A Practical Theology of Discipleship Formation
in Aotearoa New Zealand

Jethro Day

Student ID: 3557616

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Supervisor, Lynne Baab
Abstract

The objective of this research is to develop a practical theology of discipleship formation that would be effective in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Using research methods from practical theology and the social sciences, I bring together these different strands using the mutual critical correlation approach of theological reflection. First I consider the context of New Zealand as a place that has moved from a culture of religious participation to religious consumption and from public faith to private faith. This means that people wanting to form disciples need to find new ways of forming community and engaging with truth. I then seek for ways of answering these questions by studying theologians, Gerald A. Arbuckle and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and by creating an ethnography of the theology and practice of discipleship formation of the Anglican missional order, Urban Vision. For Arbuckle formation can be seen as a anthropological process whereby disciples find new ways of understanding themselves and engaging with the world by admitting their need for God and returning to the stories scripture and connecting these stories with their present experience. The experience of chaos is God's way of catalysing this process to bring about a new order within the disciple. For Bonhoeffer formation is done through finding oneself in Christ through daily rhythms of communal and private prayer and scripture reading. Urban Vision has a comprehensive espoused theology and operant theology of discipleship formation. It has intentional formational practices for new members and full members, and has created a culture of formation that daily reminds members of the gospel. I conclude that discipleship formation happens in the context of community and mission, and by creating a culture of remembering through the means of daily, weekly and annual rhythms of storytelling, reflection and skilled guides.
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Chapter one

Introduction

In this research I explore Gerald A. Arbuckle’s, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Urban Vision’s (UV) theology and practice of discipleship formation, to find insights into Christian discipleship formation in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. I do this through first looking at the cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand and identifying the challenges it poses for discipleship formation. I then put together an overarching practical theology of formation found in Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer’s work. I use this to analyse an actual example of discipleship formation in action in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the missional order Urban Vision. The insights gained from these processes generate ideas and suggestions for discipleship formation in the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

There is much that could be written about discipleship formation. To narrow the scope of this research so that it is not too broad to cover, only two theologians will be focussed on: Gerald A. Arbuckle and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Each of them offers a helpful perspective for analysis of the formation practices of Urban Vision, and their perspectives provide different emphases that will enable effective analysis.

Gerald A. Arbuckle offers many helpful insights into Christian formation. Arbuckle is a New Zealander, a Roman Catholic Marist priest, who studied anthropology at Cambridge and also taught theology and anthropology at Oxford University. He is currently the codirector of Refounding and Pastoral Development, in Sydney, Australia, a ministry that researches effective mission and ministry in a post-modern context for New Zealand, Australia and Oceania. Arbuckle’s particular area of interest is in improving the particular culture and effectiveness of religious communities and healthcare providers, and he has published 15 books on these topics. Arbuckle has done international consultancy for
religious communities such as L’Arche and healthcare providers in America, Britain and Australia.\(^1\) In many ways Arbuckle has been ahead of his time, calling for “fresh expressions” of church well before his Church of England counterparts.\(^2\) Arbuckle makes a good conversation partner because he knows the New Zealand context, and his books offer suggestions specifically on how religious communities, such as UV, can form members to contextualise the gospel for a post-modern world.\(^3\)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers a good complement to Arbuckle. Bonhoeffer covers formation from the perspective of Reformed Protestant theology. Bonhoeffer has made a unique contribution to twentieth century reformed theology. Much of this theology was developed during the turbulent times of the Second World War, during which Bonhoeffer was part of the resistance against Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer’s theology and practice of formation was developed whilst acting as the principal of an underground seminary, and involved detailed descriptions of worship practices and other spiritual disciplines for his seminarians as they sought to be formed into Christ’s image.\(^4\)

This means that Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer together provide a balanced approach to formation. While the Arbuckle material offers a big picture approach for understanding formation, Bonhoeffer offers a Christological and rather detailed approach to formation. Where Arbuckle is helpful by bringing anthropological tools for understanding formation, Bonhoeffer is helpful by bringing uniquely theological ideas to bear. Where Arbuckle has experience of the contemporary challenges for mission and discipleship in the Post-Christendom era, Bonhoeffer offers the tradition of reformed theology. Both are/were theologians and practitioners of discipleship formation, therefore both draw on deep

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theological reflection rooted in experience.

Lynne Baab believes that "Urban Vision is one of the most exciting ministries in the church in Aotearoa New Zealand because deep discipleship and faith formation are happening there." UV is a group of new monastic/missional communities that have been ministering in the Wellington region for around 20 years. In this time they have developed, and continue to develop, insights and strategies for faithfully forming people to follow Jesus Christ. They offer a ministry that has proven to be innovative and sustainable. Therefore, this research evaluates whether UV’s theology and practice of discipleship provides a model that can be applied in other settings in New Zealand.

The structure of research is as follows: this introduction introduces the work of Kevin Ward, in particular his research on social and cultural change over the last fifty years. In chapter two I look at research methods, including the techniques and ethics of ethnography. I explore what practical theology is, and put forward the overall methodology of mutual critical conversation. Chapter three explores Arbuckle’s and Bonhoeffer's approach to formation, describing the most helpful insights for good formation. This chapter picks up Arbuckle's more anthropological insights, and contrasts them with Bonhoeffer's more theological insights. Chapter four presents the espoused theology of UV's discipleship formation. This is primary found in documentation created by UV and talks given by UV members. It also sets out the community and structure of UV. Chapter five looks at UV's operant theology. It summarises the data collected from participation observation. UV's theology and practice will be explained through the ethnographic data and analysed through Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer's insights. The conclusion will set out the insights gained from UV about the theology and practice of discipleship formation in a New Zealand context. The conclusion again picks up Ward's research and looks at how the

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5 Personal email from Lynne Baab, Jack Somerville Senior Lecturer in Pastoral Theology, University of Otago, 3 June 2014.
insights gained address the New Zealand context. As a foundation for this study, discipleship and formation must be defined.

**A definition of discipleship and formation**

Discipleship is to follow Jesus, and formation is the human response to this.

To be a disciple is to be a follower of Jesus. The word for disciple in the New Testament is μαθητής (mathetes). It means pupil or adherent. The actual term “discipleship” does not appear in the Bible, however the term “disciple” appears roughly 260 times, exclusively in the Gospels and Acts, and (in most modern translations) once in the OT (Isa. 8:16). In the New Testament Jesus is the teacher or rabbi of the disciples, therefore discipleship is characterized as following him (ακολουθεω, akoloutheo). To follow Jesus is to be a student under his tutelage so as to learn to be like him.

Formation refers to the practices that Christians engage in to become faithful disciples. It is in contrast to the work God does to form people into his disciples. Evan B. Howard believes formation is human effort to conform more to Christ. He makes a distinction between God’s *trans-formation* of people and people’s *formation* toward God. He defines Christian formation as: “the intentional and semi-structured processes by which believers (individuals and communities) become more fully conformed and united to Christ, especially with regard to maturity of life and calling.”⁶ Therefore discipleship formation refers to the human endeavour to become a student of Jesus.

**The context of discipleship formation**

Over the past fifty years or so New Zealand as a whole has encountered a huge cultural shift. This means that the context of discipleship formation has changed, and

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therefore the practice of discipleship formation needs to be looked at more closely. This section will draw mainly draw on New Zealand missiologist Kevin Ward who has looked at the change in New Zealand culture and the effect it has had on the Church.

Although first, a caveat undergirding this thesis: this research is built on the assumption that there is something of a crisis of discipleship formation in Aotearoa New Zealand Church. This a assumption is based on the decline experienced by the New Zealand Church in the last fifty years, attested to by Ward in his book *Losing Our Religion?*, which this section draws on. This decline represents a crisis because at its foundation the Church is commissioned by Jesus to, “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). As will be explored below, this decline is in part a symptom of the massive change in society and culture over the last fifty years. However, the decline could be seen from another angle, that the New Zealand Church has not managed to adequately meet these changes. Therefore, the church is not living up to its calling to “make disciples of all nations.”

Ward describes this cultural and social change using five “isms”: individualism, pluralism, privatism, relativism, and anti-institutionalism. These words give definition to changes that are both challenges and opportunities for the Church's practice of discipleship formation.

Ward also has a lengthy discussion about the supposed secular nature of New Zealand and secularization. Ward points out the distinction between the term secular and secularization: “The term secular simply refers to those areas of life that are not under the control of religious institutions, beliefs, or symbols. Secularization is the process whereby this occurs, as the control of religious is rejected.” According to Ward there was once a

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8 Ibid., 19.
9 Ibid., 12.
belief held by many sociologists that suggested that as society became more rational, religion would slowly disappear, and that this was observable in the change in society. However, even though the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand may have lost significant influence in society, secularization has not occurred. In fact, as Ward points out, there has actually been an increase in religious belief in society over the last fifty years, but this has not turned into church attendance. The five “isms” help explain why this might be.

Individualism characterises the cultural and social shift from a focus on community-centred life to individual-centred life. The personal obsessions of individuals have becoming the guiding force for life; personal fulfilment is has become the goal of life. This means that commitment to community is no longer seen as a priority. Therefore people no longer make decisions based in consultation with a wider community or tradition in mind, but based on personal thoughts and feelings. These things are especially seen in attitudes toward spirituality and religion. Spiritual and religious beliefs are seen as private and personal matters that are chosen and acted upon purely on the basis of individual choice. This has created a cultural climate that means people no longer see it as necessary to be a member of a faith community or in need of a leader or guide to help develop spirituality. Ward argues convincingly that this has contributed to Church decline in New Zealand because community and leadership (or clericalism as he calls it) are two important aspects of Church life. This raises two interesting questions for discipleship formation: how does a process of formation deal with the individualistic nature of culture, and to what extent is it important to have outside leadership and guides in formation?

Pluralism describes the way in which Aotearoa New Zealand is no longer culturally homogenous but culturally diverse. This has occurred because of immigration and global

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10 Ibid., 13.
11 Ibid.
mass media exposing people to other cultures. According to Ward this has had an eroding effect on culture’s plausibility structures. Culture’s plausibility structures “are networks of persons in constant contact who hold a common worldview and set of moral commitments and thus help to maintain beliefs. Obviously the more varied or plural the beliefs held in a community or society, the weaker the plausibility structures are for any one particular set of beliefs.”¹³ This means that people have a smorgasbord of worldview options to choose from for understanding the world and making decisions. When New Zealand’s culture was homogenous and the majority of people identified as Christian it meant that the Church had a stronger plausibility structure. However now Christian worldviews have become part of a larger plurality of voices all wanting to be heard. Therefore how does discipleship formation create robust plausibility structures whilst still being able to interact positively with a culturally diverse society?

Privatism describes the way in which individuals’ lives are increasingly lived in private in lifestyle enclaves rather than as part of a wider community. Work life, family life, leisure life, church life etc. are all disconnected from one another. This has led to a segmentation of society where institutions are no longer part of an integrated social whole. The only connections between these segmented institutions is through the individuals who use them. Whether or not they are used is based on the perceived utility to the individual. Churches have become one more segmented institution that is engaged with or ignored on the basis of utility to the individual. The Church has the added challenge that spirituality and religion are seen as personal and private matters, therefore the Church is no longer seen as a public institution, but a private one. Therefore how does the discipleship formation create disciples who still seek a personal yet public faith?

Of Relativism Ward writes, “if pluralism describes the social and cultural reality,

relativism is an attitude that allows one to live comfortably and at peace in such a diverse setting." In the past when culture was more or less homogeneous it was easier to maintain a shared sense of right and wrong, truth and falsehood. However, in a pluralistic society is it increasingly common that people will be living and working alongside others who hold beliefs or have behaviours that were once seen as wrong. In this context it becomes increasingly difficult to hold these negative view of others. Therefore a way of thinking has developed that says people can believe and do as they wish as long as they do not hurt others, with tolerance becoming the greatest virtue. This is hand in hand with a view of truth as merely contextual, no longer objective and universally applicable. All beliefs become equally valid and invalid. Therefore, institutions, such as the Church, that make universal claims about truth are seen as unable to be tolerant and live happily with difference. Therefore how does discipleship formation put the truth found in Jesus at the centre of life?

Anti-Institutionalism describes a theme that has been seen in the others. It describes the way in which “many [have] developed a deep cynicism ... toward public institutions, as well as an inclination to make autonomous decisions irrespective of conventional mores or traditions” that have historically been held and promoted by these public institutions. In this climate many people have rejected organised religion. This means that the Church is no longer seen as a public institution but a voluntary association. Ward points out that this means that in New Zealand culture religious believing has become disjoined from religious belonging. People may believe particular things about God and spirituality but that would not be expressed as part of belonging to a church or other religious community. This loss of belonging has not only been experienced in the

14 Ibid., 22.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., 23.
Church but in wider society too. There has been a loss of local community and a decline in the number of people joining local groups such as rugby clubs and rotary. Therefore the question for discipleship formation is how to create belonging when people no longer interact with institutions in the same way?

Ward summaries these five “isms” as a social and cultural change from “public to private” and a change from “religious commitment to religious consumption”. It seems that fifty years ago discipleship was focussed on belonging to public institutions and simply accepting the conventional norms and traditions of the Church. The Church can no longer expect the same kind of commitment and conformity that was expected of disciples fifty years ago. Therefore the question for discipleship formation in the present context is how does the Church create belonging and influence belief when society has a completely different (or indifferent) relationship with so called public institutions, community and truth?

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18 Ibid., 23–24.
19 Ibid., 29–30.
Chapter two

Methodology

This is primarily a work of practical theology. This practical theology draws on a number of different methods from theological disciplines and the social sciences, so the overall theological reflection methodology is mutual critical correlation. Mutual critical correlation is an action/reflection research methodology that brings together a number of different sources into conversation. Therefore this practical theology brings together views on Christian discipleship formation from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Gerald Arbuckle, along with the practices of Urban Vision. Urban Vision’s practices of discipleship formation have been obtained through ethnographic study. These sources offer resources for theological reflection on how discipleship formation can be faithfully performed in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. In this chapter I will explore the meaning of practical theology before describing how the different sources are put into conversation with the overall theological reflection methodology of mutual critical correlation.

Practical theology is about how faith is performed. Practical theologians recognise that theology is lived and experienced in the midst of human life. They investigate how the ideas of theology affect the way faith is performed and how the way faith is performed impacts on theology. They believe that theology is not dislocated from human existence, only to reside in university faculty offices, libraries and lecture halls, but lives in the practices of church communities as they endeavour to faithfully perform and participate in the gospel. Therefore, practical theology is concerned with evaluating the faithfulness of the performance of faith through critical study of human experience and theological

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reflection, offering new ways of performing faith faithfully.

One way this evaluation can be done is by comparing and contrasting a faith group's espoused and operant theology: what that say they are doing (espoused theology) is compared with what they are actually doing in practice (operant theology). Even though this is only one among a number of different ways to do practical theology, John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, and Helen Cameron and Deborah Bhatti all point out that practical theology explores the tension between what is said and what is done. Cameron and Bhatti coined the language of espoused theology and operant theology. This typology forms part of their own methodology, the “four voices”: operant theology, espoused theology, normative theology and formal theology. Normative theology is the way in which faith groups resolve the tension and discrepancies between espoused theology and operant theology. Formal theology is academic theology a group may have produced and/or looks to as a source of theology. These latter two theologies are outside the scope of this thesis. This research focuses on UV's espoused and operant theologies. The espoused theology for this research comes from the formal documents produced by the members of UV, talks given at UV events and a book written by the founding members of UV. Since the social sciences are focussed on human experience they contribute a method for looking at operant theology. Ethnography is the method chosen for this research.

Ethnography is a qualitative research method of the social sciences, especially cultural anthropology. Raymond Madden writes that ethnography is defined by “writing

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about people”, “being with people” and “theorizing about people”. It involves writing “an interpretive and explanatory story about a group of people and their sociality, culture and behaviours, but it is not a fictional account; it is a narrative based on systematically gathered and analysed data.” This data collection involves being with people, participating in life with them, interacting and talking with them face-to-face, more often than not in their context. Therefore ethnographic data can be collected through participant observation, interviews, documents produced by those people, and can be captured using field notes, photography and film. From this data theories are explored and expounded, and questions are asked and answered.

This research is partly made up of an ethnography of UV’s discipleship formation, and the main data collection method is participant observation, along with semi-structured and semi-formal interviews. Participant observation is the somatic involvement in the life of those being studied. Through participant observation the ethnographer/researcher becomes the means by which data is collected, making systematic and targeted observations as he or she experiences first hand the people and places he or she is studying, and recording this information in the form of field notes to be analysed later using theoretical tools. The semi-structured and semi-formal interviews helped to answer more targeted questions and explore deeper with UV members their own reflections and understanding of their practices and approaches to discipleship formation. Often these interview questions were asked during the course of participant observation, inviting UV members to reflect on their own feelings and thoughts on what they experienced. Although there is no explicit interview data in this research, their reflections and insights contributed to the participant observation data.

Because of the personal and potentially intrusive nature of participant observation

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27 Ibid., 16.
there are a number of ethical considerations. It is important to recognise the power that the researcher has as people disclose intentionally or unintentionally personal and private information, and the potential for that power to be used to abuse and misrepresent the people. Therefore strict ethical guidelines need to be in place. I obtained ethics approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Otago. The ethics protocol from the university required informed consent and assurance that information will be kept confidential and secure. Therefore there needs to be plans for the secure storage of the data collected. The university also required that the research to be made available to participants. Also participants in this research were informed of the purpose and scope of the research so that could make informed consent to participate or not. They were also given the option to stay anonymous, so that not personal information such as names would go into the finished research. This consent and option for anonymity were given in the form of a written document that was signed. UV members were also given my contact details so that they could reach me with any questions. I also made it clear to the UV participants that if they wanted me to leave or not record something then they only needed to make it known to me and I would leave and/or not record. This option was used by UV members several times.

Participant observation was conducted with UV over several weeks and selected weekends. These times were chosen because they often pertained to formation practices such as formation retreat weekends. Extended periods in particular UV teams were also chosen to gather an overall sense of day to day life in UV and the everyday practices that contributed to discipleship formation. Participant observation was only conducted on UV members, which meant that is there was anyone outside of UV that came into UV space they were not intentionally observed or data about them recorded. This was a significant ethical issue as UV is a community that is purposed to bring others into UV space to
befriend and minister to them. During these times no data was recorded.

To create this practical theology the theological reflection methodology chosen is mutual critical correlation, because it brings a number of disciplines and their methods of data collection and analysis (theological disciplines and social science) into conversation with one another in light of a specific context to develop new insights. In other words this methodology brings together the academic theology and ethnographic data, and the cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand to build thoughts on revised practice. This method was first proposed by S. Pattison. Pattison’s original suggestion was that each discipline be treated equally, therefore conclusions made by the social sciences could be used to supplant theological truths. However, John Swinton and Harriet Mowat propose a revised model of mutual critical correlation that proposes that the conversation between scripture, theology, and the social sciences will always be “asymmetrical”. That is, the divine revelation of Jesus Christ found in scripture and theology will always take priority, whilst still taking into consideration that insights about God’s work might be found through experience. That is why Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer have been used to analyse and evaluate the ethnographic data, however the data from UV also contributes insights.

In summary the revised methodology of mutual critical correlation is used by putting the New Zealand context, the theology of Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer, and the ethnographic data collected from UV into conversation to discover and develop new insights into a practical theology of discipleship formation. UV has also been evaluated by comparing and contrasting their espoused and operant theology to add weight to the overall analysis and potential theological insights that can be gained from their experience of performing faith. These methods have been brought together to offer a practical theology for faithfully performing discipleship formation for the wider Church in Aotearoa New Zealand.

28 Swinton and Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research, 95.
29 Pattison, “Some Straws for Bricks: A Basic Introduction to Theological Reflection.”
30 Swinton and Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research, 86.
Chapter three
A Theology of Discipleship Formation

This chapter looks at Gerald A. Arbuckle and Dietrich Bonhoeffer in turn, describing their unique theological contributions and the practical implications each has for discipleship formation. First Arbuckle will be looked at, then Bonhoeffer, finishing with a summary of the analytical tools they both offer for researching and critiquing Urban Vision. The chapter concludes with a summary of the analytical tools used to analyse UV's espoused and operant theology of formation.

Arbuckle’s theology of formation

Gerald A. Arbuckle's theology of formation is informed and shaped by his understanding of anthropology. He brings anthropological understandings of culture to bear on the question of formation. He looks to rites of passage to offer a model for how culture forms identity, and develops his own model, refounding, to explain Christian formation. Arbuckle shapes these anthropological models using Biblical insights, drawing especially on the story of Israel’s Exodus and Jesus’ life and ministry. This section will look at rites of passage and refounding each in turn, and then offer some practical considerations drawn from Arbuckle's understanding, but first a few caveats and a brief explanation of Arbuckle’s definition of formation.

Arbuckle is primarily writing for and within a Roman Catholic context. His work focuses on formation of religious within the Roman Catholic Church. Which means that his ideas are, to a certain extent, contextually bound. However, Arbuckle’s insights are helpful for the wider church as well because he provides broad theological and anthropological principles that can be applied in other contexts. Anthropology and ethnographic research
are formed around models and case studies. Models are patterns of behaviour that can be seen across a broad range of cultures. Rites of passage and refounding are both examples of models that will be explored below. Case studies are particular cultural examples of these models in action. Arbuckle as both a theologian and anthropologist is helpful because he offers theologically infused models, developed through biblical case studies. Therefore Arbuckle’s contribution is unique; I have not found another theologian who combines theological and anthropological insights and then applies them to formation. His description of rites of passage and refounding become theological anthropological models that are applied to the case study of Urban Vision.

A second caveat is that this section does not try to cover the totality of Arbuckle’s thought, only those ideas useful for understanding formation. Arbuckle’s writing covers many topics, but always seems to touch on similar themes. Arbuckle is interested in calling the Church back to what he sees as faithfulness to Jesus’ teaching and mission as understood in scripture and through the Church’s tradition. Therefore this section picks up on some of these broader themes.

Arbuckle sees that formation is first and foremost formation for prophetic mission based on complete dependence on God:

Formation for prophetic mission is a process whereby a person in and through community assumes responsibility for his/her growth in Christ, in the service of the Church and society…. It is a process of liberation by which, under skilled guides, a person frees himself/herself from constraints of:

- a personal order (sin, pride, ignorance of Christ as the centre of life, ignorance of academic/pastoral skills necessary to be part of Christ’s mission today);
- a social or cultural order (undue cultural pressures, prejudices).

Arbuckle hopes that formation will create disciples who find “attachment in God alone”

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because Arbuckle’s fundamental principle is that “attachment to God alone will bring security and authentic identity; no building, no sacred site, no official or sacred office, no attachment to this or that piece of ancestral land, will of itself bring one’s family, culture or nation or oneself, into union with God.”33 It is only through this complete dependence on and union with God that disciples can outwork the calling to prophetic mission.

Arbuckle also assumes that people entering into formation do so willingly. If people are unwilling to enter into a process of formation then that process is doomed from the beginning.34 Discipleship formation can only take place amongst those who are willing to enter a formation process. The rest of this section will look at the formation process.

Rites of passage

According to Arbuckle, Christian formation can be thought of as a rite of passage. Arnold van Gennep first described the anthropological understanding of rites of passage.35 All rites of passage are made up of three stages: the separation stage, the transition or liminal stage, and the re-aggregation stage. Each stage has rituals peculiar to it. Arbuckle picks up on van Gennep’s ideas on one particular rite of passage, initiation rituals. Arbuckle finds initiation rituals particularly helpful because the three stages are obvious within them36 and they share the same biblical motif of death to new life.37

Initiation rituals are the rituals within a culture that create new identity, often from childhood to adulthood, or when someone is accepted into a new community; this makes them an excellent tool for understanding formation. In initiation rituals the old identity dies and the new one is born. Each stage of the tripartite process takes the person on journey

34 Arbuckle, From Chaos to Mission, 124.
36 Arbuckle, From Chaos to Mission, 114.
37 Ibid., 135.
to finding a new identity. In separation stage there is the separation from the old identity and from society. These separation rituals are often short and dramatic. This stage is often characterized by a literal geographic separation. In the liminal stage there is the experience of a lack of identity and the journey to discover a new one. This stage is especially draw out in initiation rituals. Lastly the re-aggregation stage the new identity is taken up. This is accompanied by reintegration into society. Christian discipleship formation can be thought of as an initiation ritual that takes the disciples from old identities to a new identity in Christ Jesus.

The liminal stage in initiation rituals is especially significant. The liminal stage is the between or transitional stage, where one identity has been left but a new one has not been picked up. This betwixt and between stage therefore creates some interesting phenomena. The liminal stage is characterised by what Victor Turner calls anti-structure and communitas. Anti-structure is the intentional breaking down of previously held identity and culture. All the usual signifiers of the culture, role, status, insignia, property, are stripped away, with nothing to differentiate them from other initiates. Therefore, those being initiated become non-persons and are brought into a sort of cultural turmoil. Then the culture’s foundational stories and ideas are presented in new and sometimes startling ways. This disruption in the usual order of things and the re-presenting of culture helps those being formed to step back from their culture and see it in new ways, and therefore see themselves in new ways. In the end this reinforces core cultural understandings and helps initiates to find a new identity within their culture and society.

Communitas refers to the kind of community formed amongst cohorts of initiates. Turner coined the word “communitas” to label the kind of community that is formed by those who are within the liminal stage. Because of the lack of role and status, communitas

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is characterized by equality, mutuality and interdependence between the individuals being formed. The shared experiences of initiation tighten relational bonds. It creates a community that is more conducive to learning, listening to one another, being open to being changed by one another.

When joining a new community or entering into adulthood, anti-structure and communitas offer the way for culture to form people into authentic communities and authentic identity. Going through a period of anti-structure could be helpful for Christian disciples to reengage with the gospel in new and authentic ways. The fostering of communitas also seems to reflect an ideal community of Christian disciples. Arbuckle uses the concepts of anti-structure and communitas when he discusses initiation rituals.

Arbuckle believes that God is seen to use initiation rituals to form Jesus and the disciples. Arbuckle gives three Biblical examples of God using initiation rituals: Jesus’ baptism and time in the wilderness, Jesus’ journey to the cross and resurrection, and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. In these episodes the movement through each stage of the initiation ritual is clearly seen.40

Arbuckle draws on the work of Mark McVann41 to describe Jesus’ entry into ministry in Matthew’s gospel. The separation stage of the ritual begins with Jesus leaving his family to be baptised in the river Jordan (Matt 3:13). He is separated from his old identity marked by family ties. The next step in the separation stage is his entry into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matt 4:1). Jesus then enters into the liminal stage in the wilderness. In this stage “Jesus travels into the desert, the sacred Israelite paradigm of marginality, trails and the experimental discovery of human weakness and the power of God – in brief, chaos…. Now Jesus is confronted by the devil as the ‘cultural monster’ whose temptations

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are the catalyst for much learning and self-growth.” As he is faced with the anti-structure of the temptations and the devil’s startling use of the foundational myth of scripture, Jesus engages more deeply and finds a more authentic and faithful faith. Arbuckle believes that in these trials Jesus finds solidarity with the prophets, from Moses through to John the Baptist, experiencing communitas with them, and sees that the prophets’ work is to recognize and drive away evil. The Devil departs, and as Jesus enters into the re-aggregation stage he is tendered to by the angels (4:11), showing his Father’s acceptance of him, and conferring on him the identity of prophet and the unmediated presence of God that accompanies it. It is with new identity that Jesus then enters back into society and so starts his prophetic mission.

The second example Arbuckle gives is the “initiation of Jesus as Saviour” from Matthew 26-28. Matthew 26:1-35 marks out the separation stage. It has several steps. Jesus is anointed in anticipation of burial (6-13), he celebrates his last supper (17-19; 26-27), and Jesus recognises the loss of his friends in Judas and Peter (14-16; 20-25; 30-35). This progression of episodes shows how Jesus is slowly being separated from the world, from his friends and previous ministry of preaching and healing that drew adoring crowds. The separation and liminal stages are a journey to the margins. Jesus enters into the chaos of the liminal stage in the Garden of Gethsemane (26:36-56). Here he struggles with his impending death and the inattentiveness of his friends. Arbuckle sees in this moment Jesus longing for communitas with his three close friends; this is not possible and he finds a new and deeper communitas with his heavenly Father (36-46). Jesus is then presented with sacred traditional cultural symbols and a choice must be made: the power of the Sanhedrin and civil Roman authority or the path of the suffering servant presented in

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42 Arbuckle, *From Chaos to Mission*, 121.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 122.
45 Ibid.
messianic psalms and Isaiah (26:57-68; 27:1-31). Jesus makes the right choice and continues his journey to the Cross. The liminal stage finishes with the Cross. “Jesus experiences marginality to an extreme degree (27:32-36).” It is on the Cross that Jesus breaks through the chaos and darkness of death to see the new hope of salvation that God has in store for him and the world. Jesus expresses this new hope through the cry of the first line of the lament in Psalm 22. This psalm recounts crushing disaster and then its opposite:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?...
For he has not despised nor disregarded the poverty of the poor, has not turned away his face.…
The whole wide world will remember and return to Yahweh.

(Psalm 22:1, 24, 27)

Arbuckle writes that “in the chaos of his dying, Jesus is already being initiated into the new life of hope that comes only from a God in whom he has total trust.” Jesus then enters the re-aggregation stage through his resurrection. He rejoins his friends with his new identity as the one who has overcome death (27:62-66). Arbuckle believes that is because of this initiation ritual that Jesus is able to be the saviour and therefore have the father’s authority to pass on his mission to his disciples in the Great Commission (28:18-19).

The third and last example is the initiation of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus found in Luke 24:13-35. The disciples enter the separation stage as they literally separate themselves from disappointment in Jerusalem. They had hoped that Jesus would be the political and militant revolutionary who would free Israel, but this revolution was crushed when Jesus was killed. They enter the liminal stage on the road as the unrecognisable resurrected Jesus comes along side them. They vent their disappointment to this supposed stranger. Then Jesus begins to lead them through their initiation by re-

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46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., 123.
presenting the core Jewish stories found in scripture, teaching them how they pointed to him, explaining why the Messiah had to suffer and die. Arbuckle believes that Jesus presents them with a choice, “continue to run away dreaming of a monstrous, military minded saviour or accept what has been said and move forward out of chaos into the future in faith and hope.”49 They choose Jesus and their eyes are opened to see who has been speaking to them the whole time; they experience communitas with Jesus. Their re-aggregation occurs as they race back to Jerusalem to share their experience of the real Messiah with the rest of the disciples.

Arbuckle uses these three examples to argue that God uses initiation rituals to form his Son and disciples. A lot can be learned from these examples. Christian discipleship formation shares the same goals as Jesus’ own initiation as prophet at the beginning of Matthew: to be prophetic, to be a speaker and doer of God’s Word, to strive for justice and to share the good news of the kingdom. Christian discipleship shares the same goal for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus to recognise the true Messiah, Jesus the suffering servant. Therefore, disciples are called to share in Jesus’ suffering. Christian discipleship formation will be a journey to the cross, but in the hope of resurrection.

Arbuckle shows that the three-stage process of rites of passage, and in particular initiation rituals, understood in light of scripture offer an excellent resource for understanding how people are brought into new communities and new identity through a process of discipleship formation. God himself uses initiation rituals to form community and identity for his Messiah and disciples. Therefore, I use Arbuckle’s perspective on separation, liminality and re-aggregation to evaluate the formation practices of Urban Vision. The initiation rituals of UV can be analysed to discover the kinds of initiation rituals help form disciples to be part of the community.

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49 Ibid.
Formation as refounding

Arbuckle’s concept of refounding is also helpful for understanding formation and is particularly helpful for understanding how disciples might rediscover the foundations of their life in the way of Christ. Refounding is similar to rites of passage because it builds on the same three-part process of a rite of passage. However, where a rite of passage is about becoming part of a new community or finding a new identity, refounding is about the ongoing process of formation within the life of existing communities of disciples and individual disciples. Therefore refounding is helpful because it offers suggestions for how contemporary churches and disciples might find a deeper and more authentic faith in light of the Church’s contemporary problems. Consequently, this section treats the words “refounding” and “formation” as synonymous.

Arbuckle coined the word “refounding” because he thought other language was not able to encompass fully the problem and solution the Church needs. This becomes clear

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when refounding is contrasted with the language of renewal and revolution. Renewal implies an enlivening of the existing ways of thinking, structures and practices, whereas refounding will create something new. However, neither is refounding the same as revolution, because revolution implies something totally new, whereas refounding goes back to the foundations of faith, and not a complete upheaval of it. Therefore, the notion of refounding stresses that there will always be the continuity of Christ and his gospel. Broadly speaking, refounding unlocks the potential creativity that comes from experiencing chaos. Refounding is the choice to confront change by returning to cultural or organizational foundations, and from these foundations develop new ways of meeting the chaos and bring about order. Arbuckle describes this process of chaos to order using the same tri-partite structure of a rite of passage (figure 3.1). Arbuckle believes that this process can be seen in scripture from creation to Christ. He argues that this is one way God chooses to deal with his people. Therefore, refounding is both a description and a prescription for the Church and disciples. Now each part of the process will be looked at in turn, focussing on its theological basis and practical implications.

The separation stage: the decent into chaos

For Arbuckle chaos is the catalyst for formation and signifies the separation stage of refounding. He sees chaos in a positive light, but believes that order is always preferred to chaos. However, he believes that scripture shows that for true order to occur there need to be times of chaos.

The word chaos is used several times in scripture. Arbuckle points out that in its most "concrete meaning, it connotes a barren wasteland (Deut 32:10), emptiness,

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51 This diagram is based on Arbuckle's in *From Chaos to Mission: Refounding Religious Life Formation* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 89.
52 Ibid., 90.
nothingness in general.”53 This motif comes to the fore in Israel’s experience of the Wilderness. Other notable Biblical motifs to describe chaos are turbulent water and a monster or monsters, such as the Leviathan.

God’s relationship with chaos is defined from the very beginning of creation with the motif of turbulent water. Genesis shows that chaos is the beginning state of creation. The opening lines of Genesis 1 are, “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.” This void and darkness was a common feature of ancient near eastern creation myths, which they described as chaos. Chaos was seen by ancient near eastern cultures as the primeval state of creation. In ancient near eastern these primeval forces are still said to be a threat to creation. The void or chaos is the first state of creation in Genesis, but it is not God’s intention for creation to be in chaos. God breathes out His Spirit over the waters and speaks His word and creation becomes ordered. In Genesis God’s word and Spirit separate the chaotic water by a firmament or dome. However, this does not mean God is always willing to keep these waters at bay. God will let the chaos overtake creation again if he sees that creation needs a new start, for example in the story of the flood (Gen 7-9). Therefore it is out of chaos that God creates; for God, chaos holds creative potential.

Arbuckle argues that “the experience of the Israelites in the desert or wilderness is the fundamental and most vividly powerful symbol for them of chaos”54 and sets a pattern for refounding and formation. Arbuckle sees Israel’s journey through the wilderness as the blueprint for refounding and therefore formation. He explores Israel’s journey as a resource for understanding God’s work of forming his disciples, and even as a lens for reading and understanding the contemporary situation the Church finds itself in.

54 Ibid.
The Exodus, the journey through the wilderness and the entry into the Promise Land can be seen as the three stages of a rite of passage and refounding. The Exodus from Egypt marks the separation stage. In the Exodus God separates Israel from its old identity as a slave nation by freeing them, bringing them out of Egypt and through the waters of the red sea. Entry into the wilderness marks the liminal stage. The wilderness becomes synonymous with chaos. In this stage they must learn to totally rely on God for their needs and trust in his promise of a new land in the midst of severe trials that seem to have no end in sight. During this time God reaffirms their identity as His people by giving them the Law that sets them apart from others, and also by reminding them of the foundational story of God’s promise to Abraham. However, this identity is not fully realised until the re-aggregation stage, when Israel enters the promise land, where the Law can be fully lived out as it was intended. Thus the dynamic of refounding transcends both renewal and revolution: Israel's identity as people of God's promises are renewed and they go through a revolution by being given a new understanding as people defined by God's law. In some ways this is a rite of passage, Israel's identity is being formed anew, however this new identity is a rediscovery, or a refounding, that they have always been God's special people since Abraham.

For Israel the movement from order into chaos, the first part of the refounding process, seems to be a bittersweet affair. Being granted freedom from slavery marks Israel's separation, but is it also marked by being brought into the wilderness, a new place where old certainties are no longer present. Slavery in Egypt offered order and the certainty of food and shelter, but with the huge change that was the journey through the Red Sea and into the wilderness Israel become fully aware of the chaos inducing implications of such a change.55

The chaos of the wilderness is a catalyst for formation because it invites Israel to be

55 Arbuckle, *Refounding the Church*, 38.
a new people who totally rely on God for all their needs. This pattern repeats itself through the Old Testament. When Israel stops trusting in God, God lets in the chaos in the form of enemies and exile so that they are given the opportunity to convert back to full reliance on God again.

From an anthropological perspective, chaos is a breakdown of people’s ability to make meaning of the world. To understand where this cultural chaos comes from and the upheavals it creates, it is first necessary to define culture. Arbuckle defines culture as being made up of symbols, myths and rituals.56 Symbols are the basic building blocks of culture. Arbuckle writes:

A symbol is a reality that by its very dynamism or power leads to (i.e. makes one think about, imagine, get into contact with, or reach out to) another deeper (and often mysterious) reality through a sharing in the dynamism that the symbol itself offers (and not by merely verbal or additional explanations).57

This definition can be explained by looking at the three qualities a symbol has: meaning, emotion and instruction.58 Symbols hold meaning by representing and representing reality. Often there is no distinction between the thing the symbol represents and the thing itself. Symbols hold an emotive quality; they can elicit a negative or positive response. These two aspects of symbols therefore give an instructive quality to symbols because they can direct how a person is to think, feel and respond. An example of a symbol in Western culture could be the sports car, because a sports car represents and is at the same time the actualisation of material success and excitement.

Arbuckle’s second descriptor of culture is myths. He defines myths as “symbols in narrative form.”59 When Arbuckle uses the word myth he does not mean stories that are

59 Gerald A Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique* (Collegeville,
untrue, but stories that give purpose and meaning to a people and culture. There are many
different kinds of myths, but overall myths show the relationships and connections
between different symbols, adding richer content to the symbols’ meaning and instruction.
Myths are “webs of symbols.” Without myths people would not be able to understand the
world. Myths meet human need by giving structure to the world and by forming individual
and community identity. Myths also resolve tensions in cultures and teach what is good
and bad. Myths therefore reveal truth and provide a telos to existence. To continue the
example of a sports car, the stories of James Bond offer a myth that shows the
relationship between the sports car and male success. These stories give structure,
understanding and telos to a potentially chaotic world by instructing the audience in how
the successful male interacts with the world. James Bond is the master of the world,
defeating enemies, travelling to exotic places, seducing woman, mastering technology
such as laser watches and sports cars!

Lastly, Arbuckle argues that rituals are the way people enact and enter into these
myths using symbolic behaviour. Rituals have many functions within cultures. Rituals can
be a way of resolving social and personal tensions, bringing predictability, order and
meaning to social interactions. For example a man may regularly drive his sports car to
enact the James Bond myth and identify himself with the symbols of male success. These
also meet his emotional needs; a man may doubt his success and need to reassert it, so
by driving his sports car he can remind himself, and his friends, family and society of his
success, and so his social standing. Enacting this ritual keeps the chaos that he is without
identity at bay.

According to Arbuckle, from an anthropological perspective chaos happens when

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Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), 34.
60 Ibid., 19.
62 Ibid.
symbols, myths and rituals lose their meaning, and so their ability to give direction and make sense of the world. It does not take much to elicit chaos, because the symbols, myths and rituals that keep chaos at bay are very fragile.

There are many ways that this breakdown of culture into chaos can be explained, but one way useful for understanding the situation in the contemporary Church is what Arbuckle calls “myth drift.” Myth drift occurs “when myths change, degenerate, or disappear without any deliberate planning or even awareness by people it is happening.”\textsuperscript{63} The chaos of myth drift happens when myths and subsequent actions no longer correspond to reality. These changes can be caused by internal or external factors. For example internal myth drift can occur if a church congregation continually repeats the myth they are a forgiving and inclusive community, yet in reality there is no forgiveness or invitation or welcome happening. In that case, the church has drifted from this myth. Myth drift can also occur through external factors. Kevin Ward's description of the changes in New Zealand culture and society are an excellent example of this. Ward shows that the way in which people view and interact with institutions such as the Church has changed drastically over the last five decades, however many churches still operate in ways that were appropriate for fifty years ago.\textsuperscript{64}

These internal and external factors that are creating the chaos that the contemporary Church is experiencing can be thought of in terms of gaps. Arbuckle touches on this briefly, he sees these gaps as being between the founding myth of a religious community and their present experience of that myth. He believes in many Catholic communities there are gaps between the two.\textsuperscript{65} These gaps can also occur in the wider church, not just religious communities. The Church's foundational myth will always

\textsuperscript{63} Gerald A Arbuckle, \textit{Culture, Inculturation and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique} (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), 34.
\textsuperscript{64} Kevin Ward, \textit{Losing Our Religion? Changing Patterns of Believing and Belonging in Secular Western Societies} (Eugene, Oregan: WIFP & STOCK, 2013).
be found in scripture and in particular in the stories of the Church's founding leader, Jesus. Therefore the gospels and experience of the early church are the primary place that the contemporary church must look to to discover identity. This is the internal aspect of identity formation. The Church's task has always been to share these stories with the world, introducing them to the person of Jesus and teaching the world to follow him (Matt. 28:18-20). If there are gaps between these two things, churches will experience the chaos of myth drift. Or put simply, chaos happens in the Church when there is a gap or gaps between the gospel, the world and the Church or life of a disciple. Figure 3.2 is my way of visually representing the gaps between these three, encompassed by the experience of chaos. Fifty years ago churches had a place in society as a public institution, but culture and society have changed. Therefore churches and Christian disciples lost their identity because they lost their defining relationship with society. This has created a gap between the Church and the world. The loss of identity that came from this relationship shows that identity was not found in the gospel. This casts light on the gap between the Church and the gospel.

![Figure 3.2. Chaos-Inducing Gaps](image)
Whether acknowledged or not, the loss of relationship and identity has created the experience of chaos. Arbuckle points out that any change brings about loss, and loss creates a feeling of chaos. The Church losing this relationship means that it has to renegotiate the relationship it has with wider culture and society, and rediscover its own identity in the gospel. Successfully renegotiating identity and relationships is one of the primary goals of refounding. It could be considered alarming, but this theology of chaos could imply that God is the architect of the present situation. Through changing the place of the Church in society, God seems to be inviting the Church to fully rely on him again.

On a personal and individual level Arbuckle believes that chaos does not need to be artificially created; Arbuckle believes that the rigours of formation programs, community life, rhythms of prayer, theological study and exposure to different kinds of mission and ministry are enough to elicit chaos. But this leaves the question as to how those who do not take up the religious life would be formed. However, it seems that within all people’s lives there are chaotic experiences; whenever some kind of change or loss occurs there is the potential to experience varying levels of chaos. Again Arbuckle is correct that chaos does not need to be artificially created. Through the pilgrimage of life God presents individual disciples and the wider Church with challenges and losses that hold the possibility for formation. Only reliance on God’s grace will help keep the chaos from overtaking them.

**The liminal stage: conversion, grieving and myths**

According to Arbuckle within the refounding process the liminal period is when a person or culture fully experiences the chaos and deep sense of loss that change brings. It is at this point in the refounding process that people and cultures have a choice. If the right choice is made, “conversion” and the next step in refounding, re-aggregation, can take

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place. However, for conversion to be successful it must be accompanied with rituals of grieving and by returning to foundational myths. Liminality can be quite a dangerous stage, fraught with danger and discouragement, but if approached properly the liminal phase can bring about the right conditions for good formation to take place.

For Arbuckle the term “conversion” is full of theological significance. “Conversion” means becoming fully reliant upon God for all one’s needs. Although the Bible does not often use the word “conversion”, the whole of scripture could be seen as a call to the sentiment the word portrays. Again Arbuckle draws on the story of Israel in the Wilderness to explain his point.67

In the liminal space of the Wilderness Israel must learn to fully rely on God for all their needs. In the Wilderness Israel are constantly tempted to trust in things other than God. The Wilderness is seemingly a place without food and shelter, and no sooner have Israel finished praising the Lord for setting them free from Egypt they are crying out to Moses, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (Exodus 16:3). These complaints continue through the Exodus story. However, there is deep irony in these statements because God has already provided for them, and has promised to continue to provide for them (Exodus 15:22-27).

The chaos that they are experiencing is to be a catalyst for Israel to acknowledge its full reliance on God (Exodus 15:26); no longer do they need to rely on being Egyptian slaves for their security, but can fully trust in God. However, this is too much for the Israelites. They are unable to trust in God, and they continue to wish for the security that slavery in Egypt brought, rather than the blessings that God has in store for them. They refuse to follow God’s plans for them; they refuse to confront their enemies and to enter

the Promise Land. So God curses them, leaving them to wander the Wilderness for forty years until the disobedient generation has died away. It is the new generation, who have been formed in the Wilderness, only ever having known complete reliance on God, those who have fully “converted”, enter the Land.

Arbuckle sees conversion as a choice to be made. Arbuckle notes the responses and choices that chaos can elicit and the dangers it poses to conversion. When confronted with chaotic situations Arbuckle highlights three choices for those being formed: 1) they can retreat from reality and confront the chaos by reasserting past ways of understanding; 2) they can retreat from reality and deny that any chaos is taking place, and so maintain the status quo; 3) they can be pro-active and choose conversion. How they identify and acknowledge chaos will often determine which way they choose.

Arbuckle labels the first choice “restorationist”. This choice tries to deal with chaos and loss by retreating back to the way it was in some romanticised past time when all was supposedly well and right. Those who make this choice blame the chaos on those who would try to change things or think creatively. However in reality it may have been past ways of being and acting that may have created the chaos in the first place. Arbuckle calls this “witch-hunting,” which “is the process of passionately searching for and eliminating evil agents believed to be causing harm to individuals or groups, and as a craze it rises and fades in reaction to chaos and its eventual control.”\(^{68}\) Arbuckle believes that witch-hunting is often pursued to stop feelings of guilt.\(^{69}\) Blame is simplistically laid on others rather than acknowledging the part they may have played. Therefore, restorationists do not find reliance on God, but reliance on those past ways and understanding that supposedly once brought about order. The story of Israel shows they wished they were restored to slavery in Egypt, blaming God and Moses for the chaos they are experiencing, refusing to

\(^{68}\) Arbuckle, *Refounding the Church*, 70.
\(^{69}\) Ibid., 71.
acknowledge their own disobedience. In formation the hope is to confront the chaos, not run away from it with unrealistic dreams of restoring a past life and simplistically blaming their predicament on others.\textsuperscript{70}

In the second choice the chaos is just ignored and the status quo is forced to continue. There is not much to say about this other than that individuals or groups will persistently deny that there is any chaos or need to change. This too can lead to dysfunctional behaviour. People will go to great length to deny the experience of chaos. In a similar way to witch-hunting, people and things that remind them of the chaos will be silenced and even rejected.

Lastly the ideal choice for formation is to convert. This is when an individual or group acknowledges total inability to deal with the chaos; it is God alone who has the power to save, it is only God who can bring about order again. Anything other than this choice is tantamount to idolatry. It is the choice to convert that will move the disciple through the process of refounding to re-aggregation.

For conversion to happen successfully the huge sense of grief that comes from giving up old identities must be dealt with. Arbuckle defines grief as “the sadness, sorrow, confusion, even guilt that can emerge as individuals or cultures of all kinds suffer a loss.”\textsuperscript{71} The chaos of grief is comes about when things change, and change creates loss. Loss can elicit anger, frustration and stress, because of the lack of control to stop the loss. If this sense of loss is not properly dealt with it could lead to regression, and refounding or formation does not take place, because order is not reached. Arbuckle believes the best response to this lack of control and loss is to acknowledge and mourn it.

This approach to grief makes Arbuckle different from other theorists on change. In

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 93–94.

\textsuperscript{71} Gerald A Arbuckle, Change, Grief, and Renewal in the Church: a Spirituality for a New Era (Peabody, Massachusetts: Christian Classics, 1991), 11.
Our Iceberg is Melting,\textsuperscript{72} change management expert John Kotter writes about how he thinks those who are resistant to change should be dealt with amid a process of change management. He believes that they should be sidelined, taken out of places of authority, and if possible quietly dismissed. Although Kotter is speaking into a different context, the same is applicable to the Church. If disciples are experiencing difficulty with the chaos of change it could be an easy temptation to dismiss them has having a lack of faith or be accused of not being authentic disciples, and therefore removed them from having a position within the church community. However Arbuckle would disagree with this approach. Arbuckle believes that it is only through helping these people acknowledge grief, and mourn chaos inducing change, that conversion can take place.

Therefore it is important that any plan or programme for formation has moments where individuals and formation communities can acknowledge loss. Acknowledging the loss involves individuals and communities declaring the nature and consequences of the loss, and then being given the permission to grieve those things. According to Arbuckle this means that people can no longer deny that any loss has occurred. Behaviours such as witch-hunting and scapegoating will cease as the truth of the loss is brought to light. Therefore, conversion can fully happen as people recognize deeply the complete need for God. Now the re-aggregation stage can begin.

\textbf{Re-aggregation: myths and narratives}

Within refounding, re-aggregation takes place when conversion happens and then new narratives are found by going back to foundational myths. Arbuckle is using the language of myth and narrative in technical ways. I have defined myths earlier in this chapter. Cultures have many different kinds of myths, but the most important to

understand for refounding and formation are creation myths or foundational myths. According to Arbuckle's definition narratives are stories that are created when an individual or community go back to these foundational myths and find new ways in which these stories connect with their present context. In other words narratives are the retelling of myths in light of contemporary concerns.

Narratives form identity. People and cultures form identity by telling stories about themselves. Cultures are not static and unchanging, but are constantly in a state of flux and tension. In the midst of all these changes individuals and cultures must constantly negotiate and re-negotiate these circumstances and their place within them. Storytelling is the way that these changing circumstances are negotiated. It is only by retelling their stories and creating new ones that identity can be grounded and understood in light of such chaos. Therefore it is through storytelling that re-aggregation takes place.

Israel in Exile is a good example of re-negotiating identity through creating new narratives. In the Exile Israel had many of its cultural identity marks taken away: the Temple and therefore the sacrificial system and order of priests that went with it, and the Land, the sign of God's promises to them. They are brought to a completely new land where these cultural markers are no longer accessible. Therefore they must look back at their founding mythology to find what else it is that gave them identity. They found this re-negotiated identity in the Law. Through adherence to the Law, Israel was able to keep their identity in the midst of huge change.

Arbuckle identifies many different kinds of cultural narratives that enable people to respond to change and create identity, however refounding narratives are the most helpful for understanding Christian discipleship formation. Refounding narratives are “the

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74 Gerald A Arbuckle, Culture, Inculturation and Theologians: A Postmodern Critque (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), 72.
75 Ibid., 17.
76 Ibid., 66–67.
77 Ibid., 72.
process whereby people relive the founding mythology of a group and are so inspired by the experience that they imaginatively and creatively search for ways to relate it to contemporary life.” Therefore, refounding narratives offer imaginative solutions to confront chaos, and give permission for people to act in new and creative ways. For Christians the founding mythology will always be Christ’s story and God’s stories as seen through scripture and tradition. Therefore re-aggregation takes place when disciples make Jesus’ story their own and find new ways to live this story out.

As explained above, the contemporary chaos of the Church can be seen as resulting from an experience of gaps between disciples and gospel, disciples and world, and the gospel and the world. Therefore, finding narratives that will close these gaps will bring about re-aggregation and order within the refounding and formation process. From these new narrative new kinds of rituals (or symbolic behaviour) will be created that will enact the narratives in contextually appropriate ways that will successfully communicate the gospel to the world. The three-step process of refounding is complete, and a new cycle of chaos to order can begin.

In summary, formation as refounding is the process that begins with the experience of chaos when the gospel, Church/disciple and world become disconnected. This chaos is met through conversion, acknowledging full reliance on God and grieving the loss that change creates. Then from this place of complete dependence, Arbuckle encourages Christian disciples to go back to the foundational stories in scripture and create new narratives that offer authentic and creative solutions to the chaos, and enact them.

**Practical considerations: guides, storytelling and reflection**

From looking at Arbuckle’s understanding of rites of passage and refounding, several practical considerations must be taken in account for good discipleship formation.
to take place. Firstly, Arbuckle highlights the need for good guides.\textsuperscript{79} The second and third practical considerations can be extrapolated from Arbuckle’s work: the need for good storytelling and the need for regular times of intentional reflection. These three things offer the practical buildings blocks for formation to take place.

Experienced people are needed to help guide disciples through the formation process. These should be people who themselves have gone through significant times of formation, and have dealt with the chaos of life in Christ-centred ways.\textsuperscript{80} Arbuckle calls guides “ritual elders”\textsuperscript{81} and believes they need to be “ritual specialists”,\textsuperscript{82} because they are the ones that facilitate the initiation rituals and refounding process. Guides are living examples that take care of the rituals and assess progress and pastoral needs of those being formed.

Arbuckle sees Moses and Jesus being two of the best examples of guides in formation.\textsuperscript{83} Moses led Israel through the Wilderness. He led Israel to fully rely on God; he led them through their stubborn grief and brought them to the promise land. Jesus guided his disciples in the way of the Kingdom and the cross, calling them to give up everything for his sake. Jesus has many lessons to teach formation guides: He repeated what was most important. He led them in times of retreat and prayer. He was patient with his disciples when they seemed not to understand.

One individual need not occupy all the roles that Moses and Jesus exhibit. In fact it may be impossible for one person to occupy all these roles, therefore formation needs a variety of guides. Moses and Jesus were both living examples to those they were guiding: They exhibited a life of prayer. They both called for justice. They delegated responsibly. And both fully relied on God. Therefore, like Moses and Jesus, guides need to be living

\textsuperscript{79} Arbuckle, \textit{From Chaos to Mission}, 187.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 191
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 188
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 191-201
examples themselves to those they are guiding. And as “ritual elders” it is the guides’ task to facilitate storytelling and times of reflection.

In both initiation rituals and refounding, the power of story or myth is highlighted, therefore good discipleship formation needs to have time and space given over to presenting the core stories of scripture and tradition to those being formed. Arbuckle has a very broad definition of what can be understood as storytelling, pointing out that storytelling can be everything from art to music, as well as spoken words.84 Those conducting formation need to learn to present these stories in new and creative ways that grip people and help them to see scripture and tradition in ways they may never have seen before.

Lastly, formation needs time and space given over to intentional times of reflection. These reflection times can be used for everything from grieving things that need to be left behind in order to follow Jesus, to reflecting on Biblical stories, to looking at the chaos and gaps in their lives, or assessing the gifts and talents that they possess. These times can be done as a community, taught as individual disciplines or devotions, or done one on one with a formation guide. However it is done, guides have responsibility to create space and encourage those being formed to enter into intentional times of reflection.

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84 Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*, 64.
How Arbuckle’s ideas apply to this research

For the purposes of this research focused on formation in the Urban Vision community, Arbuckle offers some very useful and practical theological and anthropological insights into formation. Rites of passage and initiation rituals provide an initial framework for understanding how members are initiated into UV. Therefore this research will look for the three-part journey that UV individuals and the UV community take as they let go of old
identities and are invited into new ones. Rites of passage and initiation rituals also highlight the importance of times of liminality; therefore the research will look for the kind of anti-structure and communitas created in UV formation, so that those being formed are given the opportunity to see things in new ways. This idea of liminality is further explored through Arbuckle’s understanding of chaos and refounding, where according Arbuckle, chaos becomes God’s tool for discipleship formation. Therefore, refounding offers another framework for analysing UV but from the perspective of how disciples who are already members of UV are invited to further their formation beyond the initiation stage. This research looks for signs of chaos, to see if it draws people into liminal spaces where they are given opportunities to make the choice to find a deeper identity and reliance on God, creating new narratives to confront the chaos and close the gaps between gospel, disciple and world. This means that when UV members experience chaos, the question must be asked of where the chaos has come from and how God is drawing them into profound faithfulness to him. Lastly this research will look at the way UV enacts the three practical considerations of storytelling, intentional times of reflection and the need for guides to lead people in discipleship formation.

For the purposes of analysing Urban Vision’s formation practices, Dietrich Bonhoeffer adds a helpful counterpoint to Arbuckle because Bonhoeffer focuses on the way Christ is the foundation of formation and the daily rhythms that contribute to good discipleship formation. Bonhoeffer will now be looked at.

**Bonhoeffer’s theology of formation**

In his book *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer brings together his theology of costly grace and practical lessons for the life of a community in formation. These concepts are rooted in

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Bonhoeffer’s theological perspective on the way Christ mediates relationships and the way Christ speaks to his people through scripture, and this section will focus on those two ideas. From these foundations, this section I look at Bonhoeffer’s suggestions for Christian community and how Christian community should live out daily formational rhythms, therefore offering insights for evaluating UV. Bonhoeffer’s view of “costly grace” offers a perspective that is visible in new monastic communities like Urban Vision and that undergirds their practices of Christian formation.

**Costly grace**

According to Bonhoeffer to be a disciple is to be formed by and live by costly grace. To understand costly grace Bonhoeffer contrasts it with its opposite, cheap grace. Cheap grace is:

*Preaching forgiveness without repentance; it is baptism without the discipline of community; it is the Lord’s Supper without confession of sin; it is absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without cross, grace without the living incarnate Jesus Christ.*

Cheap grace turns forgiveness into a general principle, rather than forgiveness in the context of being a disciple of Jesus. According to Bonhoeffer this produces Christians who are not disciples at all, but gives them the excuse to continue living in the way of the world. Costly grace on the other hand is to follow Jesus in the way of the cross. Costly grace is costly because it is the call of Christ to leave the way of the world, everything, and follow him. But costly grace is grace because it is the only way to life in all its fullness. Bonhoeffer takes up the imagery from Matthew 11:28-30 to describe the grace in following Jesus:

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87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 45.
When holy scripture speaks of following Jesus, it proclaims that people are free from all human rules, from everything which pressures, burdens, or causes worry and torment of conscience. In following Jesus, people are released from the hard yoke of their laws to be under the gentle yoke of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{89}

For Bonhoeffer it is the life of the apostle Peter that provides a template for discipleship, because in “Peter’s life, grace and discipleship belong inseparably together. He received costly grace.”\textsuperscript{90} Peter’s life is marked by two calls to follow Jesus. The first call prompts him to leave everything, his family and vocation as a fisherman (Mark 1:17). The second is the call from the resurrected Christ (John 21:22).\textsuperscript{91} This call is grace to Peter after he denied Jesus, but it is costly because it was the call to his eventual martyrdom. Jesus calls Peter to proclaim Jesus as the Lord and God in the face of ridicule and opposition. This is the same call to disciples today, to be formed as followers of the costly, but grace filled, way of Jesus.

\textbf{Christ as mediator}

Formation happens in community. Bonhoeffer builds an understanding of discipleship in community on his own “theological anthropology”.\textsuperscript{92} However, this “anthropology” is very different from how Arbuckle and contemporary anthropologists would understand it. At the foundation of this theological anthropology is relationship. Clifford Green describes Bonhoeffer’s understanding: “To be human is to be a person before God, and in relation with God.”\textsuperscript{93} God freely chooses for humans to know him and be in relationship with him; this is God’s freely given self-revelation. To be relational also means that to be an individual person can only be understood through being in community; community defines the individual person. Therefore, Bonhoeffer believes that human

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 39.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 46.
  \item \textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 115.
\end{itemize}
personhood can only be understood through being in relationship with God and one another. At the centre of these relational dynamics is Christ, because Christ is the one who mediates all relationships. Therefore, according to Bonhoeffer, to be human is to be in relationship with God and others in community, mediated through the person of Christ. To explore Bonhoeffer’s approach to discipleship formation is to explore the implications of this ontology.

Like Arbuckle, Bonhoeffer believes that Christians should strive to become entirely dependent upon Christ. According to Bonhoeffer our relationship with Jesus is the only unmediated relationship. Jesus knows people so completely that he knows them even better than they know themselves. Because Christians are found in Christ and Christ mediates reality for them, “Christians are persons who no longer seek their salvation, their deliverance, their justification in themselves, but in Jesus Christ alone.” Bonhoeffer expands on this understanding by drawing the implication that disciples can therefore no longer even trust their own faculties but only ever trust in God’s truth: Christians “know that God’s Word in Jesus pronounces them guilty, even when they feel nothing of their own guilt, and that God’s word in Jesus Christ pronounces them free and righteous, even when they feel nothing of their own righteousness.” In light of this understanding Bonhoeffer explains the attitude Christian disciples should take:

Christians live entirely by the truth of God’s Word in Jesus Christ. If they are asked “where is your salvation, your blessedness, your righteousness?” they can never point to themselves. Instead, they point to the Word of God in Jesus Christ that grants them salvation, blessedness, and righteousness. They watch for this Word wherever they can.

To watch and wait for Jesus the Word of God is the beginning of formation; Jesus is the one who forms his disciples, saving them, blessing them and causing them to be

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95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., 32.
righteous.

Christ as the Word that forms

Because Christ is mediator, Christ is the one who forms disciples through his Word. Christ forms his people when they are present to Jesus’ Word in scripture. Therefore, the reading of scripture sits at the centre of Bonhoeffer’s approach to formation. This is similar to Arbuckle, who believes it is only through returning to foundational myths and applying them to the contemporary context that disciples will refound themselves in God. Bonhoeffer in a similar way wish disciples to be deeply grounded in the person of Christ through centring life on hearing his word. Therefore Bonhoeffer provides theological weight to Arbuckle's ideas.

According to Bonhoeffer, it is only through scripture that Christian disciples can know and participate in the story of God. Bonhoeffer writes that when disciples hear the historical stories of scripture, “We are uprooted from our own existence and are taken back to the holy history of God on earth…. What is important is not that God is a spectator and participant in our life today, but that we are attentive listeners and participants in God’s action in the sacred story, the story of Christ on earth.” By reading scripture Christian disciples are able to enter into God’s story. The guilt and stubbornness of Israel become the disciple’s own and God meets them and ministers to them there. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus become the disciple’s own story, and disciples can know of their salvation because it is demonstrated in Jesus. In regard to this participation, the Psalms are particularly important to Bonhoeffer because for him they have Christological significance. Bonhoeffer states that:

The psalms that will not cross our lips as prayers, those that make us falter and offend us, make us suspect that here someone else is praying, not we.. that the one

98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
who is here affirming his innocence, who is calling for God’s judgment, who has come to such infinite depths of suffering, is none other than Jesus Christ himself. It is he who is praying, and not only here, but in the whole Psalter.\(^{100}\)

Bonhoeffer believes that the Psalms are Jesus’ very own prayers. Therefore when Christians pray the psalms they are participating in the prayer of Jesus. These prayers are only able to be the disciples’ prayers as they are found in Christ. Therefore, disciples are formed as they enter into the stories of scripture, being attentive listeners and participants. Because of this, the communal and private reading of scripture is very important to discipleship formation. It is also important to Bonhoeffer that disciples spend time in silence before the Word, so that the Word alone can minister and form them.\(^{101}\) However, Christ the Word is the mediator of relationship, therefore he also ministers through community.

**Christ forms disciples through community**

Christ the mediator of relationship forms people through his Word and though Christian community. Christ forms disciples through community because Christ mediates the relationships of community; therefore Christians are able to be Christ to one another.\(^ {102}\) However Bonhoeffer does not have a romanticised view of community, and guards against fallacies by spelling out that Christian community is by no means an ideal community.\(^ {103}\)

Bonhoeffer warns disciples: “Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest, and sacrificial.”\(^ {104}\) Christian disciples must therefore learn to accept the community that they are in and those

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100 Ibid., 54.
101 Ibid., 81–86.
102 Ibid., 32.
103 Ibid., 35.
104 Ibid., 36.
around them. Bonhoeffer believes that this is done through learning to be thankful for all those that God has given: “Because God has already laid the only foundation of our community, because God has united us in the one body with other Christians in Jesus Christ long before we enter into common life with them, we enter into that life together with other Christians, not as those who make demands, but as those who thankfully receive.”

These damaging idealised notions can also be put to rest through forgiveness. Because Jesus is the mediator, Christians receive one another as forgiven sinners. Because of Christ's forgiveness and mediation people can speak God’s Word to one another, hear one another's confessions and offer forgiveness to one another.

As Christ dwells in the community and mediates the community relationships, Christ ministers with his self-sacrificial love to the community through the community. Christians minister to one another, not from some emotion called love, but based on Christ's love for people. Therefore Christ forms disciples through community in the way of Christ-centred reconciliation and self-sacrificial love. However, Bonhoeffer warns that Christian disciples should watch for the burden they might put on Christian community as they try to live out from their own idealised vision of community rather than live through the reconciliation and love of Christ.

**Daily Life Together**

Bonhoeffer believes that Christ forms his people into disciples of costly grace through scripture and community; therefore, it is important that daily life is centred on listening to God’s Word and being together as community. For Bonhoeffer this means that Christian disciples need to be able to both live well in community but also let themselves sit alone with Jesus to hear his Word. Bonhoeffer’s whole approach to life in community

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105 Ibid.
106 Ibid., 33.
107 Ibid., 43.
with this well known saying: “Whoever cannot be alone should beware of community…. Whoever cannot stand being in community should beware of being alone.”

This is a good complement to Arbuckle’s big picture because Bonhoeffer provides some good pointers for the daily outworking of formation. From the above theology, and in particular the above axiom, Bonhoeffer built a detailed rhythm of life for his seminarians. There is too much detail to go into every prescription here, but these rhythms share much in common with monastic rhythms of daily life. The day is to be divided up around prayer and hearing scripture. According to Bonhoeffer, these times of prayer need to include extended periods of silence, psalms read and sung, times of extemporary prayer for one another, and times of private and public confession accompanied with absolution. The day must also have time dedicated to work and service. It is also important to Bonhoeffer that members of the community spend individual alone time with God. Overall Bonhoeffer shows that good formation will have an intentional daily rhythm centred on Christ and his Word, and give opportunities for the community to speak into each other’s lives and serve one another. Therefore, good formation needs to include the above practices on a daily basis.

**Bonhoeffer’s contribution to this research**

For Bonhoeffer, Christ is the foundation for formation. It is Jesus’ Word that forms disciples and it is Jesus who mediates the formational community. Bonhoeffer therefore develops daily practices that will facilitate a reconciling and loving community that listen to Jesus’ Word as community and individuals. Bonhoeffer reminds the Church that discipleship formation always has Jesus’ call to costly grace at its centre, but this is tempered by not laying the burden of idealism on community. Ultimately it is Jesus that will lift burdens and offer the challenges that form disciples.

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Ibid., 82.
Concluding implications for analysis

I draw on Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer as I analyse what I observed at Urban Vision. Arbuckle contributes his understanding of discipleship as prophetic mission, the anthropological insights from rites of passage and his unique concept of refounding to my analysis. Bonhoeffer contributes his understanding of costly grace, Christ’s work in mediating relationship and daily rhythms of prayer and scripture reading to my analysis. Both Arbuckle’s understanding of prophetic mission and Bonhoeffer’s costly grace can be compared and contrasted with UV’s own goal for discipleship.

I look for the way in which the model of a rite of passage is present in UV’s formation structures. I observe the overall pattern of formation, but also the specific rituals that accompany each stage or separation, liminality and re-aggregation. I will also look for the communitas that is formed during the formation process.

Arbuckle’s understanding of refounding will offer many helpful pointers for inspecting UV. How does UV engage with experiences of Chaos? Are there the right conditions for conversion to take place? Are there times for grieving? Are there skilled guides who can help people on the journey?

Bonhoeffer also contributes to analysing the formation community. Does the UV community relate to one another as a reconciling community, whose relationships are mediated through Christ? What is the role of costly grace in the espoused and operant theology of UV? And what are the daily spiritual practices that contribute to UV formation?

Both Bonhoeffer and Arbuckle articulate the role of scripture in formation. Arbuckle sees scripture as the way for creating new but faithful narratives, and Bonhoeffer sees scripture as the way of daily participating in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, so being formed by it. Therefore, I look at the role of scripture in the formation practice of UV.
Chapter four

Urban Vision's espoused theology of formation

Urban Vision has a very intentional and well-considered espoused theology of discipleship formation. It has a range of documentation that defines who it is and its mission, and how people should be formed as members of UV. However, over the 20 years of UV’s life the formation programme has evolved as it has responded to crisis and critique. Its formation is built on its *charism*. Charism is a word commonly used by religious orders as a label for their own particular rule of life and their particular calling for mission and ministry. Charism implies something that is God-gifted. UV uses the word charism in a similar way, to describe the ethos that directs UV's life together and mission. However UV does not have a rule of life in the classic sense. Rather than a rule of life, its charism is labelled as the *Three Strands* and *Seven Textures*. Within UV's charism is found the cultural resources, symbols, foundational myths, narratives and UV’s the goals of formation. First, in this chapter I give an overview of UV and then an overview of the documents that I draw on to analyse UV's espoused theology. Then I describe UV’s present espoused approach and structures for formation, and provide an explanation of the UV charism, which is the goal for formation. Then I look at the espoused theology of two UV teams as they articulate their own application of the UV charism and its impact on formation in the everyday life of each team. This analysis of UV provides new insights in discipleship formation, and adds to and builds upon many of the ideas expressed by Arbuckle an Bonhoeffer. In particular it offers new insights into the gaps (figure 3.2) and the resources needed for refounding. This chapter ends with a brief theological reflection on the place of relationship in discipleship formation.
An overview of Urban Vision

Urban Vision is a contemporary missional order that has been ministering in the Wellington region for around 20 years. In this time it has developed, and continues to develop, insights and strategies for faithfully forming people to follow Jesus Christ in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand in the 21st century. It offers a ministry that has proven to be innovative and sustainable.

I only researched people who are members of UV. There are around 80 members aged between 18 and 65. UV is structured into teams. Each of these teams shares a common life, sharing houses and finances. These teams are committed to ministering in particular neighbourhoods. One team lives and serves at Ngatiawa, a contemporary monastery/retreat centre on the Kapiti coast, which acts as a hub for rest and resourcing for the other teams. Most teams live and serve in the suburbs in and around the Wellington region, but there are teams in Hamilton and Auckland. The teams are usually planted in lower socio-economic areas, as UV has a calling to those on the margins of society.

There are two levels of belonging in UV. There are “companions”, who are full members of UV who have gone through discernment and formation, and there are those who are in the formation process, called “learners”. Those who are in the formation process are there to learn, so do not contribute much to the direction and leadership of UV or the team to which they belong. Only companions exercise a leadership role within UV and their team. Each team has specific team leaders who are chosen from amongst the companions.

UV is governed by a small group of companions called Lego. Lego members rotate every two years. The companions vote Lego members on to the governing group. Therefore there are always new voices coming through, although UV tries to put people on Lego who are suited to the role. Lego is the group that decides on the direction of
formation, and one of its members is delegated the task of administering the formation process.

**Sources of UV's espoused theology**

There are a number of sources for UV's espoused theology. Espoused theology is “a group's articulation of its beliefs.” Therefore the data for this chapter is drawn from a talk/presentation, a book, UV's website, artwork and UV's internal documentation.

The talk/presentation comes from Jenny Duckworth. She is one of the founding members of UV along with her husband, Justin Duckworth. This presentation told the story of UV's development and was given in the context of a formation camp. This story touched on the development of formation in UV and the challenges UV's formation has faced.

Jenny and Justin Duckworth has also co-written the book, *Against the Tide and Toward the Kingdom*. It tackles some of the problems that might challenge faithful disciples in a Western cultural context and offers solutions. It also tells the story of UV and the lessons learned about doing community, mission and discipleship in a Western culture. This book was written for a wide audience and suggests concrete ways in which people outside UV could live a life similar to theirs.

UV also has an extensive website which is rich source for espoused theology. It outlines UV’s charism, covenanting process, history, and structure, provides latest news, events and photographs of UV events.

Individual UV teams have been encouraged to develop and articulate how the UV charism will be fulfilled in their everyday life. These have been articulated in the form of artworks and detailed booklets. In this chapter I engage with the Newtown Park Team's

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artwork House Culture (Figure 4.2) and Ngatiawa’s booklet Kaupapa.

An investigation of UV’s internal documentation concludes the chapter. A number of documents have been created by Lego to define and set out expectations for the UV formation process. In this chapter I focus on Urban Vision Formation and Urban Vision Companionship. These documents are a source for the structure of formation, the context of formation and the competencies expected of learners.

This range of sources provides a broad articulation of UV’s present espoused theology, covering many aspects of formation in the order. These sources represent UV’s public articulation as well as its internal articulation. They also represent different levels of UV’s leadership, from Lego’s top level articulation to each individual team’s more grass-roots articulation.

**Urban Vision’s espoused approach and structure of formation**

This is a snapshot of UV’s present espoused approach and structure. Historically UV’s approach and structure has changed and evolved as they meet new needs and challenges. Therefore this is only the present state of formation taken from current documents and articulations. From what I experienced I would not be surprised if formation were to change in the future. However one motif that seems to be a constant is *waka journey*.

The motif of *waka journey* undergirds UV’s approach to formation. A *waka* is a Maori canoe. In Jenny and Justin Duckworth's, Against the Tide, Toward the Kingdom, the narrative of waka journey is used extensively to talk about all sorts of aspects of UV’s life. It is espoused often not only in formal documents but within everyday life and is heard in conversations and in talks at UV’s formal gatherings and is used to answer questions

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that are often asked of UV’s story and approach. The motif is useful for thinking about community, mission and formation. The Duckworths show how this motif is useful by breaking it down into four symbols: “a crew (the team), a destination (the dream/vision), the course (the scheme)”, and the boat or waka.

The symbol of crew represents the kind of community needed to go on the journey. Having a crew, or team, of the waka is based on the foundation that people need each other; people cannot go it alone. They argue that these teams have to be small highly committed groups, rather than large groups of partially committed people. These small crews need the gift of leadership, although leadership has to be exercised through service and accountability. Leadership is only to be exercised by those who are fully committed. People who are only going to be around for a short time or who have only just entered a crew should not given the same level of responsibility for leadership as those who have proven commitment. From the perspective of having skilled guides this approach makes sense. According to Arbuckle, leadership in formation needs to be exercised by skilled guides who have experienced formation and are experienced disciples. Therefore the Duckworth's suggestion for committed and experienced leadership is wise.

The Duckworth's argue these crews or teams need to learn how to cope well with conflict: “The key to avoiding most conflict in the team is good communication, with clear expectations and roles, a willingness to negotiate, and an openness to ongoing conversation.” However, the Duckworth also state, “Conflict is inevitable and can be the most constructive times of growth.” They believe the most important factor for a healthy crew is individuals' walk with Jesus “because it allows us to access his fruit; it

111 Ibid., 94.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid., 101.
114 Ibid., 94.
115 Ibid., 95.
116 Ibid., 97.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
allows us to work on our wholeness/transformation while supporting this for others; and it allows us to reflect his character of wisdom, grace, and forgiveness vital in resolving conflict.” This sounds very similar to Bonhoeffer’s Christological approach to confession and forgiveness in community. Although the Duckworths and Bonhoeffer use different language, they hope that people are open and communicate as a community around difficulty, and that disciples would be open to Christ as the mediator and healer of conflict. The Duckworths’ approach also offers the opportunity for Arbuckle’s communitas and anti-structure as disciples are invited to be open, communicate, and learn from one another in the midst of difficulty. The Duckworths hopes that a solid crew that deals with conflict well “would create space for others to gather around the edges.” This puts the focus of community back onto being a missional community. Community is not done for community sake, and conflict is not dealt with just for the same of resolving conflict, but so the crew would be a healthy and life giving for others to enter into.

The symbol of destination, or the dream, is the shared vision that the crew will have journeying forward together. The Duckworths have some simple and practical advice for putting together a destination or dream: “The dream… needs to be big enough to have scope for all sorts of responses, but specific and humble enough to hold us together and ensure that something actually happens.” The Duckworths argue that the destination needs to be something that is prayerfully discerned by the group, listening to God’s guiding. However, the crew may need to identify those people who are gifted with Christ-centred visions for the waka’s destination. This idea of a destination implies that the waka is leaving somewhere; there is a place, a false life, that is being left behind. However people are constantly being pulled back to this place. The Duckworths call this “the cultural

119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid., 97–98.
122 Ibid., 98.
The Duckworths are talking about the specific things in Western culture that go against Jesus’ vision for his disciples. Throughout the whole of Against the Tide Duckworth deals with this cultural tide. They devote chapters to leaving behind cultural norms such as “seeking experiences”, “being addicted to entertainment”, seeking after careers and financial security, “Hollywood romance” and “picket fences” and respectability. To leave this cultural tide behind involves plotting a course toward fully trusting in God for everything, opening up homes to local neighbourhoods, sharing life with others, building healthy relationships and taking up social justice issues. The Duckworths point out that this cultural tide can become a distraction to the work of Jesus’ Kingdom, therefore the dream or destination helps keep the waka and its crew on track. This correlates with Arbuckle’s hope that discipleship formation would be “a process of liberation by which... a person frees himself/herself from constraints of... a personal order (sin, pride, ignorance of Christ as the centre of life, ignorant of academic/pastoral skills necessary to be part of Christ's mission today) [and] a social or cultural order (undue cultural pressures, prejudices).”

The course, or scheme, is the symbol used to describe the practical implications for living out the destination/vision. This represents the organisational skills needed to make dreams reality. The Duckworths believe that it is often folly just to come up with grand schemes, but that schemes should rise out of getting to know and meeting the needs of the local neighbourhood and working alongside local people whilst listening to God’s directing. Therefore practical organisational skills and a good understanding of community development are necessary for plotting a course. The Duckworths’ course/scheme sounds a lot like Arbuckle’s narratives, because it makes practical

123 Ibid., 97.
124 Ibid.
126 Ibid., 100.
suggestions for disciples come up with plans to close the gap between gospel, church/disciple and world (Figure 3.2). They add additional insight to Arbuckle by highlighting the need to get to know local people and then developing narratives from this understanding. The Duckworths' suggestions also reflect Arbuckle's hope for formation to give disciples the "academic/pastoral skills necessary to be part of Christ's mission".  

The boat or waka is the symbol used to describe the overall model that holds the crew together, takes them to the destination and provides a place to work out the scheme. The UV model is a manifestation of New Monasticism, which will be explored below. The Duckworths state that if the shape of the boat, the shape of community, is not clarified, this can lead to unnecessary and unhelpful conflict. However the crew also needs to be flexible about the shape of the boat. It may need altering as new needs arise. This process can be "both refreshing and painful." Again there is agreement between Duckworth and Arbuckle. Arbuckle believes that those being formed need to be aware of what formation entails and then commit to that for the process of formation to be successful. Although the Duckworths use different language, they point out the same dynamics of needing to be open about what people are committing to. If people do not know the model they are committing to it may be detrimental to formation.

In summary, the Duckworths argue using the *waka journey* motif that formation should happen amongst small groups of people (The Crew) engaged in mission (The Destination), with a shared vision for mission (The Course) and life together (The Waka). The *waka journey* motif frames things differently from Bonhoeffer and Arbuckle, yet shares many of the elements that they suggest are essential to discipleship formation. Duckworth identifies that being in community can create conflict that pushes disciples to deal with personal problems. This is comparable to Arbuckle's chaos and communitas, as well as

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127 Ibid., 102.
128 Ibid., 101.
129 Ibid.
Bonhoeffer's thoughts on Christian community being mediated through Christ's reconciling work. Just like Arbuckle, the Duckworths hope that discipleship formation would overcome the cultural pressures that stop disciples from fully being engaged in God's Kingdom life. And like Arbuckle, the Duckworths highlight the need for explicit expectations for disciples so that they can commit to a process of formation. They add the insight that although this mission and life together should be counter-cultural it should be deeply rooted in local neighbourhoods. This contributes a practical suggestion for how faithful narratives that connect gospel, disciple and world can be created.

*Urban Vision Formation*\(^\text{130}\) contains the present stated structures, processes and definition for formation in UV. It states that overall formation in UV “involves orientation to UV’s values, opportunity to imbibe UV’s culture, and discernment of the learner’s vocation.”\(^\text{131}\) The motif of *waka journey* is implicit in UV's approach to formation. This is clearly seen in this document, *Urban Vision Formation*, where formation is described as “the journey we take as followers of Jesus to becoming the person we are created to be.”\(^\text{132}\) It goes on to say that learners would “show willingness to do this journey, knowing what it is, and be taking responsibility for their formation in that journey”.\(^\text{133}\) This further builds on the correlation between Arbuckle and the *waka journey* motif, both of which state that people should have a clear idea of what they are committing to and be willing to enter into formation. *Urban Vision Formation* sets out clearly the process for this opportunity to imbibe and discern. It is a three-stage process that can take anywhere between 2-5 years, but is expected to take around 3 years.\(^\text{134}\) The document explains and has prescriptions for each stage of formation. Each stage focuses on a different topic. Stage one focuses on what UV is. This first stage is an initial informed discernment. Stage one learners join a UV

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\(^{130}\) Ibid.

\(^{131}\) Ibid.


\(^{133}\) Italics original, Ibid.

\(^{134}\) Ibid.
team to see what life as part of UV is like. By the end of stage one learners “are no longer asking ‘What is UV?’ but rather ‘What must I do to join UV?’”\textsuperscript{135} The second stage focuses on what it is like to be a companion. By the end of the second stage “there should be evidence that the learner is clearly orientating towards the goal of becoming a companion – walking the journey, but with grace to fumble.”\textsuperscript{136} Stage three learners are to live like companions. It is hoped that by “the end of stage three, the learner essentially shows the maturity, responsibility, initiative and commitment of a companion.”\textsuperscript{137} Each stage could be seen as a part of the initiation process; stage one being a year of separation, coming to terms with what UV is; stage two a period of liminality, thinking what does in mean to find identity in UV; and the third stage a process of re-aggregation, figuring out what life and identity looks like in practice as a full member of UV.

*Urban Vision Formation* states that formation is done within community. Just like for both Bonhoeffer and Arbuckle, formation and community are inseparable. UV believes that formation happens first and foremost in the community of their teams: “Team mission and rhythms form an important part of ongoing formation. Your conscious engagement in your team and neighbourhood is the most vital part of your formation.”\textsuperscript{138} But the team is not the only place formation in community happens; the whole of UV seems to be involved in formation. In the teams, the team leader or leaders take responsibility for the formation of learners. Learners are also closely engaged with other learners who are at the same stage, they meet together as a formation group.\textsuperscript{139} These groups meet four or five times a year, at formation camps and other UV gatherings. In these groups they discuss how things are going and particular topics relating to their stage. Each formation group has a

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., I often heard this approach to formation being referred to as “osmosis”. However I believe there is some very intentional and observable practices that create this “osmosis.” This will be explored later UV’s operant theology.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
small amount of pre-reading to do before these gatherings. Each stage within formation gives the opportunity for learners to reflect upon UV in an incremental way, first just reflecting on what UV is, then reflecting on what they might be and do as members, before fully trying to live the UV culture. These groups are led and facilitated by “formation leaders”. A third relational aspect of formation comes through “alongsiders,” the mentors who journey alongside individual learners. It is expected that learners and alongsiders will meet once a month to discuss how formation is going. This involvement of team leaders, formation group leaders and alongsiders shows that many members of UV are involved in formation. The structure of formation groups, teams, and leaders and alongsiders gives opportunity for good formation. Between the team and formation-stage group UV learners have the potential to develop communitas and anti-structure as they journey together. The formation-stage group leader and the alongsiders provide opportunity for learners to be exposed to guides that will help them on the journey.

Both the waka journey motif and Urban Vision Formation present a pragmatic espoused theology for discipleship formation that opens up the possibility for essential parts of Bonhoeffer's and Arbuckle's hopes for discipleship formation. UV's approach and structure of discipleship formation offers the opportunity for hearing core UV stories and reflecting on them, and being led by skilled guides. The structure of formation in UV is certainly geared toward creating community of the waka journey’s shared destination/vision. The approach and structure is oriented toward helping people to truly understand what it means to be a member of UV and taking ownership of UV's vision. It is also orientated toward creating tight knit community where people speak into each other’s lives. Therefore the prescriptions for the formation structure have the possibility of the opportunity for the creation of communitas and for people to be Christ to one another.

140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
There is opportunities for learners to reflect on what it means for their own lives to be a member of UV, therefore providing the possibility for narrative creation. And the structure offers opportunity for guides to help people journey through formation.

**Urban Vision's goals for discipleship formation**

Overall, the goal of formation for individuals is to become a “companion”. UV hopes, through its formation structures, to form people to be disciples of Jesus within the charism of UV. The UV charism finds is influenced by *The 12 Marks of New Monasticism*. The UV website describes the UV charism as *The Three Strands* and *Seven Textures*. As explained above, the word *charism* has its origins as a label for the God gifted rules of life, and particular mission and ministry focusses of historical religious orders. UV uses it is a similar way, but not the same way. UV seems to use the word *charism* to describe the general ethos or culture of UV. This general ethos or culture is anchored in and given shape by *The Three Strands* and *Seven Textures*. In this section I explore how the global New Monastic movement has impacted on UV’s goals for formation. UV’s charism and the ways in which individual teams have committed to be formed by and so live out this charism is then analysed.

UV identifies with the Western ecumenical Protestant movement New Monasticism. The New Monastic movement is interesting because in the last few decades it seems that groups from different Protestant denominations all doing similar things and thinking in similar ways started to develop independently of one another. Since they have become aware of one another, connections have been made through social media, gatherings and books, all of which have given the movement a shared sense of

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identity.

The most significant markers for identity are the 12 Marks of New Monasticism. These marks were put together in 2004 after a gathering of leaders at one of the new monastic communities, Rutba House, in association with a Baptist church in Durham, North Carolina, in the United States. The 12 marks are as follows:

- Relocate to the abandoned places of the Empire
- Share economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us
- Hospitality to the stranger
- Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities combined with the active pursuit of a just reconciliation
- Humble submission to Christ’s body, the church
- Intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community along the lines of the old novitiate
- Nurturing common life among members of intentional community
- Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children
- Geographical proximity to community members who share a common rule of life
- Care for the plot of God’s earth given to us along with support of our local economies
- Peacemaking in the midst of violence and conflict resolution within communities along the lines of Matthew 18
- Commitment to a disciplined contemplative life

When UV came across these marks they identified that all but one of them was reflected in their charism. The marks encompass the goals UV intentionally strives to fulfil. Duckworth describes the 12 Marks as being the shape of the UV boat or waka when describing the narrative of waka journey. Therefore, the 12 Marks of New Monasticism have become goals for formation in UV and are taught to those in formation. The only mark that they did not fulfil was mark five, “Humble submission to Christ’s body, the Church.” Therefore, this prompted UV to begin talks with the Anglican Church about options for relationship. In

146 Duckworth and Duckworth, Against the Tide, Towards the Kingdom, 102.
147 Duckworth and Duckworth, Against the Tide, Towards the Kingdom, 102; Duckworth, “Urban Vision’s Story.”
2007, UV became a missional order with the Anglican Church. Within the beginning of UV’s story there was some general antagonism toward the wider Church. However, UV came to see through the Marks the need to be connected with the wider Church. This shows that the 12 Marks became an espoused theological narrative within UV that closed the gap between themselves and the wider Church. UV’s espoused theology adds an extra dimension for discipleship to consider. From UV's experience as they reflected on the 12 Marks, the representation of discipleship being about closing the gaps between gospel, disciple and world (figure 3.2), could have a fourth category added to it, the Church (figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1, Revised Chaos-inducing Gaps](image)

The UV charism is the goal of formation for learners, when a person has fully

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adopted the UV charism then he or she can become a “companion”. The UV charism 

foundation is *The Three Strands*, and then built upon these are *The Seven Textures*. The 

Seven Textures supplement The Three Strands. The language of strand and texture is 

taken from ideas of Maori weaving and draws on the *whakatauki* (Maori proverb) by 

Potatau Te Wherowhero: 

Kotahi te kohao o te ngiro e kuhuna ai 
te miro ma, te miro pango, te miro whero.  
He aha tenei whakatauki, 
e turo nga miro 

Translated into English: 

There is but one eye of a needle, 
through which white, black and red strands are threaded. 

For Urban Vision, “this is a profound image of the three threads of our journey all tied to 

our God: inward, Urban Vision community and our neighbourhood.”  

It is the *Three Strands* that companions covenant to at their dedication services. These Three Strands of 

commitments are: 

1. A commitment to deepening intimacy with Jesus Christ 
2. A commitment to deep belonging in the body of Christ, increasing wholeness, 
   integrity and friendship 
3. A commitment to sharing God’s loving justice in this world, especially among the 
   poor and marginalised. 

Each of these strands can be understood in relational terms, relationship with Jesus, 

relationship with church, and relationship through mission with the world. These strands 
correlate with the gospel, disciple/church and world 

It is interesting to note that these *Three Strands* seem to be very similar to another 
ecclesial movement, Fresh Expressions (FE). FE is a successful ecumenical church 

planting movement in the United Kingdom. FE understands ecclesiology in these very 
same relational terms, drawing on a particular understanding of the Nicene Creed’s 

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150 “Covenant & Dedication » Urban Vision NZ,” accessed July 8, 2015, 
confession that the Church is one holy catholic and apostolic. FE sees the confession of being one as the relationship believers have within individual church groups. It sees holy as being the relationship believers have with God through Christ in worship. They see catholic as the relationship individual church groups have with the wider Church. And they see apostolic as the confession that the church engages the world in relationship through the mission of Christ. Therefore the only difference is that UV does not have an explicit catholic dimension within their charism. The same critique that was corrected by the 12 Marks of New Monasticism.

The Three Strands are the goal for UV’s discipleship formation. Therefore each strand has a detailed espoused theology. This espoused theology is expressed in the UV document Urban Vision Companionship and the UV website. Urban Vision Companionship states the kind of attributes learners need to cultivate to become a companion who lives out the UV charism. The website explores the underlying principles and theology of the strands. Because these are so central to UV’s approach to formation, I will look at each strand and its espoused theology in more detail:

**Strand one: A commitment to deepening intimacy with Jesus Christ.** UV calls this commitment the “inner journey” and “intimacy with God”. The webpage “Our Inner Journey” describes the way in which a life of Christian love and service has to be built upon Jesus’ love rather than obligation: “We cannot continue on this sacrificial journey without deep reliance on Jesus, otherwise we cease to be transformational.” True life only comes from Jesus. Therefore in the document UV members are encouraged to commit to finding “sustenance in regular prayer, retreat and whatever else builds our life-

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154 “Our Inner Journey » Urban Vision NZ.”
giving relationship with Jesus.”

Therefore to become a companion a learner must exhibit these attributes in their life:

a) Actively seeking God’s guidance and direction in the practice of discernment, holding a kingdom agenda in all of life;
b) Actively seeking God’s renewal and power for sustaining the journey and building resilience;
c) Allowing God’s transformation and healing by owning and working through brokenness, addictions and accepting weakness;
d) Having an increasing sense of God given vocation, strengths and gifting (and also vulnerability) to offer;
e) Practising gratitude and noticing the kingdom coming around them;
f) Practising repentance and being aware of their need of God and others;
g) Deepening and developing our spiritual life and practices in a way that is appropriate to our stage of life and growing understanding of ourselves, creation and God;
h) Maturing their character to be more loving, humble, generous and gracious.

The first strand seems to address the gap between gospel and disciple (figure 4.1).

Therefore, the first strand provides an excellent resource for examining the gaps between a disciple’s life and the gospel. By inviting disciples to seek after God’s guidance, sustenance, healing, gifts and look for complete reliance in Him the first strand provides the kind of storytelling needed for good reflection in refounding.

Strand two: A commitment to deep belonging in the body of Christ, increasing wholeness, integrity and friendship. This commitment is also called the “communal journey” and “deep belonging.”

This commitment is primarily about committing to UV community life. That is a commitment to the life of the team the member is part of and the wider UV community. There are many foundational theological ideas to this strand. The UV webpage Our Community Journey states that community has missional elements. Citing John 13:35 as one basis for this, “All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another”, UV argues that God’s immanence is experienced through close community; community “points to the truth of God’s current activity in the world and proves

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155 Ibid.
God is love.” UV also states that community has an eschatological dimension. The hope is that the UV community would reflect something of God’s future Kingdom. Moreover, it is community that forms disciples: “God uses community to help us learn to love.” Living in community reveals the sin in people’s lives and helps them to confront it and be healed. All members of UV have a responsibility to create and protect good community. Therefore in the document Urban Vision Companionship states that for a learner to become a companion they must reflect these attributes:

a) Actively discerning God’s call for and with the team and the wider movement;
b) Caring for others and building strong friendships in their team, discipling those in formation, empowering the contribution of others, and journeying in mutual accountability with other UV companions;
c) Sharing decision making, including personal life changing decisions with vulnerability and searching;
d) Offering stability of character and commitment to the team and wider movement;
e) Working to maintain good clear, honest and inclusive communication with others in the team;
f) Working to embrace and work through conflict constructively, finding its potential to bring team and personal growth;
g) Be able to accept challenge, difference and the rub of close community open heartedly with an awareness of our tendency to be defensive, dismissive or isolating;
h) Working mindfully with others in the stage of life they are in, supporting singles, partnerships, children and young people and family life within the team to flourish;
i) Supporting leadership to function healthily within the team;
j) Gladly sharing their resources of time, energy, finances and whatever is needed for the life, future and health of the UV team and wider movement;
k) Sharing a sense of ownership of the team and wider movement, contributing what it needs and helping to keep it growing and maturing (leadership, Lego, threads...).

The second strand seems to address the gap between disciple and Church (figure 4.1). UV’s hopes for learners in this strand are comprehensive and seem to take into account the many complexities of being in community, even more so than Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer who are only speaking out of the training of single people. (Arbuckle formed his ideas from formation amongst contemporary religious and Bonhoeffer amongst 1930’s German single

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158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
male seminarians.) Therefore, UV offers an excellent resource for inviting disciples to reflect on how they are engaged in deepening community in a Christ-like way whilst taking a broad appreciation of the joys and challenges of being in community.

Strand three: A commitment to sharing God’s loving Justice in this world, especially among the poor and marginalised. This commitment is also called the “neighbourhood journey”\textsuperscript{162} and “giving our best for the least”.\textsuperscript{163} This is the commitment to work amongst the marginalised, strive for justice and be deeply connected to their neighbourhood and the people who live in it. UV espouses on the webpage “Our Neighbourhood Journey” that while “each commitment needs equal attention, this commitment expresses the key charism that has brought those in Urban Vision together.”\textsuperscript{164} This commitment is built on God’s heart for the poor clearly seen in scripture; the webpage cites such passages as Jeremiah 9:23-24, Matthew 25:34-40 and Luke 4:18-21. It is also a commitment to be incarnational; as Christ emptied himself and so became poor so that the world might know him, so too UV strives to be in solidarity with the poor so that they might know the love of God. However, it does not see poverty as a virtue in its own right, but only as means to be incarnational. This strand is about a commitment to “seek justice, reconciliation and transformation in our context and beyond. The Kingdom of God is free of poverty and oppression – we work for this on earth as it is in heaven.”\textsuperscript{165} This is also a commitment to live simply. Again, simplicity is not seen as virtue in its own right, but as a requirement of the demand to love. The webpage states that this love demands that they live in ways that only satisfy needs, rather than indulge wants.\textsuperscript{166} Therefore, to become a companion learners must meet these requirements:

\begin{enumerate}
  \item a) Discerning God’s call for and with their team for their involvement with the pain
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{163} Urban Vision, “Urban Vision Companionship.”
\textsuperscript{164} “Our Neighbourhood Journey » Urban Vision NZ.”
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
and struggle in the neighbourhood/context;
b) Giving quality time and energy to engage with the suffering and struggling in their
neighbourhood;
c) Prioritising their time and resource for those in their neighbourhood who need
and embrace our solidarity and support and friendship;
d) Cultivating a life and home that is hospitable to strangers and friends;
e) Personally upskilling and training in issues that are helpful to the struggles
present in their neighbourhood/context;
f) Offering long term stability and support and hopeful alternatives to their
vulnerable friends in their neighbourhood/context;
g) Working ethically, safely, thoughtfully and consistently to be, share and find the
kingdom’s good news in their neighbourhood/context;
h) Advocating for the poor and marginalised in issues of justice at all levels (local,
big picture) particularly in issues affecting people in their locality;
i) Participating in rhythms of team and individual reflection and retreat in order to
keep their team’s involvement present, sustainable and God led;
j) Ensuring the teams integrity in long term presence and support beyond
individuals in the team leaving/moving on.\textsuperscript{167}

The third strand correlates with the gap between gospel and world (figure 4.1). The third
strand offers an excellent resource for inviting disciples to discover how they can close this
gap by serving their neighbours in thoughtful gospel centred ways. All Three Strands
represent the kind of storytelling needed for good formation, offering comprehensive
questions to help close the gaps between gospel, disciple, church and world.

The \textit{Seven Textures} are to help understand the implications of \textit{the Three Strands}
and the specific ways in which UV engage with them; UV’s website says the \textit{Seven
Textures} “describe our identity, the culture we create among us… the stuff that makes UV
unique among movements and churches.”\textsuperscript{168} UV were “looking for concise words that add
further clarity and expression to the movement.”\textsuperscript{169} They are: hospitality, incarnational, bi-
cultural, bi-vocational, discipling, relational and sustaining.\textsuperscript{170}

\textit{Hospitality} is about the way UV desire to be “generous with our homes, our
mealtimes, our bedspaces, our personal wealth, our emotional energy, and our time.”\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{167} Urban Vision, “Urban Vision Companionship.”
\textsuperscript{168} Urban Vision, “The Seven Textures of Urban Vision,” accessed July 7, 2015,
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.
This hospitality is to be show to all people but especially those who might be seen by society as outsiders.

*Incarnational* describes UV’s wish to “seek out, relocate to, and become credible members of marginalised communities.”172 A mentioned above this is grounded in God’s own incarnation. Therefore members of UV seek to get rid of anything in their lives that might prevent them from connecting with their neighbourhood.

*Bi-Cultural* describes the way UV wishes to seriously engage with the Tangata Whenua (people of the land) of Aotearoa and the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi. This means that UV members are encouraged to learn *Te Reo Maori* (the Maori language), learn Maori culture and customs, and incorporate them into their life together.173 UV’s espoused theology is a testament to this specific New Zealand justice issue, using Maori language whenever it seems appropriate and useful.

*Bi-Vocational* describes the way in which UV strive to integrate their commitment to the UV charism into their whole lives whilst finding “creative ways to remain self-supporting in paid employment.”174 UV members are not paid to be in UV. It is hoped that this would be a “prophetic sign of the high calling of lay Christians everywhere.”175

*Discipling* describes UV’s commitment to be and make disciples of Jesus. They wish to “prioritise and support each other, [their] friends, and neighbours in intentional discipleship, especially welcoming those who join [them] in formation, knowing that following Jesus will cost [them] what [they] hold dear, but lead [them] to true life.”176

*Relational* is about the way UV wish to do community and ministry through creating authentic relationships, rather than offering programs. These relationships are to form the basis for their action and reflection. They believe that it is through real relationships that

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172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 Ibid.
healing and change occurs in people and places.\textsuperscript{177}

Lastly, \textit{sustaining} is about creating lifestyles that are sustainable, both personally sustainable and stable, and ecologically sustainable. This is done through rhythms of spiritual practice and following the natural seasons.\textsuperscript{178}

In summary, this charism of \textit{The Three Strands and Seven Textures} forms the storytelling needed in formation within UV's espoused theology. It is the guiding force behind their life together and the goal of formation to become a companion. Overall to be a companion is to:

have demonstrated an increasing openness and maturity throughout the formation process and have the knowledge and desire to commit. They have lived out all Three Strands of their covenant over time and share deeply the Urban Vision values. They have journeyed beyond disillusionment with both self and UV enough to love and own this life, warts and all. With the other companions they are ready to share the responsibility and ownership of our movement, offering themselves in their strength and vulnerability, from a shared sense of discerned calling. They commit for a season of three years or more, until there is a discerned call to move on.\textsuperscript{179}

This storytelling becomes the cultural resource for individuals and teams to refound. They are encouraged to take this charism and connect it with their personal lives and the life of their team. Through all this disciples are invited to close the gaps between gospel, disciple, church and world so they can more faithfully live out the calling of Jesus Christ. It is my belief that the broadness of the \textit{Three Strands} means it could be applied to many contexts.

This charism is an excellent cultural resource for discipleship formation. It provides a pragmatic yet theologically grounded story for disciples to reflect upon to close the four gaps (figure 4.1). The accompanying documents also provide clearly outlined competencies for disciples to be working toward and discussing with mentors and guides. It provides resources for disciples to create appropriate narratives as it already tries to

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{179} Urban Vision, “Urban Vision Companionship.”
connect the founding stories of the Christian faith with contemporary context through building up relationships. Therefore, as it acts as a sort of founding myth for UV. It could also be used as a refounding narrative for other Christian groups when compared to the Christian faith as a whole. As an espoused theology it is theologically grounded through the motif of relationships and given depth through The Seven Textures. It reminds disciples that God is a relational God, and that mission, ministry and formation only happen through deepening relationships with God and those around them. This makes it both specific enough to be practical yet flexible enough to be applicable to a variety of different contexts. The helpfulness of this specific flexibility is confirmed in the examples of espoused theology and goals for formation of the UV teams. Kaupapa and House Culture provide examples.

“Kaupapa” and “House Culture”

At the two teams I visited each team had its own stated goals for its life together and personal discipleship formation. Because of the different contexts each team had different goals but both drew from the Three Strands and Seven Textures to create narratives that connect them with their context. These stated intentions are therefore excellent sources for understanding the goal of discipleship formation in UV, as each team seeks to be intentionally formed by the UV charism in their particular context. The Ngatiawa team called it Kaupapa and the Newtown Park team called it their stated goals House Culture.

The Kaupapa\textsuperscript{180} of Ngatiawa is a formal document in the form of a booklet that can be found in the communal space of the Ngatiawa kitchen. It is there for anyone to view. The document defines Kaupapa as a “topic, strategy, matter, plan, scheme, theme”.\textsuperscript{181} It


\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 1.
was written to help order the life of the community, and put forward expectations and
general guidelines for members of the team. The document was put together by the team
members of Ngatiawa and has gone through revisions as new insights have been made
into the needs and nature of the community and its ministry. The document is in four parts:
the introduction, a section on Manaakitanga/Hospitality, a section on Prayer and a section
on Whanaungatanga/Community. Interspersed through the booklet are scriptural passages
and Maori proverbs relating to each section to help provide something of the larger context
of the Kaupapa.

The introduction introduces the Ngatiawa community. It sets out that Nagatiawa is a
contemporary monastic “community of prayer and hospitality.” It states that it is the UV
team members of Ngatiawa that have responsibility for the Kaupapa. However the
language used in the Kaupapa makes it ambiguous as to who the audience is. This leaves
it open to be a document, not just for the team, but for all who visit Ngatiawa. The
introduction goes on to set out the Three Strands and Seven Textures that underpin the
Kaupapa. The introduction states that the whole document should not be read as a rule
book, even if some of the practices “are held to strongly” and that it should be “read
through the context of relationship.” This sets the scene for the next three sections.

Manaakitanga/Hospitality. Manaakitanga means hospitality, kindness. This
hospitality is based on the Treaty of Waitangi. Therefore the kawa (practice) for Ngatiawa
is based on a deep respect for the tangata whenua (people of the land). This section of the
document begins with Matthew 25:31, 34-40. This passage speaks of the way in which
serving the stranger, hungry and thirsty, the sick and prisoner, “for the least of these”
(v.40), is serving Jesus. There is also the Maori proverb Nau te rourou, Naku te rourou, Ka
ora te manukiri, translated as Your food basket, my food basket, the guest will be satisfied.

\[182\] Ibid.
\[183\] Ibid.
\[184\] Ibid.
These undergird the rest of the section. Ngatiawa’s *manaakitanga* /hospitality is focussed on providing a space for “The Three S’s”: Strugglers, Servants and Seekers.\(^{185}\) Strugglers are those that UV identify as being on the margins. Servants are those in UV and other ministries who need a break. Seekers are those who are interested in finding out more about God, and the work of Ngatiawa and UV. This *manaakitanga* is to be offered through simple acts of eating together and drinking cups of tea. This *manaakitanga* is also something in which all visitors are invited to share in. The *Kaupapa* states that:

We’re not a hotel where we do everything for the guests. We’re not a camp where we expect our guests to do everything for themselves. Rather we invite people to come and participate in our work and life together as a community.\(^{186}\)

*Prayer.* The rhythm of prayer is a significant part of Ngatiawa. The *Kaupapa* states that it “is a defining practice…. Prayer is what unites us and holds us together as a community.”\(^{187}\) They state that: “Jesus is our source. We love because he first loved us. Prayer is what fills and sustains Ngatiawa. Having a regular rhythm of prayer means that when hard times come, we continue to receive from God.”\(^{188}\) Therefore the *Kaupapa* makes it explicit that if a person is living at Ngatiawa they are expected to participate in the times of common prayer, and that they should attend particularly when they are going through a difficult time. These prayers are order by structured liturgies, although times of prayer are not to have a set worship leader or preacher. These liturgies are to be a blend of old and new prayers, but with the guiding principle of simplicity. The reasoning is that simple prayers and songs with repetitive elements are easier for people to join in with.\(^{189}\) Lastly the *Kaupapa* states that Ngatiawa will have vigils/fast, and times of silence, Sabbath, and retreat through out the year. These are to be times of special engagement with God to help people centre on the life of Jesus.

\(^{185}\) Ibid., 4.
\(^{186}\) Ibid.
\(^{187}\) Ibid., 6.
\(^{188}\) Ibid.
\(^{189}\) Ibid., 7.
Whanaungatanga/Community. The section on Whanaungatanga is the longest section in the Kaupapa. Under this section there are a series of seemingly miscellaneous yet specific topics. However, the Kaupapa on Whanaungatanga/Community has two aspects under girding it. The first is that whanaungatanga is about creating “an environment where everyone feels part of the family.”\textsuperscript{190} The second is to create a community culture “where it is easier to make a good decision and harder to make a bad decision.”\textsuperscript{191} Therefore these numerous topics, twenty-one in all, are practical responses to creating family culture and a healthy environment. Rather than deal with all twenty-one individually each section can be grouped into three consolidated topics: creating healthy community, making room for good decisions, and caring for the environment.

Creating healthy community is about an invitation to “belong deeply”.\textsuperscript{192} The document expresses the hope that people at Ngatiawa are “gentle and laid-back with one another”,\textsuperscript{193} always praising one another and always relate well with one another even if there are disagreements. The community is to be non-violent in behaviour and language, but if people do become aggressive there is the expectation that they would apologise. If romantic relationships occur between team members there is the expectation that one of the members would move out of Ngatiawa so that if the relationship does not work out it does not damage the wider community. It is also expected that those in relationships do not spend time in bedrooms together. Lastly it states that safety and boundaries are important to life at Ngatiawa, however there is not much detail as to what these boundaries are.

A lot of the section on Whanaungatanga/Community is about making room for good decisions. One aspect of this is the rhythm of life at Ngatiawa revolves around meals,
prayer, work and rest. The rhythm is important because it helps to create a space for a well-ordered and healthy life. Of particular importance is getting up in the mornings and having a Sabbath. These are seen as helping to create good mental health. There is an expectation that from Monday to Friday people would have breakfast together before morning prayers. There is also the expectation that members of the team would regularly take time out to rest and get away. Another aspect to making good decisions is that Ngatiawa is drug and alcohol free.

Lastly the section on Whanaungatanga/Community has stipulations for looking after the built and natural environment in and around Ngatiawa. It is expected that all people will take responsibility for this. The Kaupapa states that: “We want Ngatiawa to be beautiful. We want to preserve buildings and gardens that are in keeping with the natural beauty of the Tararua Forest and the Ngatiawa River.” Therefore, environmental impact is always to be taken into account. This is all to be done in very practical ways such as growing their own food, planting native plants, and everyone helping with the maintenance of buildings and the care of equipment. This attitude is expressed in a number of sayings: “Do it once, do it well…. Start it, finish it…. End of day, put it away.” The idea is to always strive for care of the environment.

Overall the Ngatiawa Kaupapa directs the team and those who visit to develop The Three Strands through hospitality, prayer and healthy community. The ambiguity of audience in the text is helpful in making the Kaupapa an inclusive document, leaving grace for visitors who might not fully share in the life of Ngatiawa. Therefore, it could be said that the Christ-centred care of people and place is the goal of discipleship formation in the Ngatiawa team. This shows the ability for the UV charism to be an excellent example of storytelling that has facilitated reflection and then action; Kaupapa is a good example of a

194 Ibid.
195 Ibid., 11.
narrative.

The Newtown team *House Culture* was inspired by Ngatiawa’s *Kaupapa*. They hoped that it would give guidelines and expectations for how they do life together and engage with their neighbourhood. Therefore it represents their goals for discipleship formation. *House Culture* is not found in a document, but in a piece of mixed media artwork that includes within it the hopes for the house culture (Figure 4.2). It was created by the whole team after reflecting on the UV Charism during team retreat. This piece of artwork hangs in the main living space of the team. It seems that the *House Culture* is something that is genuinely thought about, playing an active role in the team’s life. I saw evidence of this when members would often respond in jest to accidental swearing or an unwillingness to help with chores with the remark “house culture!” The *House Culture* revolves around four themes: hospitality, prayer, transformation and simplicity. It is not as comprehensive as the Ngatiawa *Kaupapa*, only having a paragraph dedicated to each theme, yet it provides precise and useful guidelines for the team.

The paragraph on *Hospitality* speaks of the responsibility of all members to be good and diligent hosts to anyone visiting the house. This paragraph ends with the phrase “first time a guest, second time family”.\(^{196}\) This reflects the kind of community they wish their hospitality to build; one where those visiting the house feel like it is their space too, and are happy to be part of and contribute to the place.

The paragraph on *prayer* states the way in which the Newtown team wish to have the foundations of their life in Jesus Christ. It states that daily rhythms of prayer are foundational to life together. These times of prayer are not to be exclusive to the team. The *House Culture* states that these times of prayer are to be open to anyone who wishes to participate, and that their house should be a place where questions and discussions

\(^{196}\) *Ibid.*
about God are “open and respectful”.  

The paragraph on transformation states the hope that the house will be a safe place for people where they are able to experience the love of God rather than negative influences. This section does not talk about changing people but sets some boundaries around the use of drugs and alcohol. It also stipulates that physical and verbal violence is not allowed in the house.

Lastly the paragraph on simplicity suggests that “technology, consumerism and media entertainment” should not be allowed distract them from their relationships. For this reason they choose not to have a television or allow “personal use of technology” in communal spaces.

These four paragraphs speak of how their team is to create a place that is welcoming to others, focussing on how they as disciples are to be formed to create a good space for developing loving relationships to with each other and the local neighbourhood. It is a very specific narrative created for their context and therefore shows again the strength of the UV charism as a story that invites deep reflection on how to close the gaps between gospel, disciple, church and world. This particular narrative seems to be very focussed on the gap between gospel and world, and looks for appropriate ways to love their neighbours.

Both the Kaupapa and House Culture show an espoused theology built upon the UV charism. These espoused theologies show clearly the three relationships espoused in The Three Strands have been reflected upon and applied to their own contexts. This is evidence that the UV charism offers specific yet flexible cultural resources for narrative creation. They also present an espoused theology that shows the focus on formation in mission and community that is endeavouring to close the gaps between gospel, disciple,
church and world. These espoused theologies prescribe that each team would serve each other and those they encounter; therefore discipleship formation is to happen as they look beyond themselves to love and serve others, with a particular focus on creating healthy environments for good relationships to flourish. This indicates the possibility for the creation of Arbuckle's communitas, and Bonhoeffer's being Christ to one another and loving service. Another strength, in light of Bonhoeffer, is the place they put on learning to rely on God by engaging in rhythms of daily prayer.

![Figure 4.2, House Culture](image)

**Conclusion**

By analysing these documents it has been shown that UV have a comprehensive espoused theology that has the potential for good discipleship formation. I have mainly focussed on their charism for espoused theology, however here are many aspects of UV's espoused theology that could be studied further, such as their liturgies or their theology of the Kingdom of God. Their charism and experience illustrates many of the principles
discussed by Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer, and offers excellent resources for refounding to take place. There is evidence of the *waka journey* approach throughout their espoused theology, which provides clear direction for the formation structures, helping to build formation around community and UV’s model of mission. These structures help create formation communities that could foster communitas and anti-structure, and potentially give space for Christ mediated relationships. The structures also make provisions for skilled guides to help disciples on the journey of formation. And it provides room for storytelling. The model or *waka* for UV is New Monasticism. The critique of New Monasticism’s 12 Marks raised awareness of UV’s need to be connected with the wider Church, so highlighting another dimension to gaps for disciples to discover and overcome, and further adding to the first three gaps extrapolated from Arbuckle. The *Three Strands* provide excellent resources for discipleship formation. They invite disciples to explore the gaps and try to close them in comprehensive ways. The strength of these is that they have been developed in the context of the mission and community of UV. The *Seven Strands* add significant value to UV’s espoused theology. The strength of the UV charism is further seen in its ability to be applied to the specific contexts of the two UV teams, and again it was seen that an espoused theology developed in the context of mission and community helped bring significant value to storytelling/reflection/narrative making.

Therefore the approach and structure of UV formation provides excellent opportunities to deal with the chaos these gaps and other life difficulties create. Arbuckle points out that chaos does not need to be artificially created, but by doing life chaos can occur. UV’s life together, their teams, daily rhythms, mission context and formation program are enough to highlight the chaos-inducing gaps. They also have many of the strategies and practices necessary to deal with the chaos. Their documentation sets out wise prescriptions for discipleship formation. The three-stage process slowly introduces
the UV community and charism to learners so they can make informed decisions about their relationship with UV, therefore providing clear expectations that are helpful for learners to fully commit to UV formation. The pattern of community life and alongsiders (whereby learners journey within a team, with others in the same formation stage and with skilled guides) offers many places for learners to debrief and reflect on any chaos they might be experiencing with people who understand and can offer helpful advice. The charism provides great storytelling to reflect and refound upon, and so bring order out of the chaos. The charism invites both learners and full UV members to constantly refound in God; it invites them to form their identity and overcome chaos by putting Jesus at the centre of their lives.

The *Three Strands* offer a theology of discipleship formation based primary on developing relationships. This contrasts with Kevin Ward's description of churches primarily focussed on formation for institutional participation. UV offer a theology that overcomes this past and presently problematic theology, because it takes the emphasis offer joining a particular group or going to a particular building or being led by particular people as discipleship, and instead emphasises the quality of relationship that a disciple has with Jesus and the people around them. This seems to answer some of the questions raised by Ward's work. It has the opportunity to bring about belonging and believing without the requirement of institutionalisation. The charism deals with individualism by inviting disciples to take their focus off themselves and put it on Jesus, those they are in community with and those who are outside their community; the charism invites disciples to discover how they can serve others. It deals with pluralism and relativism by inviting disciples into a community that constantly reinforces the importance and centrality of Jesus in the disciple's life. The charism deals with privatism by inviting disciples to genuinely have a public faith that will connect with the problems of the world and their local
neighbourhood. And as stated above it also deals with anti-institutionalism by taking the focus off church institutions and onto the quality of relationships.
Chapter five

Urban Vision’s operant theology of discipleship formation

This chapter is primarily an ethnography of UV formation. It looks at both specific instances of intentional formation in UV, and general life in two UV teams. From this ethnography an operant theology can be deduced. This operant theology is contrasted with UV’s espoused theology, and analysed using the insights gained from Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer. UV’s operant theology also has something to offer the wider church in Aoteaora New Zealand.

UV’s operant theology, or practice, of discipleship formation fits the patterns described by Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer. The tripartite process of an initiation ritual and the accompanying experience of communitas and anti-structure can be clearly seen in UV’s formation. My analysis shows the role the yearly dedication day plays in the process of separation and re-aggregation, and the place team life and formation camps play in the liminal stage of formation. I show daily life in a UV team invites learners to find their identity in Christ through the UV charism. I also show that Formation camps offer special times of storytelling, reflection and grieving essential to formation. My analysis shows that UV has the elements required for refounding. The very culture of UV invites and creates space and has the resources for companions to daily refound and continue to be formed as disciples of Jesus. This can be seen in the way UV have skilled guides, storytelling and times of reflection built in their everyday life together. UV also follow Bonhoeffer's suggestions for daily life, with intentional times of prayer, scripture reading and service.

First the dedication day and the process of separation and re-aggregation will be looked at. Then the elements that contribute to the liminal stage of formation will be analysed. This includes team life and formation camp. This section also highlights how refounding
happens in UV’s daily life. The conclusion and following theological reflection draw out the place of remembering in UV formation.

To become a full member of UV, or a “companion”, a person must go through a very intentional formation process that usually lasts three years. This process of formation has the classic characteristics of an initiation ritual. The UV dedication day, held at the beginning of every year, provided a ritual for the separation stage as new learners are invited in the UV community, and it also provides a ritual for re-aggregation for learners becoming companions when they have finished their time in formation. The liminal stage of UV’s formation is a three-stage or three-part process, usually spanning across three years, but this can be shorter or longer depending on the circumstances of the individual in formation. This liminal period involves being part of a team, attendance to formations camps and meeting with others in formation.

Separation and re-aggregation in UV formation

The separation stage and re-aggregation of the whole formation process begin with the first UV gathering of each year, dedication day. I attended this day-long event. The day had a series of different components that introduce the new learners to the rest of the order and commit themselves to it. It is a chance for the whole UV community to get together. Therefore it is also a way for all members of UV to touch base at the beginning of the year.

This gathering is held at Ngatiawa, therefore there is an element of the literal separation and entry into the hub of UV. The format of the day I attended went from initial gathering and Powhiri, then morning tea, after that a gathering to present the new members and share news in the main hall of Ngatiawa, then a time of reflection and midday prayer in the Ngatiawa chapel, then lunch, and lastly the day was finished with the dedication ceremony in the local Anglican church. I observed a great deal of casualness
and fluidity in many UV gatherings, and those two characteristics were visible in the dedication day I attended.

A *powhiri* is a Maori welcoming and greeting ceremony usually conducted at a *marae* (ancestral home and tribal hub). The basic format of a *powhiri* is that the visiting group is beckoned on to the *marae*. Then speeches are exchanged between visitors and *tangata whenua* (the people of that place). The ceremony ends with both parties eating together.\(^{200}\) The UV *powhiri* overall was no different, except for the fact that Ngatiawa is not a *marae*, although the *powhiri* reflected that Ngatiawa, being a central hub for UV, does act as a sort *marae*.

The initial gathering before the *powhiri* at Ngatiawa was good example of this casualness and fluidity. As people slowly showed up in the morning, they greeted each other and mingled outside the main building at Ngatiawa. During this time everybody asked each other what was going on as no one seemed to know. There was no obvious leader of the group; however nobody (other than those who were new to UV) seemed to mind. There seemed to be an implicit understanding that something would happen soon and someone would let everyone know what to do. Therefore, not only did this show the casualness of UV, but also the overall sense that they are a community characterised by the liminal quality of *communitas* and *anti-structure*. Eventually someone did begin to direct the group in the protocol of the *powhiri*.

The *powhiri* was significant for formation as it started the process of introducing the learners into UV. During the speeches it was reinforced by the speaker from Ngatiawa that Ngatiawa acts as a centre hub or home for UV and that even though they were being invited on as visitors Ngatiawa was their place. The speaker for the visitors talked of the

waka journey that UV members enter into. The speaker talked of the “vulnerability and faithfulness” needed for such a journey, and also the “carnage” that such a journey can create. By “carnage” the speaker was talking about the expectation that to journey in the UV waka is not always easy. The powhiri ended with a morning tea. This powhiri served as a welcoming ritual with new members symbolically invited into UV by being invited to accept the UV central hub as their place. They were told about the overarching waka journey that they were beginning by accepting the invitation on to Ngatiawa and into UV. This time also served as a reminder of the foundational stories of UV for the rest of the order. This was just one such moment right through the life of UV where these core stories and symbols of UV are constantly remembered.

After the morning tea people gathered in Ngatiawa’s main hall. This time was particularly significant for new learners as each one had to introduce himself or herself to the whole UV community. Everybody arranged themselves into their teams around the edges of the hall in a circle so everybody could see one another. The learners sat with their future teams. During this time notices about the coming year were given and news about the community was announced. If there were any changes within teams this was also announced. The new learners then introduced themselves. After their introduction they were then welcomed into their team by a representative from the team, usually a team leader. This welcome included gift giving related to the team or the learner’s formation. There seemed to be some competition between teams with the gift giving. It was also significant for new companions as this was also announced along with other happenings within the teams. This time was again characterised by casualness and fluidity, and also humour. It was also during this time that I was introduced as “their anthropologist”.

This time of welcoming seemed to add to the sense of communitas by creating a
real atmosphere belonging for the new learners. In this atmosphere learners were accepted and encouraged to be appropriately vulnerable. Although they were coming into the community as learners they were accepted as one of the team, not someone who was just paying a visit.

Anti-structure was also created as again the time together seemed to have no set leader, but almost spontaneously happened, although with some prompting from the more organised within the order. This highlights the way people are open to one another, each being able to exercise their gifts with the support of the others.

The middle of the day was taken up with a time of reflection, midday prayer and lunch, but it was the last event of the day, the dedication ceremony, held in the afternoon, that stood out as being especially significant. The dedication ceremony that completed the day was particularly important to the separation stage and re-aggregation stage of the UV initiation rituals. It was important because it was the moment that new learner and new companions signed the covenant, the document that links their life with the life of the order.

The dedication ceremony was again low key and casual. There were leaders directing the service this time, but the roles were were spread across many in the order. The dedication service started off with prayers remembering those who were leaving UV or going on sabbatical. Then the Three Strands, described in the last chapter, were introduced with Potatau Te Wherowhero’s proverb:

Kotahi te kohao o te ngiro e kuhuna ai te miro ma, te miro pango, te miro whero. He aha tenei whakatauki, e turo nga miro

There is but one eye of a needle, through which white, black and red strands are threaded.

This was followed by prayers and biblical readings relating to each strand. After this all those who were being covenanted said these words together:

Lord Jesus
Weave us together we pray
Weave us together in love
Jesus you are our source
We commit to deepening our relationship with you, our Lord
Help us to live this year
with you at the centre
You call us together as your body
We commit to journeying deeper with each other with increasing wholeness and integrity.
Help us to share this year fully with those we live among.
Yours is a revolution of love
We commit to sharing God’s loving justice among the poor and marginalised
in our neighbourhoods
Help us to respond to your call
serving with love, compassion and justice
Lord Jesus
Weave us together we pray
Weave us together in love

After the covenant was recited each team came up in turn and each member of the team, learners, companions and new companions, sign their names to the covenant in the UV covenant book. This forms the pinnacle of the dedication ceremony. However it was done in the casual and low-key way; while it was happening people talked, and children ran around shouting and playing. After this there was a Eucharist and an afternoon tea. This ended the dedication day. The dedication ceremony and in particular the signing of the covenant book is an important moment for those going through the separation and re-aggregation process, learners entering into covenant and people becoming companions. However the actual moment of signing the covenant, and so becoming a learner or companion, was not presented with any great significance. Although this reflects the UV belief that formation happens mostly in a UV team and put less emphasis on gathered formation events. That being said there were a number of moments that offered the

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202 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
opportunity for formation through storytelling. The emphasis and repetition of the Three Strands in Potatau Te Wherowhero’s proverb and words of commitment offered opportunity for every UV member present to be reminded of their identity as followers of Jesus and members of UV.

Overall this dedication day provides an excellent series of rituals to introduce new members of UV to the community and begin their journey of formation. It also provides resources for other UV members to continue their journey of discipleship formation. The day reinforced for new learners the separation from old identities. This separation was augmented by the literal geographical separation from previous contexts and identity, and brought into the hub or heart of UV life, Ngatiawa, therefore highlighting Ngatiawa as the place all UV members are free to come to and find a home. Core foundational myths/narratives were remembered and repeated through the course of the day. For example, waka journey and The Three Strands were remembered and repeated during the powhiri and dedication ceremony. This provided the story-telling and reflection needed for formation. Communitas and anti-structure were experienced through many aspects of the day. The welcome helped to create the togetherness and mutuality that accompanies communitas. And the lack of a clear leader through the day and the way in which new people were welcomed into their teams helped to develop the sense of anti-structure. The casual nature of these significant moments was both a strength in helping to develop communitas, but also a weakness. Significant moments within the separation process could be glanced over without realising their importance.

Liminality in UV formation

The liminal period of the three year initiation ritual is mainly experienced over a few years as a learner in a team. For this ethnographic observation of the liminal period I joined the life of two UV teams, the Newtown Park team and the Ngatiawa team, each for
a week. Although there is some rhetoric within UV about discipleship formation through “osmosis”, participant observation revealed that the strength of UV formation comes from the integration of key components of formation into everyday life.

The first team I joined was the Newtown Park team. The Newtown team is relatively young. Seven of the nine in the team are under the age of 30. Four are also relatively new to UV so are in formation. The others have been part of UV for longer, but not since the beginning. Out of the nine, five are female and four male. The team is co-led by two of the more experienced female members. There are also two couples within the team. One couple is married and has a young family, and the other couple is soon to be married. They are one of two UV teams in the suburb of Newtown. The team members are all self-supporting, and therefore studying, or working full-time or part-time. In the case of the family, one of the parents stays home to look after the children. They have a diverse range of occupations such as student and youth workers to kitchen hand and research analyst.

Newtown is a suburb close to the heart of Wellington city. The suburb has a diverse demographic, being made up of expensive town houses, and means tested city council housing and apartments. There are also a number of different ethnicities. People in UV describe Newtown as being a place with a lot of “mental health consumers,” which could be because it is close to the hospital and the city council housing.

Although close to the city centre, Newtown is still a busy hub. The main street, Riddiford Street, has many shops, cafes, bars and takeaway restaurants, and a number of community centres that provide social services to the community; these include the City Mission and Salvation Army. Interestingly, Newtown also has a very high number of intentional Christian communities. There are at least five, two of which are UV teams. The other intentional communities are from non denominational backgrounds.

204 I am using the present tense to describe the teams and neighbourhoods to reflect what I saw at the time of my visit.
The two residences that make up the living arrangements for the Newtown Park team are situated opposite and within the council apartments. These two residences, though separated by a road, seem to be seen as one residence by the team, the apartment being called “upstairs” and the house across the road is called “downstairs.” This is not surprising because the apartment only seems to be used for sleeping, and most of life together happens in the “downstairs” house.

On a daily basis Newtown’s life together is structured around prayer and meals. Every weekday morning at 7:00am there is prayer together in the living room taken from the *A New Zealand Prayer Book* and using the Anglican lectionary. Morning prayer takes around 15-20 minutes and is open to anyone from the neighbourhood to join. These times of prayer have no clear leader, but each part of the liturgy is led by anyone who feels like contributing. This means that during prayer almost everybody present will have had a chance to lead a prayer or do a Bible reading. After prayer everyone has breakfast together around the kitchen table before heading off to respective jobs and studies. After work at the end of the day, one of the members will have the task of preparing dinner and all eat together around the kitchen table.

The weekly life of the Newtown team is organised around three events, *team night*, *tea party* and *sacred space*. Team night happens every Monday. It is a time for just the team to be together to build up the communal bonds. These nights start with the team organising their week together, deciding who will prepare meals and making plans to visit people in the neighbourhood. Then the team prays together, and then they do some kind of team building exercise. These activities could be anything from sharing stories to going to a local café together. I was not given access to team night because of the sensitivity of what would be shared. Tea party is a neighbourhood gathering organised by the team and

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held in the “downstairs” kitchen/living area. It is literally a tea party, but with a few rules: no one is allowed to serve themselves and there is often a topic of conversion or question that everyone is encouraged to engage with. Lastly there is sacred space on Sunday night. This is a time of prayer and silent reflection lasting around an hour. This again is open to anyone from the neighbourhood.

The Newtown team engages with the demographic of those who live in the urban context of Newtown. These daily and weekly rhythms help the team to engage with this context. The team is very interested in what happens around the suburb and will join in with any neighbourhood events, and keep an eye on anyone they know who might be struggling in some way.

I also collected ethnographic data from Ngatiawa. Ngatiawa is a very different team from the Newtown Park team; however the shared DNA of the UV charism is seen in both. Currently the Ngatiawa team has seven members, three couples and one single person. Like all other UV members they are all self-supporting. Again they have a wide range of jobs from student to early childhood teacher. Most members of the team are companions, and only one member is in formation. The team is led by one of the couples. The team lives at Ngatiawa River Monastery. Ngatiawa River Monastery is set in a rural context an hour north of Wellington inland from Waikanae on the Kapiti Coast, in the Reikorangi Valley.

As described above, Ngatiawa River Monastery is seen as a hub for UV as a whole and it is also a place where many different people come to visit and stay. The team hosts many different groups and individuals who come to stay at Ngatiawa for retreats and events. Often visitors may be people at risk who have been referred to them from other UV teams; however they make it clear that they are not a social service provider, a rehab centre or refuge. Sometimes people who are not members of UV live for extended periods
at Ngatiawa River Monastery. Therefore the team does not have an outward focus like other UV teams, but is focussed on the people who visit, and the retreats and events that occur at the monastery.

The monastery consists of a number of buildings, gardens and paddocks. The main centres of activity are the kitchen and chapel. This is because the life of Ngatiawa, like the Newtown Park team, revolves around a very intentional rhythm of prayer and meals together.

The prayer life at the monastery is very intentional. Ngatiawa has prayer three times a day from Monday to Saturday and once on Sunday. Prayer is held in the Tarore Chapel, named after the Maori martyr Tarore. Ngatiawa has its own set of liturgies adapted from A New Zealand Prayer Book and a songbook that gathers together numerous songs, some written by members of UV and others from places like Taizé. They also use the Anglican Lectionary for their readings. These times of worship are very simple and include a lot of silence. The songs are all sung unaccompanied and are often repetitive. The music is not chosen beforehand, but if anyone wishes to sing a particular song they just start singing at the appropriate times and everyone else joins in. There is no designated leader of worship, and like the Newtown team, people lead different parts of the liturgy as they like. However, there are team members designated each day to make sure worship happens. Their duties include calling people to worship by ringing a bell and setting out the appropriate prayer booklets. This person will often lead worship.

At Ngatiawa there are three shared meals a day, breakfast, lunch and dinner. These meals all happen in the joint kitchen/dining room. Everybody staying at the monastery is encouraged to help prepare meals, but like worship a team member is responsible for making sure these meals happen. Everybody eats together around a large table.
Every Monday evening there is team night. This is a time for everyone living and staying at the monastery to get together and touch base. This is split into two halves. The first half is for everyone and happens in the kitchen. This time includes prayer, reading a section of the Ngatiawa Kaupapa. Then the team members organise the duty roster for the coming week. During this time team members also put down which day they will be doing a “sabbath”. A “sabbath” is a day that a team member gives to God for rest and renewal. During this day the member need not join in with the prayer and meals of the day, but are free to do what they like. In the second half of team night the team members and people living at Ngatiawa split off and go elsewhere to do what’s on top, an activity in which people share what is going on for them in life at the moment. The team thought it was best to only have people who are journeying together long term to be part of this second half, rather than including people who might only be staying for a couple of days. Therefore I was not granted access to this part of the evening.

Life in these UV teams provides many opportunities for formation. Bonhoeffer’s prescriptions in Life Together are seen in these UV teams’ life together, such as prayer and serving one another. There are also practices that contribute toward refounding and Arbuckle’s other prescriptions for formation. Arbuckle’s three practical considerations for discipleship formation, storytelling, skilled guides and times of reflection, are all naturally a part of life within these UV teams. There are a number of particular rituals where these are most prominently seen: prayer, the table and team night. However, all these aspects are particularly useful because of the missional focus each team has.

Each team has a very definite outward-facing focus; its members are first and foremost focussed on serving others. This shows their deep commitment and faithfulness to the third strand of their charism. The Newtown Park team ministers to those who live in their neighbourhood and the Ngatiawa team ministers to those who come to visit the
monastery. Therefore each team does not do community for community’s sake, or even formation for formation’s sake, but it is so that it can better serve others in the name of Christ. These missional and relational encounters provide the context for coming up against chaos-inducing situations and for providing real places to create narratives that truly connect their foundational myths, their charism and scripture, with their present situations. Therefore, UV shows that formation in mission is an excellent place for refounding aspects of formation to take place. Others could learn from this that formation happens in the context of mission and relationship. In addition, there are other things that contribute to formation.

Living in community gives these UV teams an excellent context for formation. By living in community the teams were able to serve one another and be Christ to one another as Bonhoeffer prescribes. This was most easily seen in the preparation of meals, where all team members take turns to cook for one another. But it was also seen just in the daily life of living in a shared house, where rubbish needed to be taken out, kitchens cleaned and wishes washed. Therefore, these teams showed that they fulfilled the second strand of their charism.

The daily and weekly rhythm of prayer in each team is perhaps the most obvious formational ritual. This is one way that the UV teams fulfil the first strand of their charism. One of the Newtown Park team members commented that when it came to morning prayer it was not so much the words of the liturgy that were helpful, but just that it provides a space at the beginning of each day to be with God. This accords with Bonhoeffer’s ideas. The beginning of each day is spent as Bonhoeffer advises, by being with God and listening to him and his word. The UV teams also seem to understand Bonhoeffer’s attitude toward silence. By providing lots of silence during prayer they create opportunities for reflection and for God to speak into their lives. The intentional inclusion of scripture in prayer is also
very significant. Using a lectionary allows the teams to hear large portions of Old and New Testaments, as well as the Psalms. This provides the opportunity for each member of the team, and the team as a whole, to be constantly informed by and reminded of the foundational myths of the Christian faith and to be ministered to by Christ through the Word. The practice of not having a designated leader for times of prayer is also very helpful for creating the sense of anti-structure and communitas needed in the liminal stage of formation. There is an equality and openness that is created amongst the team through this simple ritual.

Another significant place where formation takes place in UV teams is around the meal table. The meal table is a space where discipleship formation happens implicitly. Therefore, the ritual of shared meals is one of the places where the so-called “osmosis” takes place. However it is not simply having a meal that is formational, it is the kinds of conversations and behaviours that happen. The table and meal serve as a platform for discipleship formation. The table provides a place for interactions between learners and team leaders, who act as guides and create space for reflection. The table is a place for people to talk about what was their lives in their lives and connect it with UV’s foundational story and scriptural stories. It therefore provides ongoing formation for the whole team, not just learners. Therefore, the table is an implicit symbol of formation within the life of the UV teams I visited. To be sitting at the table is to be formed and members are formed as they sit at the table. The symbol of the table in this context directs members to talk, listen, share and reflect with one another, and elicits the emotion of togetherness.

The significance of the table was seen in both teams, but more so in the Newtown Park team. In the Newtown Park team the team had breakfast together straight after morning prayer together. Members would exchange what was happening for them that day, what they were looking forward to or how they were feeling about a particular aspect
or part of their day. Because the day’s Bible readings were just heard often there was a conversation reflecting on these stories. Then at the end of the day the team would come together around the table for a dinner prepared by one of them. The things talked about at the beginning of the day were brought up again and reflected upon, often in light of UV’s charism or the team’s *House Culture* or some Biblical passage or principle. Therefore, if any of the chaos that Arbuckle talked about was present in their lives, the table provided a space for the team to discuss and confront it together. The table at Newtown Park would not be so effective if it was not for the role the team leaders played in being guides to the conversations. Being seasoned members of UV and companions for some time meant that they had lived out and imbibed the UV charism, and therefore could weave the foundational myths and narratives of UV into the conversation. Also the simple act of a different member preparing the meal each day meant that the team were actively serving one another.

A good example of this reflecting and storytelling and refounding was when one member had had to deal with some police officers in the neighbourhood. The member said that previous experiences with police before joining UV had left him with some antagonism toward them. This created for the member the kind of chaos that Arbuckle talks of; his original identity was not able to confront the change that had occurred in his life. One of the leaders pointed out that for the team to operate successfully in the neighbourhood, and therefore fulfil the third strand of their covenant and charism, the team needed to have a good relationship with all people in the neighbourhood, including the police. This provided a moment of chaos and conversion, and narrative-making for the member. The member was open about the chaos he experienced through his interactions with the police. He was then invited by the leader/guide to reflect on that experience in light of UV’s foundational myth in the third strand, and invited to create a new narrative, find a new way forward,
which was faithful to this. This may not have happened if it was not for the space that the table and meal provided for reflection and the direction of the UV leader who acted as a skilled guide to the learner.

This was a very obvious example, but every meal offered this kind of opportunity in more implicit ways. The Newtown Park team's House Culture stipulates that the house would be a positive place for people, free of negative influences such as violence. This attitude filters through into the ways people speak at the meal table. The leaders always seem to steer the conversation to be positive and help build people up, whether present or not. This became apparent to me because it contrasted with my own speech. In contrast to their conversation I am always quick to critique things or tease others. Even though the leaders or others did not confront me with on this their own actions and speech did. They never joined in this kind of talk and respectfully changed the conversation or added something positive. This kind of culture of positive talk was in its own way a sort of storytelling that led me to reflect upon my own conduct. This positive culture extended beyond conversation, but also to the kind of music that was played and the kind of movies were watched. Being immersed in this positive culture provided excellent formation because the team members meet each other through the forgiveness of Christ rather than personal ideas of what people and community should be. This aligns with Bonhoeffer's thinking.

Lastly team night was another significant formational ritual built into the everyday life of these UV teams. In both teams I was not able to attend the more sensitive and personal times of team night. In both team nights the ritual that I was not allowed to observe was “What’s On Top?”, when each member in turn shares what is on the top of his or her mind at the time. I was told that this involves each person talking in turn while the others listen without comment and then the group prays for that person. Their need for
privacy for What’s on Top shows the depth at which people in the teams share and journey with one another as disciples, again further showing the depth of communitas developed within the teams. This meeting perhaps also shows Bonhoeffer's hope that those in formation should mediate Christ to one another and confess to one another.

I was able to attend some of the other rituals surrounding team night. One significant thing for the Newtown Park team was the use of the Ngatiawa liturgy on team nights. At other prayer times the team uses A New Zealand Prayer Book, but on team nights the time of prayer is very similar (obviously other than location) to Ngatiawa’s prayer. Therefore, the team engages in the UV charism examen found in Ngatiawa liturgies, as well as hearing the scriptures for that evening. Members are reminded of the UV charism every time they do prayer from a Ngatiawa liturgy. Three stanzas make up the examen: “Jesus you are our source”, “You call us together as your body”, “Yours is a revolution of love”. Each other represents a strand, therefore offering a moment for storytelling and reflection. A significant moment in the Ngatiawa team night was the reading of the Ngatiawa Kaupapa. These two things, the use of the Ngatiawa liturgy in the Newtown Park team and reading of the Kaupapa in the Ngatiawa team, are significant because they serve to remind the teams of their story, of their charism. In others words, these become times of remembering the foundational myths and narratives of UV. Therefore as they went into times of deep sharing and reflection with one another they were doing it in light of these stories.

Outside the team life there are other very intentional times of formation that shape the time learners spend in the liminal stage. The events throughout the year prescribed in the UV documentation are adhered to. The goals for camps, huis (Maori term for conference or gathering) and alongsiders laid out in UV’s documents seem to me to be met fairly well in the actual events. In this regard UV’s espoused and operant theology
I did not attend any of the alongsider sessions. Alongsider sessions are one-to-one conversations between a learner and a companion that happen once a month. These are times of mentoring and reflection. Many of the learners I talked to found these sessions to be very important and a good time for debriefing some of the things they experience as part of UV life. The formation camps and the *hui* are also very important times too. The *hui* is national gathering for all UV members, whereas the formation camps are mainly for learners. I got a chance to attend the first of the formation camps.

The formation camp I attended gave some good examples of effective formational rituals. This camp was held on Tokaanu *marae*, on the southern shores of Lake Taupo. The camp was not attended by all members of UV; however it was open to everyone. The majority of those who attended were learners, and the formation-stage guides, speakers, and a few companions who wanted to come along.

The camp started with all the UV attendees gathering in a carpark ready to be welcomed on to the *marae*. This was very much like the dedication day initial gathering; no one seemed to know what was going on, yet it all went off without a hitch. UV were welcomed with a *powhiri*. After the *powhiri* and evening meal all those present went to the *wharenui* (main meeting house on the *marae*) and recite their *pepeha* (personal introduction). People mainly sat around the edges of the room, but also some through the middle. This correlated to where all the mattresses were lined up, but it gave the slight impression that we were scattered around the room and gave a somewhat disordered feel to the gathering. All gatherings in the *wharenui* were like this. The next day the morning started with prayer, breakfast, then Jenny Duckworth told the story of UV from founding to present day, and afterwards people split into their formation-stage groups for discussion. I joined the stage-two group (below I will describe these group activities). Then the groups broke up for morning tea. In the second half of the morning there was another speaker,
Alison Roberts, a founding member of UV. She talked about what kind of community UV wishes to be. This talk was very conversational, and often the listeners were asked to go into discussion groups and report back to the whole group what had been discussed. Again afterward the formation-stage groups split off for discussion. Then everyone went for lunch together. The afternoon was set aside for free time. People went for walks, visited hot pools and went to visit a local missional practitioner, Sam Chapman. After the evening meal there was another session in the wharenui from Alison. This time Alison talked about developing intimacy with God. After this talk, rather than discussion, there was a chance to meditate on intimacy with God. This included a number of rituals, long periods of silence, Bible readings, prayer together, prayer in smaller groups of those who happened to be sitting next to each other, and singing all together. The next morning started with morning prayer again and then breakfast all together. Then everyone split into their formation-stage groups for the first half of the morning. I chose to join the first stage learners. They were led by the formation-stage group leader. This leader told her own story of formation and then led the group in a grieving ritual focussed on what people had left behind to become part of UV. After this everyone came back together for a Eucharist. Afterward everyone helped clean the marae and packed up bags and cars. Then, according to marae protocol, there was a time of sharing and saying goodbye. One last photo and debrief happened in front of the wharenui and everyone went home.

The formation camp as a whole was a formational experience for the learners. Even the afternoon of free time spoke of being formed into people who look to have balance and recreation in the life of mission and ministry. However there were several times and rituals that were particularly significant.

Again, as in the life of the Newtown Park team and the Ngatiawa team, the table and prayer became places of formation. During meal times learners would gather around
the companions who were there to listen and talk about what it meant to be UV. UV’s future seemed to be discussed frequently in these conversations. As in the Newtown Park team, the table became a nexus where story-telling, guiding and reflection all took place. Also a set of liturgies had been written especially for the camp. These liturgies revolved around the “Nazarene manifesto” found in Luke 4:18-19. Luke 4:18-19 provided something of a foundational myth especially for UV because it speaks of Jesus’ own mission.

The *wharenui* sessions were a very helpful ritual for discipleship formation. They were effective because the speakers were intentional about presenting the learners with the foundational myths of UV and then giving them space for reflection to create their own narratives. There were two stages to these sessions: the presentation of the foundational story and then room for group reflection. This two stage structure provided two of the three components of the practical considerations from Arbuckle: story-telling and reflection. The sessions each touched on different aspects of who UV are. Jenny told the founding myth, the birth and journey of UV as it found its identity as a new monastic missional order in the Anglican Church. Alison talked about the kind of community UV wishes to be. And then in the last session Alison talked about how members of UV want to minister out of a deep relationship with Jesus.

Everybody was together for these sessions, then people split into their formation-stage group for the reflection time. Each group dealt with things differently depending on the leader and stage, therefore I spent each reflection time with a different group. Within these reflection times there were a number of different rituals used to aid reflection.

After Jenny’s talk I joined formation-stage group two. The group leader started the time of reflection and discussion with an effective practice called “Popcorn”. This was a simple exercise where people were encouraged to speak a short word of phrase that stood out for them after the talk. From this, the group conversation moved to talking about the
tensions touched on in the founding story of UV. They identified that the tensions arose from some people wanting to be part of UV but not sharing the same charism as UV. The group talked about how it is okay that UV is not for everyone, therefore it is okay for people to leave if need be. This was a good conversation for the formation-stage two as they are to be exploring what it will look like for them to be a companion. I felt this time of reflection could have gone on for longer; however the group had to stop as it was morning tea.

After Alison's talk on what kind of community was UV, I joined the formation-stage three group for their time of reflection. During her talk Alison had already invited people to discuss and reflect with those around them, therefore some reflection had already taken place. Overall, Alison's talk was what I would describe as loose, a little vague and unfocussed. It seemed that she was still in the process of working out what kind of community UV was; was it to be a community in “solidarity” with those on the margins or were they being called to be a “catalyst community”, that is a community called to transform those on the margins? Therefore, Alison was exploring and questioning UV's identity and how it should relate to others. This exploring and questioning made it quite hard for the formation group to reflect on what she said. The talked seemed as though it was more appropriate for the companions' hui or Lego to be exploring, whereas those in formation needed some more solid stories and/or ideas to reflect upon. However, Alison's talk highlights the strength that UV is constantly refounding, reflecting upon itself and its mission as it is confronted by new challenges. Therefore, in a way Alison was a good role model and guide to those in formation as to the kind of prayerful questions, reflection and conversations companions must have to be effective members of UV. The talk was only ineffective from the perspective of laying out foundational myths for reflecting upon to create narratives. This showed in the reflection and discussion of the formation-stage group. The group, including the formation group guides, had a hard time finding things
from the talk to reflect upon. Therefore the creation of new narrative was perhaps not as
successful as it could have been if more cohesive stories were presented.

The last session and reflection time on the Saturday night was very different from
the others. It did not involve splitting into formation-stage groups; however in its own way it
provided a lot of space for reflection. The talk was on the topic of intimacy with Jesus. This
meant that the reflection time was made up of rituals that encouraged intimacy with Jesus.
These rituals included periods of silence, singing, then confession of sins and prayer for
forgiveness in small groups. Alison directed this time, breaking up the periods of silence
and song with moments of prayer, biblical readings and reflections from various authors,
all on the same theme. For the music someone just played guitar. People sat where they
were in the wharenui, and people gathered with those around them to form groups for
confession and prayer. These groups provided a great space for people to talk. It seemed
to be a powerful time for those involved. It is interesting to note that intimacy was implicitly
linked with confession of sin and receiving forgiveness. In these groups the members were
able to be Christ to one another as they prayed for forgiveness for one another. Therefore
this time fulfilled many of both Bonhoeffer's and Arbuckle's prescriptions for good
formation. From the perspective of Bonhoeffer, the silence, biblical readings and times of
confession and forgiveness are essential for life together. Bonhoeffer believes that these
rituals should be enacted every day; however whilst the UV teams practise silence and
listening to scripture, this was the only intentional time I saw personal confession and
forgiveness being practised. This time also illustrated Arbuckle's belief that good formation
requires times for conversion, that is, times when people are given a chance to find a
deeper reliance on God. This talk and reflection time offered just such a time. In the talk
the listeners were confronted with the need for God and then in the reflection time given
opportunity to explore privately and in groups what that might mean for them. These rituals
also connected with and fulfilled the first strand of the UV charism. Connection with Jesus being the first strand, this time offered the opportunity for the learners to live out this charism through these rituals.

One last significant ritual I witnessed on Formation Camp was Sunday morning with formation-group one. At this time the members of formation-group one had only been part of UV for a few months. The majority of this group was under the age of 30, many being in their late teens and early twenties. This time was for the formation-group members to reflect upon what they had left behind to become members of UV. Before coming to camp all learners were invited to bring an object symbolic of what they were leaving behind to be used in a grieving ritual. This meant that they had done some reflection before attending the camp. The group gathered and sat in a circle on the grass in front of the wharenui. The time together started with an “ice-breaker”, a game where people are asked a question about themselves to introduce them to the rest of the group. The questions were “what is your favourite flavour of ice-cream?” and “how did you join UV?”

After this there was a time of storytelling. The formation-group guide told her own story of formation in UV. She described her own formation as a “grace filled” time, but also said that the time was still difficult. She told the group that when she did formation it was not so structured and they did not have marae trips, but that formation happened by osmosis around the dinner table and just through living everyday life with people, and that these were still the most important aspects of formation. Alongersiders were also important in formation. She described alongersiders as mentors who helped her debrief and guide. The different people with whom she lived also helped her to get along with others. The group leader certainly seemed to have imbibed the *Three Strands*, and implicit and explicit references to them were right through her story. Her story of formation also gave an example of how her listeners might engage with the formation process. It also gave the
learners realistic expectations of what formation might be like for them. Therefore this was a good way for the new learners to begin creating narratives for how they would be learners in UV.

This then led into a time for learners to acknowledge and speak to the group about what they had lost to be part of UV. They were invited to talk in twos and answer two questions: “what are we leaving behind to join UV?” and “what do we fear about joining UV?” After a short time people were invited to share their answers with the rest of the group. The group leader affirmed these stories, and showed that she had listened and understood all the stories that were heard.

After this there was then a chance to symbolically hand over these things to God. The group leader set up what she called an “altar” in the middle of the circle. This was just a piece of cloth on the ground with a candle in the middle. People were invited to take their symbolic object, or if they did not have one, to write something on a piece of paper, and then place the paper or symbol on the altar. This was an act of laying before God their loss and grief. If people wanted to, they could give a brief description of what the symbol represented or what was written. Then there was a time of silence. The group leader then closed in prayer. This prayer included acknowledging the experience of loss, that God knows our loss and that “Jesus meets us where we are.” She gave thanks for the sense of joy felt when people get to know one another and are able to be vulnerable with others. She ended the prayer by asking God for hope in the coming year. After this people took their symbols and paper away. This was a good example of a grieving ritual. This was reinforced by a comment from one of the learners: “That was empowering, to acknowledge the loss and fear!” I think from Arbuckle’s perspective this is a good grieving ritual. It acknowledged that change-induced chaos and loss were being experienced by becoming members of UV. This was done in a number of ways. Firstly, the group guide's formation
story was good role modelling, created a safe yet vulnerable atmosphere and therefore gave the learners permission to express their own struggles. Secondly, the discussion in twos and then sharing with the group gave the learners a time for public recognition of this grief. This public voicing was further reinforced by allowing people to symbolically place their loss before God on the altar. Lastly, the prayer at the end expressed the healing that grieving can bring and the hope that is found is Jesus. All these elements contributed to the ability to convert and find a new hope and reliance in Jesus.

Overall, the formation camp offered a good space for the learners to reflect within the liminal stage of formation. Perhaps it could be seen as something of “waypoint” on the formation journey, or a marker to help people take stock and assess where they have come from and where they are going. It was interesting to note that the majority of the weekend was taken up with the storytelling and reflection times in the wharenui. These times served as a time of remembering and orienting, remembering the UV stories, and using them to orientate their lives.

One striking aspect of formation within UV is its emphasis on being on a bi-cultural journey. UV takes its bi-cultural journey very seriously. Despite UV being mainly Pakeha (non-Maori), the use of Te Reo Maori (the Maori language), the use of Maori protocol and visiting maraes for camps and other gatherings shows that they are committed to their charism of a bi-culturalism. This means UV do formation within the bi-cultural experience. The strength of this is that members of UV are put in a position where they have to connect the gospel to the story of colonialism and subjugation of Maori particular to being disciples in Aotearoa New Zealand. Therefore, when it comes to times of reflecting on foundational stories and creating narratives that connect with the gospel, disciples and world, UV members are put in a good place to form these narratives for a New Zealand context.
Conclusion

UV's operant theology shows the strength and intentionality of its discipleship formation and the faithfulness to its charism. The UV gatherings offer times and places for the foundational myths of UV and Christianity to be recounted, and space is provided for people to reflect on them. The team life together similarly, through shared prayer and meals, provides these times. The strength of this life together is that the rituals or practices of reflection, story-telling and having skilled guides is built into the everyday life of the teams. Overall one of the main things that can be learned from UV's discipleship formation is the place of remembering. The gatherings and teams have a culture of remembering. That is, they are constantly reminding themselves of their need for Jesus, and his foundational stories, they are constantly reminded of the needs of the world by being located in a missional context, constantly reminded of New Zealand's bi-cultural journey and constantly reminded of who they are as UV through their charism. The dedication day and formation camp were special times of remembering, retelling the guiding stories of UV; whereas in the life of the teams, remembering was part of everyday life. Prayer, team night and meals offered these opportunities. Prayer and team night were intentional times of remembering; however the meal times seated around the table were more fluid and implicit times of remembering, showing that it is a major component of the very culture of UV. Therefore, UV discipleship formation is a good model for the rest of the New Zealand Church because it has created a culture that fulfils Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer's suggestions for discipleship formation and offer a way of constantly being reminded of who Jesus is and what he intends for his disciples. This has led to some theological reflection on the place of remembering and how it links to formation in scripture.

The category of remembering is seen throughout scripture. Remembering God's
story is seen as an important aspect of being formed as a disciple in both the Old and New Testaments. Deuteronomy has an explicit emphasis on remembering. In the New Testament the Last Supper highlights the importance of remembering. These show that good discipleship at its foundation is about learning and then remembering God's story/stories.

In Deuteronomy remembering is seem as an important element of covenant faithfulness. In Deuteronomy Moses is concerned that Israel do not forget the identity defining stories of the Exodus (5:15, 7:18, 15:15, 16:3, 16:12, 24:9, 24:18, 24:22, 25:17) and wilderness (8:2, 9:7). Through remembering these stories they are invited to remember God's character (11:2), that they have made a covenant with God (8:18) and that He is the God of their ancestors (9:27). Elsewhere in the Pentateuch Moses commands that Israel must have festivals, special times of gathering, to tell each other these stories, accompanied by special rituals and so remind each other of their covenant and the law (Exodus 23:14-19, Lev 23). These passages have stipulations for weekly and annual gatherings. In Deuteronomy Moses also invites Israel to find ways to be reminded of God's story daily by asking Israel to talk about them constantly and write the law on their arms and door post (Deut 6:4-9). These stories become sources for understanding how to live everyday life and treat others. For example, Israel was invited to remember that they were once slaves, therefore they should treat slaves with generosity and dignity, and eventually release them (Deut 15:12-15). This shows that Moses intended members of Israel to be formed by remembering the foundational stories of their history as a source for reflection for how to act in the present.

The theme of remembering is taken up by Jesus. Both Luke and Paul record in the New Testament Jesus invitation to remember him every time bread and wine are eaten and drunk (Luke 22:14-20, 1 Cor 11:23-26). Bread and wine become the sign of Christ's
sacrifice and new covenant. Jesus words were spoken in the context of remembering the Exodus and in particular the Passover. Jesus becomes a new Passover lamb. However Jesus words could be interpreted as saying that anytime bread is eaten and wine is drunk it a time to remember his story. Remembering Jesus is to become part of everyday, perhaps almost every meal.

The contemporary church can learn a lot from Moses, Jesus and UV. For Moses and Jesus remembering God's story are central to discipleship formation. UV embody this remembering in their everyday life, along with annual gatherings. In light of Kevin Ward's research it seems the contemporary New Zealand Church does not have as many times of remembering as it used to. In the past Aotearoa New Zealand had a culture where there was a lot more opportunity to remember the stories of scripture, as the gospel, with the church being more involved in the everyday life of society. In the present New Zealand context new ways of daily remembering must be found for successful discipleship formation. Bonhoeffer points toward daily practices of prayer and scripture reading as a way of remembering. However, Jesus, Moses and UV go even further by inviting people into a culture of remembering. For Moses even clothing and buildings should be covered in the stories of God (Deut 6:9), and for Jesus and UV every meal should be an opportunity to remember, therefore making the whole of life and act of remembrance, and so an opportunity for discipleship formation.

Overall there seemed to be continuity between UV's espoused and operant theology, although a longer and more complete emersion in the life of UV, including research into the experience of UV members, would be needed to be able compare every aspect of each aspect of their theology. Their plan for the structure of formation was adhered to and their charism played an active role in the daily life of teams. The daily rhythms of prayer were proof of trying to put Jesus at the centre of their life. Their life
together, with meals and team night, show they were committed to journey deeper
together as a community and their focus on serving others was seen through their various
ministries. Within this life together there would always be room for improvement and
reorientation, but overall the time I experienced with the UV teams illustrated well the
connections between their espoused and operant theology.

The time I spent at formation camp also illustrated these connections, however this
time could have been more fruitful if there had been better storytelling and time for
reflection. Some of the storytelling on camp was not clear enough, and seemed to deal
with issues that were being discussed by companions. Those in formation need
foundational myths to refound upon, therefore presenting under developed narratives was
not appropriate for the learners. This lack of clear and foundational storytelling carried over
into the quality of reflection. A few of the reflection times I experienced left formation group
leaders struggling to offer something the learners could grapple with to create new
narratives for themselves. Moreover, more time was needed for the times of reflection. The
formation stage discussion groups were often too short for adequate reflection. However
that being said, the overall pattern of storytelling and reflection time with guides is a very
good format or ritual for good discipleship formation. Plus the grieving ceremony was
excellent, providing everything needed for good grieving. Therefore, the wider church
could learn a lot from UV's operant theology.
Chapter six

Conclusion: the context and means of formation

There are a number of things that the wider church in Aotearoa New Zealand can learn, adopt and adapt for faithful discipleship formation. This chapter will lay out the theology and practice of Arbuckle, Bonhoeffer and UV, and the insights extrapolated from them, that could be applied elsewhere and how these address the New Zealand context first described by Kevin Ward in chapter one. First I summarise of some of the main features of discipleship formation learned through this research, then how they might be applied elsewhere, and how they apply to the context.

Summary

In this thesis I argue that discipleship could and should be seen as disciples endeavouring to live out a narrative, based in the foundational stories of scripture, that closes the gaps and brings together the gospel, disciple, church and world. The gaps between gospel, disciple, church and world create chaos that serves as the starting point for discipleship formation. When this chaos is experienced disciples need to admit their need for God and admit helplessness. From this place of helplessness disciples can return to the foundational stories of God found in the Bible and try to create new ways of connecting these stories with their present reality, thus creating narratives. This will bring about a new and more faithful order in the life of the disciple. This pattern from chaos to new creation can be seen throughout scripture and in the life of UV. This process is called an initiation ritual for those who are new to discipleship or it is called refounding for those who are already on the journey of disciple. It has been shown that for this to be successful there needs to be good storytelling, times of reflection and skilled guides. It also needs to be done in community characterised by communitas and anti-structure, where disciples
can be Christ to one another and others. And there also needs to be daily rhythms of prayer and scripture reading. This process of formation is visually represented below in figure 6.1, *Revised Discipleship Journey*.

Kevin Ward’s five “ism” describe these gaps between gospel, disciple, church and world. He describes how because of social and cultural changes in the way people interact with institutions, church institutions are no longer able to engage with society in the same way they used to. This has created a gap because discipleship formation in the past was
more oriented toward institutional participation. Because people no longer participate in any institution in the same way new ways for disciples to engage the world with the gospel must be sought. The other “isms” show the other ways culture is working against discipleship formation by encouraging people to be more selfish, private and relativistic, being drawn to more consumptive and self-centred forms of religious expression. UV's *Three Strands* offers answers to some of these questions.

The refounding process is clearly seen in Urban Vision; UV have a culture of refounding through their charism, *The Three Strands* (given further definition by *The Seven Textures*). This narrative/charism explicitly invites disciples to close these gaps. The first strand invites disciples to connect with Christ and the foundational myths of faith. The second strand invites disciples to live that gospel out more faithfully as a team of believers. And the third strand invites disciples to close the gap between gospel, disciples and world by inviting disciples to connect with neighbours in loving service. Therefore, UV has discipleship formation that confronts chaos by mediating on *The Three Strands* to provide a new order or new solutions to the chaos. New UV members or learners are put through a very clear process of formation with the contours of an initiation ritual that teaches them this foundational story. UV is a community that lives this out through its everyday life, having developed daily community rhythms of prayer, reflection and scripture reading. The UV teams studied have daily, weekly and annual rhythms.

These rhythms mean that every day is an opportunity for formation of all UV members, learners and companions alike. These rhythms have created a culture of remembering; UV are constantly reminded of who they are in Christ and the narratives that they are to live out. A biblical theme seen especially in Deuteronomy and Jesus' teaching. UV's rhythms also correlate with Bonhoeffer's ideas. Bonhoeffer shows how specific daily practices help believers be Christ to one another by being spiritually fed by Christ through
hearing scripture, praying together, spending time in silence, and confession with one another. Therefore both UV’s espoused theology and operant theology, what they say and do, has much to offer the wider church in Aotearoa New Zealand as it puts into practice and develops the ideas of Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer.

**Application for the wider church**

From Arbuckle, Bonhoeffer and UV there are a number of things that the wider Church in Aotearoa New Zealand can learn about the faithful performance of discipleship formation for their own contexts: Discipleship formation happens in the context of community and mission, and that storytelling, guides and reflection provide the means for discipleship formation to take place. UV offers both a theology and practical examples for making these things work in practice. All these offer answers to the questions raised by the New Zealand context described by Ward.

**The context of discipleship formation**

This research shows that discipleship formation happens in the context of community and mission. UV, Arbuckle and Bonhoeffer show that in the context of a team or small community disciples become open to one another and are able to speak into one another's lives, support one another and learn from one another. Arbuckle uses the anthropological words communitas and anti-structure to describe this. Bonhoeffer describes this in the language of Christ as mediator and reconciler. And UV through their second strand, to deepen as a community. These teams help create some of the chaos that leads to new understandings of being a follower of Jesus and they also provide support in the midst of chaos. Bonhoeffer shows that in the context of a team or small community people are best able to be a Christ to one another; creating a reconciling
community where people find the forgiveness and love of Christ in one another. Therefore discipleship formation happens effectively in the context of community.

The UV teams studied are an example of this in action. On a daily basis UV are Christ to one another, serving one another, listening to one another, speaking into each others lives, rubbing up against one another, learning to love each other more deeply as they deal with conflict together and reconcile with one another. UV show how these teams create space for openness and egalitarian attitudes that invite people to learn from one another, as described by Arbuckle. UV show that much of this work is done through a daily rhythm of prayer and meals together, a weekly rhythm of meeting together to discuss life together and an annual rhythm of retreats and huis together. Through these daily, weekly and annual rhythms they create a community and culture of remembering. UV hope that these rhythms would form UV members, both learners and companions, in the UV charism.

This approach to community life confronts a number of things in New Zealand culture. It confronts individualism. By being in community disciples must learn to help others fulfil their goals and aspirations. Goals and aspirations become shared by the community; there becomes a focus on the great good on everybody in the group. This takes away the cultural pressure to be self-centred or individualistic. This approach to community life confronts privatism by breaking down potentially isolating barriers, creating community and making faith public. Being in community confronts pluralism and relativism by creating plausibility structures and cultures that revolves around Christ. It deals with anti-institutionalism by shifting the focus way from institutional forms of community and directing attention to the relational aspect of community.

Churches could take up a modified model of UV, inviting disciples into teams that commit to one another and share life together, encouraging them to deepen in life
together. In most cases it would most likely be impractical for people to live together as UV teams do, however there is nothing stopping disciples from organising weekly rhythms of prayer, meals and meetings, and annual retreats away together.

Successful discipleship formation also needs to be done in the context of mission. If formation is about closing gaps between gospel and world then disciples need to be in a context where they are engaged with the world in mission. Then they will be in the best position to close the gaps. Both UV teams studied had their own mission context. The Newtown Park team had the suburb of Newtown, and even though the Ngatiawa team had created a place especially for serving others. Therefore other churches can learn from UV by inviting their own teams of disciples to adopt a neighbourhood or create a space for loving service and mission to happen. This will also create the potential for disciples to create narratives that are truly connected to a context and speak into that context, thus further closing the gaps.

Being rooted in a particular missional context confronts some aspects of New Zealand culture and offers opportunities to answer some of the challenges Ward raises for the church. Being rooted in a missional context confronts individualism by inviting disciples to look beyond themselves, and serve and listen to others. Formation in a missional context also puts disciples in a position where they can figure out new ways of creating belonging with out the previous institutionalisation.

In summary discipleship formation happens in the context of community and mission. This puts disciples in the best position to close the four gaps and confront some of the challenges New Zealand culture raises. Disciples will grow if they find a community to journey with, and a place and people to mission to.
The means of formation

This research shows that storytelling, guides and reflection provide the means for discipleship formation to take place. For refounding to happen successfully these three elements are needed. Storytelling offers the opportunity for disciples to engage with foundational myths and narratives. Reflection offers the opportunity for disciples to make their own narratives and grieve loss created by chaos inducing change. Guides are needed to help disciples journey through refounding by providing opportunities for storytelling and reflection. These three are often intertwined. UV provides practical examples of these three that could be applied to other contexts.

Storytelling is needed for narrative creation. Central to this storytelling is scripture and the person of Jesus. By telling the foundational stories of scripture it is hoped that disciples would apply these stories to their own lives, letting their thoughts and actions be shaped by them by connecting them with their present context. UV provides good practical examples of storytelling that could be adopted by others. On formation camp the simple format of a talk and then reflection could be applied anywhere. Plus daily scripture reading as part of rhythm of prayer could also be adopted. UV’s charism is a story that could also be adopted elsewhere. The Three Strands provide an excellent way of telling the Christian story in a way that invites discipleship formation, especially in the present context of Aotearoa New Zealand. This is primarily because it redefines discipleship in relational terms. It helps highlight and close the gaps gospel, disciple, church and world experienced in disciples lives. Therefore, UV’s examen could also be adopted as a form of daily storytelling by others for the purposes of formation.

Times of reflection are needed for discipleship formation. Reflection is used here in a very broad sense and can include a few different practices. In particular reflection is need for new narrative creation and grieving. After hearing foundational stories disciples
need times of reflection that will draw them into connecting the story with their own lives and present context of community and mission, thus creating a new narrative. Times for reflection that invite acknowledgement of loss and provide space for constructive grieving are also needed. Through acknowledging the loss that the journey of discipleship will inevitably produce and grieving it, disciples can move on from those things that may prevent them from close the gaps in their lives. UV provides good examples of reflection rituals for both narrative creation and grieving. The simple two part ritual of talk then group reflection is a helpful way forward. The reflective aspects such as “popcorn” and simply asking questions by a guide are essential elements to encourage disciples to connect the story they heard with their lives. Also the grieving ritual performed during formation camp could be used, as it provided a way to to face loss, acknowledge and the grieve it. Lastly the way meal times were used by UV could be used in the same way by others. UV show that by directing conversation at meal times any time of gathering can be an opportunity for storytelling, reflection and guiding.

Skilled guides are needed to help people on the journey of discipleship formation. Especially guides who have experienced a similar journey to the people they are guiding. UV provides good structures for guides. The UV structure means there are a variety of guides. There are guides around daily life in the team leaders. There are guides for each formation stage group, offering people a chance to reflect as a group. And there are alongsiders who can offer an outside perspective from the team and formation stage group. Others could adopt these different levels of guide for effective formation.

By creating this context and enacting these practices it is hoped that disciples would be formed into and formed by being a community of remembering. The witness of scripture, particularly Moses and Jesus, along with the experience of UV, show how remembering is a powerful force in formation. Finding daily practices that constantly
remind the disciple(s) of the stories that are to guide their lives is a central factor in good formation. Moses and Jesus, and the experience of UV show how these practices are to be part of what might usually be mundane aspects of daily life, whether meals times or house decoration. Christian disciples need to be constantly reminded of who they are in Christ. Christians in Aoteatoa New Zealand who are seeking new ways of growing as disciples would do well to examine and emulate this approach.
Bibliography


