeit with later cautions.

The SoJ network of participants began and remains volunteer-created and sustained. However, as noted, its host church, GCBC, has provided sustaining space, stability, and hence a degree of independence to engage on its own. To repeat some of the favoured conditions for success, this has meant engaging in regular listening and regular organising or supporting justice-orientated organising efforts in the local and wider communities of Vancouver, BC.

To recall important critical cautions, all three case studies have been perceived to be minimally effected by the corrosive impact of a modified version of Bretherton's cautionary characteristics, namely co-optation, clientelism, commodification, communalism, and cowardice. There is evidence of a "relative" complicity in succumbing to these caveats. It is not absolute, however, since the CRC and OPS (and even its offshoot, the DS) manifest partial outcomes resulting from the impact of seeking and receiving government funds. Such funds carry conditions which, in turn, impact on, if not curtail the prophetic edge of the ministry. To the extent that such an influence results in compromise, there arises the possibility that a "forced option" prioritises charity measures over actual and sustained justice advocacy and practices. The latter invites a scrutiny of a ministry's funders, especially if there is a suspicion of a registered charity's regulations being violated (which minimise if not curtail advocacy

for change through politics and social action). On the other hand, the SoJ network has remained relatively free from the influences arising from regulations which govern funding and which might then impact on SoJ's core mission purposes. Consequently, as noted, SoJ has retained a capacity to "speak the truth to those in power" and simultaneously seek to bear a public and prophetic witness to its host church, the neighbouring cluster of churches, and the "Church" or religious sympathisers at large.

All three ministries further illustrate the value of challenging themselves beyond the pitfalls of clientelism in that they seek to resist or at least minimise measures which would reduce people to mere statistics, who drop in but are then referred on to another emergency source for a daily reprieve from hunger and/or homelessness. People can be duly respected as ends in themselves so that the temptation to use them as a means to one's own ministry's statistical count and measure of success is minimised.

The cases also resist the temptation to communalism by reaching out beyond the safe confines of the ministry's otherwise restricted, safe or protected walls. When there is a street ministry or street chaplaincy that reaches out and keeps the host ministry place filled with actual street people and their intertwining cluster of insecurities (food, housing, income) then there is a meaningful chance that the ministry can practice a degree of integrity and thus remain dedicated to its mission purposes. There may have to occur a check-and-balance on a ministry's drop-in functions so that it is more than *only* opening the doors during convenient business hours and *only* looking after those already known as "insiders" or regulars. Such a check and balance serves a critical and constructive function: fresh forays into the wider community keep an established ministry in tune and up-to-date. Then, those who are irregular drop-ins and/or those arriving to the city without reliable referrals, can be made to feel welcome because they are personally met on the outside in regular walkabouts or street chaplaincy patrols and truly welcomed. A core ingredient in the nature of depicting success is by way of noting a vital balance. This can be achieved by way of a ministry or network that works by way of a division of labour to reach out to new people as well continue to serve those already in the sphere of a ministry's awareness, care or work. When this occurs, there might well be a vital balance present. Such a balance is vital when there are present both an outward or outreach purpose and functions of a ministry that attend to an inward or

onsite mode of hospitality.[3] They resist or minimise the temptation to commodification in that the people the ministries serve are protected from being considered a convenient means merely to fortify the financial largesse of a ministry (as monthly and annual statistics). In SoJ's case there is no such bank account that needs to be increased in order to meet expanding needs and an increased number of staff.

The cases, finally, seem to resist succumbing to a cowardly posture in practicing ministry – no easy or once-and-for-all feat. The CRC exercised courage from its outset and further demonstrated by staying present in a massive urban core redevelopment. put One could surmise that OPS's virtual rush to relieve Victoria, BC's long tent-in occupation crisis of otherwise public lands by the homeless was less than courageous – rather than standing with the then un-housed, under-housed, and their allies' manifesto for a socially just resolution as Tysick, via the DS, had been attempting to achieve. Though it is relatively short-lived and seems somewhat protected by being lodged in the host GCBC, SoJ exhibits the largest degree of courage in taking public risks. Its singular and consistent focus on justice advocacy and organising is evidence of a favoured set of practices that at least suggests a successful tenacity and, by its bold, enduring existence, signs of a purposeful outcome.

To what extent does the thesis answer an implicit research question regarding how success can possibly be assessed in urban ministry and what can be discerned as posing stumbling blocks to that success or purposive fulfilment? Table 7.1 represents an effort to summarise some of the findings of each of the three case studies. A comparison of the case studies can be made on the basis of whether they are deemed to be successful (or fulfilling), partially successful in achieving the mission purposes, and sometimes not successful at all even if both the means used and mission ends to aim for a fulfilment of mission purposes are revised. It seems that each case, at different times, experiences all three of these assessments. To press again, what then contributes to a successful urban ministry especially in the face of threats to the means employed and mission purposes sought? We will focus on this question from the inevitable tensions that exist when pursing charity or justice in response to social need.

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[3] See my own summary of what grounds a vital balance -- personally, corporately, spiritually, and politically -- via the carefully crafted and time-tested grace-based serenity prayer, Chapter 8 of Morris, *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry*, pp. 130-140.

Table 7.1.   **Pivotal Phases in the Three Urban Ministry Cases**

	CRC	OD–OPS–DS	SoJ
Contrast-Arousing	Perceived contrast of affluence and city's urban core	Street people perceived outside church walls and ordinary outreach	Felt and perceived contrasts of welfare and justice perspectives
Listening-Organising-Place	From detachment to houses to reviving a dying church into social housing and office base	Drop-in uses of churches to central building and program and back to streets/vans	Host regular meetings, support justice causes, animate prophetic alternatives
Stabilising	Add funds and staff	Expand, consolidate, secularise	Website, listserv, retreats, onsite hosting
Revisions	Adapt to redevelopment forces & re-build	Back to streets to befriend	Take stock, revise, persevere

7.3.   **Enduring Charity-Justice Tensions and Facing Failure**

In the face of failure or thwarted tasks, it might well become an urban ministry or network's task to address what prevents a social justice task from being accomplished in the first place.[4] To elaborate on the comparison of the case studies above, if the purity of heart is "to will one thing"[5] or to honour one central, dominant purpose, then SoJ depicts such a determined example in its tenacious dedication to understanding and supporting the practices of justice.

The Streams of Justice's dedication to justice illustrates just such a singleness of purpose. Its narrative included how the founders' experience with charity responses to poverty and homelessness led to a crisis of conscience; it sparked an arousal of what blocked possibilities for justice and discerning a way to do otherwise. This was chiefly,

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[4] Again, I adopt and adapt this from Albert Camus [he also citing Marcus Aurelius]. See Camus, *Notebooks 1935-1942*, trans. by Philip Thody (New York: Modern Library, 1965, orig. 1963), p. 211.

[5] See Soren Kierkegaard, ed. R. Bretall *A Kierkegaard Anthology* (New York: Modern Library, 1946), p. 271.

they felt, due to an entrenched investment in historical practices and, implicitly, a fear that, were the host GCBC to make justice its cardinal focus, then difficulties might well arise which threaten its survival. A complementary difficulty is the whole complexity of understanding and practicing justice. A mature perspective on justice seems to require the work of analysis, a bold willingness to engage in trial and error, harnessing of resources to deal with an inevitable weariness, a self-critical awareness to offset subtle temptations to self-righteousness, and an openness to mix and mingle with potential and perhaps strange allies – often outside the familiarity of church spheres, such as those who acknowledge the "spiritual but not the religious" or those of a left-wing political persuasion. In terms of these disciplined foci SoJ seems unique. It thus attends to justice advocacy and organising. It has been free consistently to practice this precisely because of its profoundly mutual and yet, as intimated above, somewhat ambivalent relationship to its host church, GCBC. Virtually unencumbered by the inevitable administrative or financial concerns of GCBC, and thus deemed to be prophetically free, SoJ has been able to address some of the underlying causes of inequality and the outcome of poverty in ways that the other two cases have simply been unable to consider. The CRC and OPS have been able to help provide temporary housing shelters, some long-term (and emergency) residencies, and daily meals but have generally left unaddressed the root causes of income, food, and housing insecurities – these ministries being more subject (than SoJ) to possible harassment from higher authorities in state or church when it comes to seeking a public redress for inadequate income and unaffordable housing. To do this modest act of justice advocacy and extend it to organising for a level of justice that truly makes not only for affordable housing, adequate social assistance rates, and living wages but also a qualitative change in political relations so that the marginalised have a permanent place at any bargaining table[6] requires a prophetically bold, consistent witness. This also requires realistic measures since such prophetic actions may incur loss of funding from "higher authorities" and wider appeal bases.

The OPS and its *de facto* offshoot, the DS, exemplify unique features of urban ministry in terms of street ministries and their related chaplaincy services (averaging a

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[6] Cf. Charles Valentine, *Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter-proposals* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), passim.

hundred annual memorials or funerals). However, the DS seems freer to practice these daily and aggressive street ministries at least in part because the OPS and other urban core missions to the poor already provide onsite levels of care for the hungry and homeless (to which DS refers people). Such a freedom further extends to DS, unlike OPS, to bear a public and prophetic witness as in its annual Provincial Legislative Building's Christmas Eve vigils for the poor and, thereby, advocacy for the long-term occupants of Victoria's tent city. During the summer of 2016, irate "neighbours" called for the occupants' removal and thus a nearby Cathedral retreated from its earlier support. However, in this event OPS managed, with significant government assistance, to respond to provide shelter for many if not most of these public park tent dwellers. While the CRC is unique in exemplifying a model of a church's return to minister in an otherwise neglected inner-city of Toronto, it has had to raise significant funding in order to remain present there. All of these further illustrate the meaning and value of place, where listening can occur, and an organised stability in order to endure. These variables all assist in representing what some social scientists have come to call a residential stability contributing to a community stability without which other forms of educational, personal or spiritual stability may not occur or remain.[7] However, all of the case studies have stopped short of being willing to contribute to broad-based community organising for the sake of justice making and keeping. As noted below, SOJ seems a modest exception in that it at least focuses on what justice is, how it works, and what it takes to implement. When organising is committed to over a long haul and with the same kind of dedicated focus that SoJ claims for the discipline of justice education and reflection work itself, it could help give unrepresented and marginalised people a modicum of self -determination to negotiate on some of the above issues. It would significantly help to move practices of ministry from that of mere charity on to social service delivery and advocacy and finally to that of real justice measures and outcomes. Though again SoJ stops short of engaging in any actual broad-based community or political organising, there are, thankfully, urban ministry and theology literature examples that attest to such action training and organising efforts. There are thus

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[7] See especially Matthew Desmond, *Eviction: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2016), especially p. 296 on residential stability begetting psychological stability.

resources for these kinds of urban ministry cases and other urban ministries to take note of and, as possible, to contribute.[8]

In summary, for all the case studies the issue of engaging the work of charity and the advocacy of justice is important and thus endures. While much already has been said on this important relationship, there are ways to summarise the options as they emerge as "lessons" from the case studies. Thus, some urban ministry and social ethical writers and practitioners tend to think of charity as being justice or at least a degree, however imperfect, of justice in the making; there is a re-distribution of some resources that otherwise would not occur. OPS and the DS manifest aspects of this. Some writers or practitioners tend to think of charity and justice being on a continuum so that eventually and when dedicated to do so, charity could develop into degrees and levels of justice policy and outcomes. The CRC manifest elements of this. There is thirdly a strong caution that charity and justice are in conflict, something noted especially in SoJ. This means that while charity practices seem inevitable in urban ministries, unless one adopts a strong conviction and dedicated practices, then actual justice advocacy and organising simply are not likely to occur or if they do, they will only be temporary (without the necessary strategies and structures for justice). Here, indeed, as long as charity measures and practices are honoured, then there will always be the likelihood that charity tends to serve as a substitute for justice. There are manifold factors for this.[9]

7.4. Conclusion

Recapping much of the thesis and the above, first, there is the *endurance* toward *longevity* of the case study ministries or networks in terms of their sheer length of time

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[8] In addition to Chapter 2's Literature Survey, see especially the writings, in the bibliography, of Luke Bretherton, Saul Alinsky, Donald Keating, Jeffery Stout, Amanda Tattersall, and not all, Ed Chambers. See also Chapter 7 of Morris, *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry,* pp. 100-126, for a study of one urban ministry and its need for allies and resources outside of itself to take on disciplined community organising for the sake of justice advocacy and, for the long haul.

[9] Among many, there are distinct differences between charity and justice which include: charity is short-term, simpler, more direct, non-threatening, top-down and a "feel-good" practice whereas justice tends to be long-term, more complex, indirect, threatening, conducive to feeling threatened and, if practiced via serious organising, less top-down and from the bottom up. The work of justice tends to be more courageously interdisciplinary.

as well as the quality of their ministries. Their quality, which defies being measured quantitatively (other than via a few annual statistics), is referenced in the case studies themselves in terms of the following ingredients and patterns. Unless the ministry is a project to be undertaken in a specific time frame, or undertaken as an interim trial project related to an experimental grant, then the fact that a ministry meaningfully endures is important. While SoJ has attained a modest decade of shared efforts – the CRC and OPS several decades – such endurance has been deemed worthy of note including a due recognition of its elders by their now adult children, as via this Nov. 7, 2016 10th anniversary of SoJ. For example, Erin Diewert-Peters poetically reflects: "You have reminded us that | it is okay | to try and to fail | and to try again… You have reminded us | of what it means | what it looks like | to be in it for the long haul."[10]

Secondly, the effort to commence a ministry is important – including start-up funding, with an exception being SoJ, since it has made use of the participants' own pocket money. Otherwise, for OPS and the DS, and the CRC, start-up and enabling funds are indispensable, along with *listening and attending to the situation* to which the ministry seeks to minister and engage. There is evidence of courage, patience, and pragmatism, all in the service of persuading an urban ministry's staff, volunteers, board, supporters, and funders that the ministry's purposes are faithfully conceived and practiced if, even in the end, it falls short of being recognised as tangible successes.

Thirdly, as SoJ attests, the effort put into *organising* is important – that which, for the sake of enhancing justice, brings about an enduring stability. It is important for making the move from working with people in actual places by way of ideas becoming programs or projects and often with necessary revisions or by way of "restoration."[11]

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[10] Erin Diewert-Peters' Poem for 10th anniversary of Streams of Justice, November 7, 2016; used with permission.

[11] Cf. "… [W]e knew traditional social service was not enough. We knew that we were not going to be able to take the place of declining government social services. And we knew that the community was suffering in many ways. Families were hurting. Youth were moving out of the area and the remaining residents were aging. Public schools were in disarray and regional industries were all facing labor shortages. Obesity was on the rise. The churches tended to focus on caring for their members, yet felt the impact of the community's struggles. We were in *need of revitalization* or, to use an ancient word that the pastors could agree with, *restoration*." Larry Engel, "The Pastors of Richland County," *Christian Century*, italics added <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2016-08/pastors-richland-county>. Italics added. [accessed September 6, 2016].

Ensuring a wider alliance or coalition is also important so that a single ministry does not attempt to take on and carry the burden of exercising a prophetic voice on its own. Put otherwise, this entails being steadfastly interdisciplinary and interdependent in thought and work.

Fourthly, spirituality for the long haul, again a *meaningful endurance* – the virtual rhythm, again, of faith[12] – is important. It evidences the practice of that which contributes to spiritual renewal and nourishment in order to remain steadfastly committed.[13] Here, along with a spiritual presence and practices, the core themes and precedents of an urban ministry and training for it come into creative play. Put otherwise, there could be evidence of the work of an inner (motives) and outer (testimony) persuasion – a persuasion in the service, for Christians, of faithfulness to Jesus' story and its legacy of living the gospel and hence sometimes contra to the subtle pressures that could come by way of an "ideology of success." as some theologians – and especially dedicated theologies of the Cross – caution.[14] Though there are succinct proverbs on the paradox of success in failure, or the reverse,[15] none of the case studies intentionally court failure. Indeed, all of the cases exhibit tendencies to want to succeed if only by way of recruiting numbers of people to their programs or to replace those who

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[12] See again, John McNamee title theme, *Endurance: The Rhythm of Faith*.

[13] The author has sought to provide this in prior chapters and further discerns this in the case studies, as well as in *Hopeful Realism in Urban Ministry* and its intended, instructive subtitle *Critical Explorations and Constructive Affirmations of Hoping Justice Prayerfully* (Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 2016), especially the theological chapters 4, 5, and 6 with respectively Moltmann on hope, Reinhold Niebuhr on justice, and Merton on prayer.

[14] See D. J. Hall: "When we turn the story of Jesus into a success story, we both cheat ourselves out of its depth and effectively banish from our purview all those… whose actuality precludes their giving themselves eagerly to stories with happy endings. The gospel of the cross is… about a compassionate God's solidarity in our…creaturehood and the slow grace of divine suffering-love which, without pretending finality, effects its social and personal transformations from within," in "Cross and Context" D. Heim ed., *How My Mind Has Changed: Essays from the Christian Century* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), p. 79. See further, Merton, "Learning to Live," p. 440. As note 33, Hall is one of those theologians, with Niebuhr and others, dedicated to a theology of the Cross.

[15] Cf. a Bob Dylan depiction of success in failure. There is "no success like failure, and that failure's no success at all" <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Minus_Zero/No_Limit> [accessed November 28, 2016] and "It is often also quoted by Thomas Edison, that '10,000 failures are worth more than one success,' meaning that he was able to determine that more things did not work by his experimenting" <http://www.nefuri.com/Theres_no_success_like_failure_can_someone_explain_1579914.html> [accessed November 28, 2016].

have moved on. It is the author's observation that the cases all too well recognise the reality of the feelings of failure in the lives of the people they seek to serve and relate to and – spurred by a relentless gospel of seeking the lost, least, or last (e.g. Luke 15 and Matthew 25's parables) – seek to offer ways and means to integrate and possibly transform a failed situation into the fresh aim of, once again, a purposive fulfilment.

Fifth and finally, all of the above are necessary for the mission purpose of practicing a faithful public-and-prophetic witness. For such to remain a significant presence for an urban ministry, it requires a *balance* that is vital and such a *balance to endure invites dedication and* at times, thus, *sacrifices to the very purposeful end* of the whole of a ministry. Then it is vital. There is a sense in which the freedom to be prophetic requires attending to the practical needs of a ministry so that administrative, chaplaincy or pastoral needs are met but at the same time, frees up for a minister or lay person a trustworthy, even supportive, place to be prophetic, too. No wonder there is evidence of prophets being supported in their own bands or schools.[16] SoJ works hard at this. The transitions of the original OD to the merged phenomenon of an institutionalised OPS and then the offshoot of the Dandelion Society's back-to-streets, illustrate. Again, this latter ministry's founding came by way of Tysick being inspired – by again his mentor, Moon, and the founder of OD – to carry on despite his initial official retirement from OPS. It seemed that Moon's death and an intense, even frequent recall of what that mentorship and mutual dedication had come to mean for them both, has sustained Tysick to this day. "He was so supportive and prayerful as always…. Let us believe and work for justice in memory of Lawrence."[17]

7.5. Implications for Academy and Urban Ministry Practitioners

Some theoretical and practical considerations arose in Chapter 1, namely practical theology, biblical theology, and in particular, the less evoked genre of

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[16] See Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 85-87, passim.

[17] Tysick to Morris E-mail communication, September 5, 2011; used with permission. See also SoJ's Erin Peters' testimony, note 8.

biography-as-theology;[18] the import of the tension which exists between charity and justice including a seemingly renewed attention to the influence or role of class, sometimes in relationship to race,[19] and a renewed religious socialism[20] in an analysis of the pressures present in urban ministry encounters;[21] and, finally the role and function of the virtues in doing theology with a social ethical orientation. To an extent, the new monasticism, Christian realism, and narrative theory/analysis (even narrative therapy and theology), convey a wider grasp of what classical and theological understandings of the virtues mean.[22] These approaches attend to what happens when people ground their convictions in the work that is undertaken and with others – or when a body of people engage in deep conversations over a long period of time. In all of this, references to "the system" or systems will inevitably arise as broad-based and systemic changes are sought

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[18] See footnotes 25-27 of Chapter 1's Introduction and parts of Chapter 3's Methodology for references to biography as theology. For recent examples of the utility of narrative theology, see Trisha Elliott, "Narrative Theology: Exploring Our Stories – and God's," *The United Church Observer,* September 2016, p. 43.

[19] See *inter alia*, Natalie Wigg-Stevenson, "White, Privileged, Fragile," *Sojourners*, Sept-Oct 2016, Vol. 45 No. 9, pp. 22-27.

[20] See Danny D. Collum, "Economic Democracy and the Common Good," *Sojourners*, February 2016, Vol. 45, No. 2, pp. 20-24; also, for recent journalistic/scholarly accounts on how it is that working class's poor tend to conservatism in hard times, see Theo Anderson, "The Stories We Live By: Why the White Working Class Votes Conservative," which engages therein two further writings on the nature of class and politics, In *Strangers in Their Own Land* by Arlie Russell Hochschild and *What's the Matter with Kansas?* by Thomas Frank. Online <http://inthesetimes.com/article/19431/why-conservatives-vote-the-way-they-do> [accessed September 10, 2016]. Investigative journalists – some being "public intellectuals" – often provide insightful coverage of local/global issues such as the pressing housing affordability issue; see Kathy Tomlinson, "Out of the Shadows" *The Globe and Mail Weekend*, September 10, 2016, pp. F1, 3. Finally, see previously cited works of those, like J. Rieger, contributing to the AAR's recently established "Class, Religion, and Theology" Group.

[21] Though not a class-based-orientated civic party, the governing political party of Vision Vancouver hammers away for reformist policies especially on the city's current and dominant housing crisis. Mayor Gregor Robertson thus states "Vancouver's rental vacancy rate is hovering near-zero, putting renters in crisis. The stories I hear from tenants who are taken advantage of through bidding wars, real estate speculation, and renoviction loopholes in BC's Residential Tenancy Act are troubling. It's frustrating and discouraging to see Vancouver's rental housing crisis impacting people of all incomes and in every neighbourhood so deeply," 'An Empty Homes Tax," an e-mail announcement via info@votevision.ca, September 14, 2016.

[22] *Inter alia*, see Jonathan R. Wilson, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, England: Lutterworth, 2010), as well as his *Gospel Virtues: Practicing Faith, Hope, and Love in Uncertain Times* (Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 2004). His son-in-law and daughter are new monastics.

and, as more than cosmetic reforms which leave power relations and an unfair distribution of resources intact. Systems thinking and research seem a creative place to begin, including past and present sociological and theological works on "the system." or its alternative rendering.[23] However such thinking continually needs the concreteness that urban ministry situations and studies contribute.

Secondly, there seems to be a need and value to revisit and retrieve many of the past generations' field work and, in some instances, their written reflections (cf. Chapters 1, 2, and 3). There is something profoundly empathetic in the genre of autobiography, clear biography, and collegial events or collected reflection papers that convey the nature of ministry in the city for the benefit of the common good of those working out their vocation in the city and especially in their relation to the poor and vulnerable working (and now, even middle) classes. While this thesis sought at least to note and comment on aspects of this, it has by no means exhausted the potential. Thus, there are bound to be yet untapped persons and their inspirational resources in what the letter to the Hebrews aptly calls that "cloud of witnesses" to attend, for guidance (Heb. 12: 1-2).[24] The recent phenomenon of the new monasticism alone bears this promise as it, in turn, had drawn from the older or classical monastics and applied their lessons and insights into the urban situation.[25] The Streams of Justice case study illustrates the importance of its implicit host church (GCBC), which in turn draws on the encouraging

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[23] Theologians frequently offer a pair or trilogy of volumes on constructive or systematic theology, though they seem far from finished – one thinks of Paul Tillich's three volume work on Systematic Theology and his descriptions therein on constructive "system" thinking. See also the previously noted *Action Training in Canada: Reflections on a Church-based Education for Social Transformation,* ed. by T. Reeve and R. Hutchinson (Toronto, ON: Emmanuel College: Centre for Research in Religion, 1997), especially the contributions of Larry Peterson and Hutchinson, respectively, "Learning to Transform by Spirit: Transforming Organizations" (pp. 165-174) and "Social Ethics and Social Transformation" (pp. 115-128). More recently see Yale systematic theologian, Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), especially pp. 94-96 on "yes" to engagement but "noes" to accommodation and total transformation.

[24] Cf. B. K. Morris, "Profile: Bob (Robert George Wesley) Lindsey" in *Touchstone: Theology Shaping Witness,* Vol. 34 Oct 2016 No 3, pp. 50-56. Lindsey was a virtual circuit-rider linking head office resources to grass-roots urban minister and workers' local needs and networking them in an otherwise isolation.

[25] See in addition to previously noted new monastic writings, Shane Claiborne, "…Now We Have a Village," *Sojourners*, February 2016, Vol. 45 No. 2, pp. 32-36.

examples of the new monastics.[26] And, neither the Dandelion Society – and its now neighbouring, once host mission, OPS – nor the Christian Resource Centre have outgrown the historic and continuing resources that their still sponsoring and legitimising UCC denomination provides.

Thirdly, a case could be made regarding the interactive contribution of urban theology and urban ministry practices with small town and rural situations. There are currently compelling narrative accounts on the nature of, and challenges facing, rural churches in the face of dire poverty, unemployment, and underemployment as well as accompanying spiritual, ecclesial, cultural, and political analyses.[27] There also seem to be possible historical retrievals to note and appropriate.[28] What also is of concern is the practical decline in at least the once established or dominant churches and thus our capacity to address – let alone redress – these situations. There is thus the need to take note of realism. [29]

[26] See again, Tim Dickau's previously cited writings and to add, his regular efforts to gather and facilitate the lessons and examples of new monasticism, via retreats and in-church reflection sessions.

[27] In addition to Richard Sennett's writings, such as *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, see e.g., perhaps the classical modern USA writing on the working poor and their alienation with the mainstream churches, Tex Sample's *Hard Living Christians and the Mainstream Churches*; further, recent op ed. reflections as David Giuliano, with Barbara Ehrenreich, "The Working Poor Are the Major Philanthropists of Our Society," *The United Church Observer*, September 2016, Vol. 80 No. 2, p. 45 and feature articles as Tish Harrison Warren's "I Overlooked the Rural Poor – Then Trump Came Along," *Christianity Today The Magazine*, September, 2016, Vol. 60 No. 7. Online <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/september/i-overlooked-rural-poor-then-trump-came-along.html?utm_source=ctweekly-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=14340424&utm_content=464719318&utm_cam paign=email&start=4> [accessed September 16, 2016]. There is also Robert Putnam's apt and well researched observations on class disparities in *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015). Finally, see C.D. Cantwell et al., eds., *The Pew and the Picket-Line: Christianity and the American Working Class* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

[28] See S. T. Kimbrough, Jr.., *Radical Grace: Justice for the Poor and Marginalized – Charles Wesley's Views for the Twenty-First Century* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013).

[29] See Lucille Joseph, "Secretly Spiritual," *The United Church Observer*, September 2016, Vol. 80 No. 2, pp. 34-36 and Ed Stetzer, "The State of the Church in America: When Numbers Point to a New Reality, Part 1," *Christianity Today*, September 12, 2016. Online <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/september/state-of-american-church-when-numbers-point-to-new-reality.html?utm_source=ctweekly-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=14340424&utm_content=464719318&utm_cam paign=email> [accessed September 16, 2016].

Fourthly, perhaps most challenging of all, there is the interpretive value of the use and place of the very term "success" – to try to assess what indeed constitutes favoured and purposeful outcomes or at least contributes to steadfast efforts in urban ministries. This thesis has intentionally considered a range of possibilities and functional equivalents for the term of success. It often seems fraught with ambiguity and its meaning depends heavily on its use by the one employing the term in his or her context and for what purposes. It seems seldom free from the burden of mixed and self-serving motives, of which again Christian realism reminds us.[30] However, there is promise in working with the term "success" and its equivalent renderings. They have been identified for discerning evidence of what is the place and role of those ingredients that contribute to a purposeful process, and even hopeful outcome, in urban ministries.

What remains a challenge, fifthly, is how creatively and practically to address and redress the gap between theory and practice. At the risk of likely omission, several disciplines offer examples. From *political sociology* there is the 1920s work of Roberto Michaels on the nature of the "iron law of oligarchy"[31] – it illumines how it is that virtually all organisations, even the small or most democratic, inevitably gravitate to being controlled by those holding the information. From *social psychology* there is the recent work of Canadian Bruce Alexander and his career's worth of research on the nature of addiction and its eventual globalisation (noted in places of the thesis) – it illumines the nature of how fragmentation and dislocation foster the powers of addictive behaviours to cope but at the cost of a "poverty of spirit" or soul. And from the field of *social sciences* in general – though not all – there is the indispensable participation-observation research of the previously cited Matthew Desmond and how it is that urban pressures like gentrification and its current outcomes of "reno-victions" and/or "demo-victions" produce rent burdens and even homelessness, and for more now than just the typical street person. From the field and discipline of *social work*, there are critical reflections on the nature of how co-optation or the muzzling of a prophetic voice can

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[30] See Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems,* for his classical expression: "… 'realism' denotes the disposition to take all factors in a social and political situation, which offers resistance to established norms, into account especially the factors of self-interest and power" (Fairfield, NJ: Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, 1977, orig. 1953), p. 119.

[31] See https://www.cos.edu/Faculty/JohnD/Documents/PS%20MICHELS.pdf. Accessed July 17, 2017.

occur, even by way of the professionalisation of the work as it becomes subtly aligned with the dominant social order and the legitimacy bestowed by its established powers.[32]

Sixth and finally, from the disciplines of *narrative writing* and *narrative theology,* there are the case examples contained in this thesis and beyond. But where the examples seem to fall short, there are the kind of Thomas Merton and Douglas John Hall's eschatological provisos that witness to what it is at the end of one's mature life and thought – and eventually, though imperfectly, to an end of an urban ministry. Such provisos are worth sharing. Merton cautions "If you are too intent on winning, you will never enjoy playing. If you are too obsessed with success, you will forget to live. If you have learned only how to be a success, your life has probably been wasted."[33] Hall further adds to the seemingly inescapable ambiguities inherent in the claims to success. He thus cautions, albeit from the perhaps vantage perspective of being less an activist and more an observer with administrative obligations:

> [God] wants the victims of human power and victory and arrogance to recognize in Jesus another, higher kind of success than that which the world knows. When the church succeeded in worldly terms, and turned its very gospel into a worldly success story, it removed Jesus from the sphere of all who suffer and are victims of human success, all who fail, all who die… in the last analysis, none of us is successful in worldly terms. In fact, the whole symbolism of success as this world knows it is a fantastic delusion. In the long run, measured by the standards of that elusive symbol, we all fail. [34]

In sum, the pursuit of success is a paradox. To endure, urban ministries must strive to foster conditions that make for credibility and therein, possibilities of stability (and the reverse). To exhibit at least modest signs and depths of faithfulness, urban ministries must also seek to practice that Micah (6:8) triad of walking humbly with thy God – as well as loving kindness and doing justice. No wonder that this prophetic passage is a

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[32] See especially Nilan Yu and Deena Mandell, eds., *Subversive Action: Extralegal Practices for Social Justice* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2015).

[33] T. Merton, "Learning to Live" in *Thomas Merton: Selected Essays*, ed. Patrick F. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013), p. 440.

[34] Douglas John Hall, *Has the Church a Future?* Philadelphia, Penn: The Westminster Press, 1980, p. 47. See also Hall's challenge to an "ideology of success" in "Cross and Context," *How My Mind Has Changed: Essays from the Christian Century*, ed. David Heim (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), pp. 74-83, espec. 78-79, where he unsurprisingly cites Reinhold Niebuhr that "man's story is not a success story."

candidate for the most oft-cited biblical ground for a vital and hence nourishing and enduring balance.[35]

The nature and realistic dynamics of ministry in the city, along with the hope of practicing ministry in the service of that which bears a faithful prophetic and thus public ministry, favour an aim toward the possibilities of success. By way of grace, there is thus help for a ministry to cope with its inevitable imperfections, rally from its unavoidable failures, and to its end pass on a vital legacy.[36]

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[35] Though there are other prophetic passages including what is foundational for Streams of Justice (Amos 5: 24) and Jeremiah 29:7's admonition to seek the shalom of the city you find yourself in, see representatively on Micah 6: 8, W. Brueggemann et al. *To Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly: An Agenda for Ministers* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

[36] See the last line of verse 4 (some versions) of *Amazing Grace* hymn, to wit: "…God will my shield and portion be as long as life *endures*." Here, success could mean, as again argued herein, discerning the contributing factors of what makes for *endurance* for faith based and orientated ministries; the hymn evokes the presence of God as "shield and portion" – intimating what possible structures and strategies are needed for both justice and its endurance so that there indeed be endurance (cf. John McNamee's *Endurance* memoir). Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr on what justice needs to endure, *Human Destiny*, Vol. II, Ch. IX for his classic summary of the significance of grace in social justice actions and inevitable frustrations and failures. It reads in part: "Justification by faith in the realm of justice means that we will not regard the pressures and counter pressures, the tensions, the overt and covert conflicts by which justice is achieved and maintained as normative in the absolute sense; but neither will we ease our conscience by seeking to escape from involvement in them… without also disavowing responsibility for the creative possibilities of justice," p. 284.

Essential Case Study Interviewees

For CRC (in addition to the author)

Blair, Michel

Bourgeois, Michael

Coles, Stuart

Deacon, John

Dineen, Debra

Hili, Carmel

Hili, Anne-Marie

McCauley, Tom

Nazar, Phil

Norris, Doug

For SoJ (in addition to the author)

Andrews, Kate

Dart, Ron

Dickau, Tim

Diewert, Dave

Diewert, Teresa

Diewert-Peters, Erin

Doll, Bob

McKay, Al

Peters, Kurtis

Peterson, Doug

For OD-OPS-DS

Abrahams, Kevin

Arnholt, Dennis

Evans, Don

Fletcher, Don

Frank, Bob

Kasmer, Julianne

Moon, Lawrence

Tysick, Allen

White, Jeannie

White, Ross

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Appendix A.   Further Literature Survey Considerations for Urban Ministry-Theology

There are several ways to do a literature survey on the topic of urban ministry and its theologies. In terms of approaches, this appendix adds to and extends that which is described in Chapter 2.

Representatively, one could do an historical review of major writings from those western countries wherein urban ministry and often an accompanying urban theology have been significantly undertaken. Thus, in the UK, one could review the highlights of Michael Northcott, Kenneth Leech, perhaps add Ann Morisy and certainly include a contemporary theologian of social ethics, Luke Bretherton (now teaching in USA). Indeed, the latter is drawn from and elaborated above or in Chapter 2. In the USA, one could cite and review the reflections of Clifford Green, Ronald Peters, add aspects of evangelicals like John Perkins or Ray Bakke, and currently the dedicated works of Robert Lupton. Harvey Cox and Gibson Winter could be added for their theological contributions and with a sense of a concrete awareness of ministry-on-the-ground in cities. And in Canada, there are the participant-action reflections of Norman Ellis, Keith Whitney and Ted Reeve (with Roger Hutchinson) as well as endeavours to summarise decades if not generations of dedicated urban ministries such as by way of Stuart Crysdale's sociology of religion and denominational writings.[1]

Secondly, there could a focus on a singular theme, central or cardinal enough ideally to integrate much of what is being studied on a particular ministry or several ministries in the cities. While this could well include an historical approach, a thematic focus casts a spotlight on how empirical ministries may express master themes that aim to bear an interpretive capacity to summarise much experience and reflection. Thus for example, in the UK there are specific references to "place" for one's theological thinking in combination with praxis or the knowledge that arises from the trial and error

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[1] Most of these writers are cited below or in Chapter 2. For Crysdale, see *Churches Where the Action Is* (Toronto, ON: United Church Publishing, 1966) and a companion to *The Changing Church in Canada: Beliefs and Attitudes of United Church People* (Evangelism Resource Committee, Board of Evangelism and Social Service, The United Church of Canada, 1965) which represents Crysdale's study for the United Church of Canada; see also his general academic writings like the "Sociology of the Social Gospel" in *The Social Gospel in Canada*, ed. Richard Allen (Ottawa, ON: National Museums of Canada, 1975), pp. 263-285.

of one's activities. Leech's focus on place as a life-long discipline is elaborated in chapter 2 as are Davey and Northcott's contributions.[2] In the USA there are several writings on the theme of peace or shalom. They insightfully draw from Micah 6 and Jeremiah 29, wherein biblical people are reminded and summoned afresh to their covenant not only to practice humility and love kindness or integrity, but also to seek justice or a shalom that contributes to and combines the well-being of their occupiers for in their shalom is their own also.[3] In Canada there are such emphases on covenant, animation or organising, and the importance of regular collegial support and again, the value of a concrete place for one's ministry.[4] Overall, there are emphases on hospitality and the liberation theme which are thought sufficient enough to build an analysis and practice an urban mission to foster the possibilities of success in ministry. Sometimes, the themes of hospitality and liberation are combined to help give one a vital balance that keeps the ministry practice creative, sustaining, and renewing – the center for action and contemplation exemplifies this. Its Franciscan founder, Richard Rohr regularly attests to this in his writings and daily meditations.[5]

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[2] See Andrew Davey, *Urban Christianity: Theological Resources for an Urban Future and Global Order*, especially, p. 125 "on spirituality of place" and his edited *Crossover City: Resources for Urban Mission and Transformation*, especially pp. 106-108 on "Space, Place and the Holy Spirit." Northcott's recent work includes writings noted later and especially his latest and most far-reaching, P*lace, Ecology and the Sacred: The Moral Geography of Sustainable Communities* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

[3] See Micah 6:8 and the theme of shalom in Jeremiah 29:5-7. Building on the latter, see such urban writings as Edan Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*, Marc Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City,* and Richard Bourne, *Seek the Peace of the City: Christian Political Criticism as Public, Realist, and Transformative* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009).

[4] The literature is vast on this, even in Canada. Representatively, see Morris et al. *The Word on the Street: An Invitation to Community Ministry in Canada*; B. Rieder, "Energy from the Edges: Historical Study of the Biennial United Church Outreach Workers Consultation Events" (unpublished master's thesis, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, 2003); and, T. Reeves and R. Hutchinson, *Action Training in Canada: Reflections on Church-Based Education for Social Transformation*; also, Norman Ellis and Stuart Crysdale as below.

[5] See e.g. R. Rohr, "Liberation Theology," March 20, 2016 <http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1103098668616&ca=a096ea06-5480-48db-ae26-19c3e9db42ec> [accessed March 21, 2016]. Cf. L. Bretherton's emphasis on hospitable politics and the common good, and aptly **a** chapter title to *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, "Towards a Politics of Hospitality and a Theology of Politics," p. 210, and also a poignant section title "Politics without Piety is Pitiless; Piety without Politics is Pitiful," p. 96.

There are thirdly the offerings of case study approaches, of which there are many to note. Cases are often mentioned in even short essays on urban ministry for mainline journals.[6] This thesis later undertakes three such Canadian urban ministry situations which include their own literature reviews. Case study reflections that remain outside of the thesis purview however would include – but are not limited to – the EHPP and its subsequent offshoots in at least two further USA cities of Cleveland and Chicago.[7] In the UK, there are cases which some of the urban theology readers themselves refer to – for example in Leech, Northcott and Harvey's writings there are a variety of situations illustrating solo ministries or team ministries, inner-city or urban core missions but also metropolitan wide efforts, and signs of training undertaken to improve sensitivities as well as what analyses as to what is still needed for ministries to make a fitting response.[8] In Canada there is Ellis' own All Saints Toronto parish ministry that is summarised as a case on its own in *My Parish is Revolting.* There is further his *The Church is Dead Long Live the Church: A Study of the Church in the City.* Such case studies break fresh ground by renewing the whole *raison d'etre* of what a parish church is mandated to be: *inter alia*, a ministry to the whole of the surrounding area of one's church, regardless of people's religious or denominational affiliations or its plain absence. In our era of declining resources, however, this parish responsibility mandate has been scaled down in some cities while established denominational support has diminished and sometimes disappeared.

Crysdale depicts several examples of ministries in Toronto in the 1960s, including the Christian Resource Centre from which this thesis draws. He also depicts signs of success in experimental ministries: from storefronts to detached street work to

[6] E.g., see five+ profiles in Jason Byassee, "The Church Downtown: Strategies for Urban Ministry" in *Discerning the Body: Searching for Jesus in the World,* Eugene (OR: Cascade Books, 2013), pp. 12-21. There are four case studies in Andrew Harvey, ed. *Crossover City: Resources for Urban Mission and Transformation* (London: Mowbray, 2010), pp. 120-143.Earlier examples abound as in Harvey Forster, *The Church in the City Streets* (Toronto, ON: United Church of Canada, 1942) and Lyle Schaller, ed., *Center City Churches: The New Urban Frontier* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993).

[7] See citations later, below and also in the Toronto Christian Resource Centre chapter (4).

[8] See thus, K. Leech, *Through Our Long Exile: Contextual Theology and the Urban Experience* (London, England: Darton Longman Todd, 2001); M. Northcott, ed. *Urban Theology: A Reader* (London, England: Cassell, Wellington House, 1998); and A. Davey, ed., *Crossover City: Resources for Urban Mission and Transformation* (New York: Mowbray/Continuum, 2010).

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ecumenical engagements with admissions that "Indians," now "First Nations" or "Aboriginal" people, warrant due respect and due respect if not equality (his study predates though hints at Native Ministries in larger Canadian cities).[9] Then there is contained in *The Word on the Street: An Invitation to Community Ministry* another eighteen situations that, while not formally discussed as case studies, draw from the contributors' own urban ministry work experiences across Canada in major cities. Several issues and shared concerns are discerned and offered to the church and society at large for consideration. There are further, detailed portraits of ministries in Montreal and Vancouver reflected respectively in The Women's Collective of St. Columba House's *Hope is the Struggle: A Community in Action* and Bob Burrows' *Hope Lives Here*, an account of First United Church's history from the point of view of persons, issues and unresolved dynamics. On the topic of collective training programs for urban ministries, there are contributions notably in the UK and North America. On the former, there is the Sheffield Urban Theology Unit's commendable work and not only by its founding theologian John Vincent.[10] Complementary reflections out of Manchester by way of the William Temple Foundation also illustrate how the need for serious theological work is engaged and delivered.[11] In North America, *Action Training in Canada* and *From New Creation to Urban Crisis* – with Green's edited *Churches, Cities, and Human Community* – exemplify the value of identifying, collecting and narrating how established church bodies on their own and ecumenically sought to engage the city with intentionality. These reflections insightfully lament some of the outcomes that with the best of intentions via pooled efforts, disclose that the capacity to sustain the training for the long haul was simply not possible; local and national church and lay support did not last for more than a generation. But the embodied ideas and

[9] Specifically, Canadian Native or First Nations urban ministries began as basically denominational missions and to an extent remain so. My own Longhouse Council of Native Ministry began and remains ecumenical and endures with indispensable non-church but non-governmental support (via the "spiritual but not religious").

[10] Vincent, John, "The Radical Tradition" (2005) <http://www.radicalchristianity.org.uk/features.htm> [accessed March 16, 2016]; also see, among many, his *Starting All Over Again: Hints of Jesus in the City* (Sheffield, England: Urban Theology Unit, 1981).

[11] This includes a current series, the "Temple Tracts" <http://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/our-work/temple-tracts> [accessed November 29, 2016].

subsequent body of praxis contribute to an enduring legacy for urban ministry, theology and training. And, such legacies provide measures or markers of what contributes to success.

Appendix B. *Viva Voce* Testimonies and Grounded Theory Central Story Line

The following statements convey testimonies (a *viva voce,* via italics) from representatives of the three cases or networks or alliances employed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 though the focus here is on Streams of Justice (with brief illustrations from the other two case studies). The appendix concludes with a grounded theory application of discerning a central or core-category phrase which summarises the story line or the ministry/networks' *raison d'etre* – induced from the quoted material and inferred from the case studies as a whole.

A. From the Streams of Justice (SoJ) Network's Co-founders

There is first Teresa Diewert's founding awareness:

> I think when you look at these three – charity, advocacy, justice – you see the futility of charity and it in my mind another form of bondage – it is just another dependency that becomes engrained – there does not seem to be any movement from it. For me, giving people things is important on one level, but you are never going to get out of that if you don't go to the justice part. The advocacy part I find really difficult because advocacy is me still in this helping role, and I haven't found that to be very helpful – I don't think I have really helped anybody by giving them places to look up or access to different places and different times when I have advocated for other people it hasn't gone very well. In some ways, I feel like my role – my place – more and more I am coming to see in this position of obvious privilege is to change that system to make that less and less the case. And because of the things that we have been thinking about over the last couple of years, really coming to see the injustice of the system – it is systemic. So I feel like this is our role – is to point out the systemic injustice and to change that. Because the guys on the bottom – no one is going to do that – no one is going to listen to them, I feel like really needs to come from the place of privilege – we need to be exposing our privilege – because this stuff doesn't do anything – it perpetuates in my mind all of it [… I]t feels really slow and I can't imagine my involvement in seeking justice and seeking change in the system is going to have a huge impact.[1]

And then there is SoJ co-founder Dave Diewert's testimony.

[1] Teresa Diewert in Dickau's personal interview with her, from transcribed notes for Dickau's D.Min. thesis research for *Pursuing practices of the Kingdom at Grandview Calvary Baptist Church* (unpublished doctoral, Carey Theological College, 2008), pp. 7–8; used with permission.

Justice is basically:

> to do with distribution of power and resources in a community – [and] how that is so central to biblical vision. And think of the prophetic tradition and then seeing ways to participate and so I think in many ways that is where I am particularly interested in pushing that dimension of the issue because I think it is kind of downplayed in significance. I think we need to understand why it is – why the response to social issues is mostly at the charity and advocacy level – and approaching the need for systemic change – there is real reticence and reluctance and less enthusiasm. The thing about the charity and advocacy is that it responds to immediate needs and there needs to be some of that obviously – [...] people are cold or hungry – there needs to be some immediate response so I am not downplaying that but if those responses are not done within the larger movements towards justice then it feels really futile.[2]

Another of Dave Diewert's statements expresses:

> Real estate companies make money from gentrification and profit from an escalating housing market, now turn around and gather blankets and clothes for people they help to make homeless. This is such a clear example of charity that perpetuates the injustice and inequality of the status quo upon which such charity is predicated. Why not build homes for people instead of giving out blankets and socks? Homes actually last longer than blankets and offer much better protection against poor mental and physical health. It is also less expensive and more humane.[3]

B. Inducing a Compact Story-line from/of the Case Studies

Grounded theory, deemed a part of a family of methods related to narrative theory and analysis, is earlier described in Chapter 3. It can be described as an inductive or bottom-up method of comparing two or more cases or situations for the purpose of formulating an overview of "what is happening," how, and why? The "grounding" accounts for what appears to make sense with and out of the observed and reported data of the cases. The data or testimony is consistently and constantly compared for check-and-balance purposes and to formulate categories – and ultimately a central core category – that describe important activities, even the origins to a network's existence or

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[2] Ibid, pp. 8–9.
[3] 40 e-mail communications, November 19, 2009.

urban ministry project.[4] One of the gifts of grounded theory is to discern and summarise the story line of a body of material. In the cases of the three cases or networks described, grounded theory can, through a discernment of the story line, reveal the *raison d-etre* of each situation. These story lines contribute clues to their animated origins of the networks and thus how best to summarise what was going on herein (story line). Grounded theory representatives express it thus:

> [Central category] consists of all the products of analysis condensed into a few words that seem to explain what all this research is about [...] findings should be presented as a set of interrelated concepts [...] an analyst reduces data from many cases into concepts and sets of relational statements that can be used, in a general sense, to describe what is going on [...] [T]here is always more than one way of expressing relational statements.[5]

I invite the reader to trust that a participant-observer of these networks can induce a central category or phrase to account for each network's story line or core reason for coming into being and, continuing. I call this story line a "theme focus." A story line of each of the networks may be expressed as follows: for Christian Resource Centre, the theme focus is an initial awareness and then organising a means by which a coordinated and enduring response could occur; for Streams of Justice, the theme focus is justice; and, for the trio of OD-OPS-DS, the theme focus could be that of mission purpose, the practice of non-judgment and unconditional love. All three have in common the discipline task of organising – organising awareness, stimulating justice advocacy, and finally supporting an organising power to take action for the sake of justice. For the story line for all three networks/alliances, a valuable lead arises from Schillebeeckx's helpful interpretive category of a *contrast-awareness*. This concept is cited in Chapter 3; the literature survey on urban ministry and theology of Chapter 2 could well

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[4] Grounded theorists and practitioners define grounded theory more formally: "[It is a] qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon," Strauss and Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1990), p. 24. Cf., " . . . '(G)rounded theory' refers to both a method of inquiry and to the product of the inquiry [. . .] (It) encourages researchers to remain close to their studied worlds and to develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts from their empirical materials that not only synthesize and interpret them but also show processual relationships [. . .] Not only are justice and injustice abstract concepts, but they are, moreover, enacted *processes*, made real through actions performed again and again," Charmaz, "Grounded Theory in the 21st Century," p. 204.

[5] Strauss and Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research*, pp. 146, 145.

supplement the story line induced by an application of grounded theory. The contrast-awareness category intimates if not accounts for what motivates each of the networks' founders to become aroused to take action for social justice. An emotional arousal is a start and more than a mere abstract, cerebral experience.[6] When social justice issues and actions are considered and posited as mission aims, as they are mandated for the three cases and especially SoJ, then animation can meaningfully be added as an integrating term. Evoking a phrase for each from above, there is SoJ's *"to point out the systemic injustice and to change that"* as well as to *"expose privilege."* For CRC, there is what one of its lay founders first espoused. Namely:

> It bothered me that so little was being done especially for children and young people – in spite of our general affluence…. The need is so obvious… Our Rosedale people live in conditions at the extreme opposite t those in the inner-city and we feel under obligation to help… to help people regain their dignity and open up resources… enabling them to participate more meaningfully in society as a whole. (note to Don Cameron and Ian Jennings, in S. Crysdale, *Churches Where the Action Is*, 24)

And, for the OD–OPS–DS ministries, there is in the words of OD founder L. Moon:

> Though we have all [affluent] things, but have not love, we gain nothing…if the hungry of Victoria continue to starve…if those lacking decent clothes are not clothed…if those mentally ill are not given care…if decent affordable housing is not found for the homeless…if loneliness is seen as someone else's problem… if children are considered unacceptable when parents look for housing…." (see opening to Chapter 5)

And in the words of his successor when with OPS, A. Tysick:

> I'm asking the church for a holy rage around poverty. So they'll push wind forward (referring to an earlier remark, "… there is a wind of change about us. But if you don't watch, that wind could become a fart pretty quick"). [7]

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[6] Cf. "I was really angry… but that only gets you so far… You need to direct that somewhere productive." Quoted in David P. Bell, "Core Red Housing Crisis – Youth Hope to 'Squeeze Back'," *Vancouver Metro News*, weekend, October 28-30, 2016, p. 4.

[7] Cited in H. McCullum, 'Rev Al's story, "Street Survivors: Building Hope for Victoria's Homeless," May 2008, pp. 18-23.

Then the action-taking stage out of an *animated contrast-awareness,* accounts for how the above agents have been moved to become involved in seeking justice (or at least a dedicated response to the perceived unfairness of inequities). Put otherwise, this is what the writing professor, Fred White, calls "discontent as inspiration": "It's a delicate balance: wait too long and you'll 'cool off', to the point of losing the motivation; don't wait long enough and the red you see will transfer onto the page."[8] This action implies a disciplined commitment, more than an initial and enthusiastic level of involvement. The commitment extends to a long-term dedication where discipline is less a ready-made road map than what arises by virtue of living out one's convictions[9] and sharing them with others. Such a level of commitment affords the adequate renewal for when weariness sets in and the temptations to self-righteousness or despair loon large. Thus, finally, an elaborated central category could be that of an *animated and disciplined contrast-awareness* (often returning to and influencing revisions along the way). This awareness recalls the mission purpose of urban ministries of and for this thesis – that of a faithful public-and-prophetic witness, for the long haul.

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[8] F. White, *The Daily Reader* (Cincinnati, OH: Writers Digest, 2008), p. 112. See also S. Hessel, *Time for Outrage Indignez-vous*!, trans. by M. Duvert (London: Twelve Hachette Book Group, 2008), especially pp. 26–29, combining hope and justice via resistance and finally, see D. Keating, *The Power to Make It Happen,* on when community organising needs a "hot gut" but with "cool anger" (Toronto, ON: Green Tree Publishers, 1975), p. 234.

[9] See again, Merton, "The real function of discipline is not to provide us with maps but to sharpen our own sense of direction, so that when we really get going we can travel without maps," *Contemplation in a World of Action* (New York: Image/Doubleday Books, 1973), pp. 126-127.