

The book cover features a background of warm, out-of-focus bokeh lights in shades of orange and red. A diagonal line splits the cover from the top-left to the bottom-right. Three horizontal bars of color (purple, green, and purple) are overlaid on the top-left side, containing the title text in white. The authors' names are printed in orange at the bottom right.

MISSIONAL

FORMATION

COACHING

Healthy Rhythms for
Thriving Leaders

**WINFIELD BEVINS
& MARK DUNWOODY**

Endorsements

“I am particularly pleased to commend this strategic little book. Bevins and Dunwoody address the key issues for missional practice: The relationship between our life in God and our service of God. The need of a shared rhythm or rule of life, the capacity for discernment - for reflection in a distracting culture, and the need for missional accompaniment, wise guides along the way. As we follow the Spirit in an unpredictable time we are heading into the wild. This gift from a previous wild time is a wise guide, whether we be practitioner or coach or preferably both.”

Graham Cray, *Former Bishop of Maidstone, and Archbishops' Missioner and Leader of the Fresh Expressions Team*

“Missional coaching is a vital and much-needed resource for church planters because church planting is one of the most demanding disciplines in the church today. Planters often find themselves in unique situations facing unusual challenges and they need all the help they can get. This important book is an essential manual for anyone wanting to support church planters and multiply their effectiveness, longevity and health. Read it, digest it, use it!”

Ric Thorpe, *Bishop of Islington*

“More than ever before, missional leaders need help to be able to navigate the changes and challenges of the chaotic world we live in. Rooted in Scripture and the history of the church, Bevins and Dunwoody have written a deeply spiritual and timely resource that will help leaders thrive by promoting healthy rhythms of spiritual and missional practices. Read it and put it into practice!”

Alan Hirsch, *Author and Activist, alanhirsch.org*

“Missional Formation Coaching is a wonderfully accessible and very timely resource for those interested in growing and helping others grow in ministry. Standing on a strong foundation of Scripture and theological reflection, Winfield and Mark draw on the rich spirituality of St. Ignatius and St. Aiden to help us rediscover a missional spirituality that is badly needed to address the complexities of ministry in our current climate. You will not be disappointed!”

Kimberly D. Reisman, *Executive Director, World Methodist Evangelism*

“My spiritual father once taught me that all human life is conceived in community, but develops in solitude! True disciples are formed by Christian community and engaged in mission to the world, but equally nurtured in daily moments (often apart and alone) abiding with their Lord. This book echoes that same integrative vision for the Christian life - of both worship and mission, advance and retreat, working and waiting. But it goes further, by providing a practical application process to learning it and to share this with others. Well worth reading, but best practised.”

Revd Manik Corea, *Global Executive, the New Anglican Missionary Society (NAMS) and Regional Team Leader for South-East Asia*

“Developing a missional spirituality is crucial for today’s planters so that they don’t have to choose between losing their soul or planting a church. Using time-tested ancient practices, Missional Formation Coaching integrates deep spiritual formation with joining God’s mission in a seamless way. Bevins’ and Dunwoody’s book is a valuable resource for anyone who coaches missional leaders today.”

Len Tang, *Director, Fuller Church Planting Initiative*

“In the noisiness of today, ‘Missional Formation Coaching’ provides a holistic, well-grounded approach to the transformation and renewing of our minds as in Romans 12:2. It integrates worship, prayer and our relationship with God into the appropriate context of coaching. Mark and Winfield do not just share ‘what to do’ but provides an opportunity to apply and reflect using an interactive, social participatory experience online. After all, coaching is not about just ‘what we know.’ It’s about ‘how we engage and apply’ these truths to our lives.”

So-Young Kang, *CEO & Founder, Gnowbe Digital Learning, Singapore*

“When I think of Missional Formation Coaching, I think of Winfield Bevins and Mark Dunwoody—two highly-experienced practitioners who bring together the ancient wisdom of the church and a track record of raising up leaders. Over the next decade, the church in the West needs to equip thousands of emotionally healthy leaders—practitioners who can minister out of a deep and transformed inner life forged from healthy rhythms that connect spiritual and missional practices. Thanks to this new book we have a road-map to get them there.”

Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam, *Director of the St Hild Centre for Church Planting Yorkshire, England*

“There are no well-worn paths for the mission of the church in these extraordinary times. This means that we need adaptive Spirit-led church leadership. In *Missional Formation Coaching* Winfield Bevins & Mark Dunwoody draw on principles from church history and personal experience of coaching and make them accessible for missional leaders today. It is deeply spiritual and helpfully practical. This is a gift and a timely resource for the church as God calls us forward in mission”

Revd Canon John McGinley, *New Wine Director of Church Planting Development*

“Coaching that begins and ends with prayer shows the seriousness of missional formation as Jesus prayed and spent time with God on a regular basis. This is a very practical handbook for missional leaders. May God use you both mightily to share your thoughts and wisdom to establish His Kingdom in this world.”

John Hira, *Principal, St Andrew's Theological College, Bangladesh*

“Missional Formation Coaching is a gift for God's church today. In this impressive tool from Bevins and Dunwoody, they fuse ancient and contemporary spiritual reflections and practices to fuel contemporary pilgrims on their journey in mission with the Triune God. This is undoubtedly a resource I will return to again and again, in prayerful conversation with others on the way.”

Rev Canon Tim Lomax, *Director of Mission, Diocese of St Albans, UK*

“The effective coaching of leaders is a mission critical lifeline thrown to leaders to help them navigate through the egg and flow of ministry. In *Missional Formation Coaching*, Winfield Bevins and Mark Dunwoody introduce us to a unique coaching model that weds spiritual practices with missional practices. Their vast ministry experience serves to provide a simple, scalable and sustainable approach, leading to the transformation of individuals and communities. *Missional Formation Coaching* equips leaders by connecting common principles and practices from the past to the present, in order to propel leaders for the fulfillment and completion of the Great Commission.”

Will Plitt, *Executive Director Christ Together*

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OUTLINE

Introduction: Discover a New Beach

1. Spiritual Breathing

2. Missional Formation Coaching

3. Next Steps

A Blessing for Missional Leaders

INTRODUCTION

Discover a New Beach

“One of the most important rhythms for a person in ministry is to establish a constant back-and-forth motion between engagement and retreat.”

RUTH HALEY BARTON

We live in a strange world where things like pandemics and protests seem to be the new norm. Since March 2020, the world has radically changed and will continue to change in the days ahead. Andy Crouch, Kurt Keilhacker, and Dave Blanchard describe the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic as an economic and cultural blizzard; winter; and the beginning of a “little ice age—a once-in-a-lifetime change that is likely to affect our lives and organizations for years.”¹ One thing is for certain; we live in a different world than we did a few months ago, and things may never return to the way they were.

There is no doubt that this is a time of great provoking and unpredictable change, both natural and human-made. Disruptive elements seem to be everywhere, gathering strength like air masses that spiral over oceans or in decisions that swirl through the halls of our institutions of power. In this time of writing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the daily news is filled with extreme changes, and many of us feel battered by forces we cannot control. These feelings are exacerbated when we see many leaders still using maps for a world that no longer exists.

We cannot hope to make sense of things by using our old maps. It won't help to dust them off or reprint them in bolder colors. The more we rely on them, the more confused we will become. They will cause us to focus on the wrong things and blind us to what's significant. Continuing to use maps that helped make sense of our previous world will only lead to greater confusion. In this historic moment, we live between an old worldview that no longer works for a Christendom formation model, and a new worldview that seems too bizarre to contemplate. We need a new GPS to navigate the realities of the world we are in.

Strangely, times of change and chaos have always intrigued and excited me (Mark). During my time living next to the ocean in beautiful Ireland, I marveled at the intense Atlantic Ocean storms that frequently battered the exposed coast. Storms can dramatically change how a beach looks because they often can cause erosion and other shoreline changes due to high winds, increased ocean water, and wave action along the coastline.

After a storm had passed, I would walk down to the waterfront, not looking for damage or eroded shoreline or fallen trees, but to find a new beach. Such are the times we are living in today. The world has changed and we need to reawaken a Christ-centered spirituality and discover “new beaches” where God has gone before us to create beauty and wonder.

We know the relationship between the church and mission has always been a complex one; ask three Christian leaders about the topic and you will get three different answers. While it is true that the church was founded in mission, the stronger the church grew, the more that mission became only one item on a very long agenda. Whatever your personal beliefs, hopes, and dreams are for the Church, we invite you to consider that we need new formational frameworks for the missional leader to navigate this chaotic time.

We also know life is hard and that you might have been disappointed by the Church’s response to, or feel lost in, the current state of global pandemic. Truth be told, many leaders find themselves at a loss in times of crisis, and are still firmly in a mode of “doing” by creating more programs and activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has likely resulted in many church leaders duplicating this busyness in an online format – while unwittingly neglecting their spiritual rhythm of life by adding to the ever-constant need to feel digitally connected.

Yet, Scripture and church history prove that even in times of crisis and pain, hope will emerge. The key to this emergence is for us to be aware of God’s presence in every part of our lives, as it is that awareness that guides us to a place of missional creativity. We passionately believe missional formation that is grounded in the hope of Christ is critical for church leaders to embrace.

What is Missional Formation Coaching?

The Bible tells us that there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9). *Missional Formation Coaching* is nothing new, but simply a biblical and historical model of coaching that follows the ancient way of Jesus Christ. We see examples of coaching relationships throughout the Bible, whether it be Elijah and Elisha, Moses and Jethro, Paul, Lydia, Barnabas, and Timothy to name a few. In particular, we see this in the life of Jesus and his disciples. Jesus coached his disciples through conversations that employed thought provoking questions. For example, Matthew records 65 questions; Mark records 45 questions; Luke records 73 questions; and John records 45 questions. From this we see that questions were at the heart of Jesus' discipleship methodology. Jesus' questions were designed to lead them toward inner transformation and deeper into God's mission.

In lives that have been marked by hurry and distraction, church leaders are in desperate need of balancing themselves again if they are ever to sustain a missional lifestyle. They must remain alert to the fact that Jesus valued silence and reflected on his spirituality with others. In the midst of our world's radical changes and challenges, we need courageous leaders and churches who are willing to reimagine and embrace the future possibilities of the Church. This is why we believe coaching matters.

Missional Formation Coaching is a reflective approach to coaching that is designed to help missional leaders thrive by promoting healthy rhythms that connect spiritual and missional practices. We believe that this framework can help missional leaders thrive in today's globally diverse world. We have adapted a reflective coaching framework that begins with praying for the guidance of the Spirit, giving thanks for what is good, reviewing what is happening, reflecting on what needs to happen, and resolving what to do next.

We have written this book for people who want to learn the basics of the *Missional Formation Coaching* model, which connects spiritual and missional practices. In particular, we have written this book with two kinds of people in mind. Firstly, it is written for missional leaders, whether they be church planters, pioneers, pastors, entrepreneurial business owners, or community leaders, to be able to use as they seek to disciple and coach others. The principles in this book can be adapted to a variety of settings, including existing formation processes.

Secondly, this book can be used by missional coaches who want to understand and apply the dynamics of *Missional Formation Coaching*. We have found this to be a helpful resource for professional coaches and network or denominational leaders who help coach and mentor pastors, church planters, and missionaries on a regular basis.

Regardless of who you are, our prayer is that this resource will help you go deeper in your walk with Christ as well as equip you to be a missionary to the world around you. Whoever you are, wherever you are, we are all called to be missionaries of peace and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ afresh to this generation!

CHAPTER 1

SPIRITUAL BREATHING

*“You have made us for yourself, O Lord,
and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”*

ST. AUGUSTINE

We invite you to take a journey with us to rediscover the rhythms of missional spirituality.

All around the world, many Christians are running on empty, are on the verge of burnout, and suffer from “SADD” – spiritual attention deficit disorder. One of the reasons for this is that many of us are trying to serve God in our own power and strength. Mission without prayer and worship is dangerous and disembodied. Oftentimes, we falsely divorce missional practices from spiritual practices, as if mission was something non-spiritual and merely pragmatic, dependent upon us – not God. Could anything be further from the truth? If mission is anything, shouldn't it be spiritual and influenced by the Spirit of the living God, rather than something that is attempted in our own strength and power? No wonder so many Christians are departing from the faith.

Perhaps you are at the point of burnout or know a close friend or associate who is. Henri Nouwen describes his own experience that some of you might identify with. Listen closely to his words:

After twenty-five years of priesthood, I found myself praying poorly, living somewhat isolated from other people, and very much preoccupied with burning issues. Everyone was saying that I was doing really well, but something inside was telling me that my success was putting my own soul in danger. I began to ask whether my lack of contemplative prayer, my loneliness, and my constantly changing involvement in what seemed most urgent were signs that the Spirit was gradually being suppressed. It was very hard for me to see clearly, and though I never spoke or only jokingly

so, I woke up one day with the realization that I was living in a very dark place and that the term “burnout” was a convenient psychological translation for a spiritual death.²

I (Winfield) remember the first time I read these words because they hit a little too close to home. For too many leaders today, these words are daily realities. But it doesn't have to be this way.

More than ever before, Christians need to rediscover holistic practices for spiritual formation that will sustain them for mission in today's world. Christianity is not just a set of doctrines to be affirmed but a way of life that is meant to be lived. The earliest Christians were known simply as “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 18:25; 22:4; 24:14). They were known as “the Way” because they followed the way of Jesus. We need to rediscover an ancient way of being a Christian that brings together worship, formation, and mission. We call this “missional spirituality” because it connects spiritual practices with missional practices.

Just as breathing is essential to the physical body, so the Christian life requires a spiritual breathing. Breathing is a beautiful analogy of the Christian life that reminds us that our mission is directly connected to our spirituality. Mission isn't just doing something *for* God, but begins and ends with being *with* God. In their book, *Worship and Mission After Christendom*, Alan and Eleanor Kreider say the Church needs to both inhale in worship and exhale by going into the world and sharing the Good News; making peace; and caring for creation, reconciliation, and the marginalized of society.³ In missional spirituality, “inhaling” and “exhaling” are two essential and interconnected movements of living the way of Jesus in the world.

This balance of worship and mission is especially important for missional leaders today. Even doing good things like ministry and mission can be a distraction if we don't allow time for rest. After the disciples returned from a busy missionary journey, Jesus told them to “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile” (Mark 6:31). They had been busy and Jesus knew that they needed rest for their weary souls. Spiritual burnout occurs when we don't give ourselves time to rest from our daily routine. We believe that the secret of Jesus' ministry can be found in this balance of worship, prayer and mission. Henri Nouwen offers the following meditation on the balance of the spiritual life and ministry of Jesus.

“In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there.” In the middle of sentences loaded with action – healing suffering people, casting out devils, responding to impatient disciples, traveling from town to town and preaching from synagogue to synagogue – we find these quiet words: “In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there.” In the center of breathless activities we hear a restful breathing. Surrounded by hours of moving we find a moment of quiet stillness. In the heart of much involvement there are words of withdrawal. In the midst of action there is contemplation. And after much togetherness there is solitude. The more I read this nearly silent sentence locked in between the loud words of action, the more I have the sense that the secret of Jesus’s ministry is hidden in that lonely place where he went to pray, early in the morning, long before dawn.⁴

We also see this illustrated in the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his word, but Martha was distracted with much serving. Jesus said that Mary had chosen the best thing because she sat at his feet and was not distracted. Resting in the Lord is the only way that we can continue to have an effective Christian life because our *being* must come before our *doing*. Times of rest and retreat enable us to listen to the still, small voice of God.

Several years ago, I (Winfield) went through a difficult season wherein I felt spiritually exhausted and close to burning out in ministry. Like Bilbo Baggins in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, I felt “thin, sort of *stretched*, like butter scraped over too much bread.”⁵ My faith had not adequately prepared me for this experience. During this season of life, God helped me slow down and recover my faith by embracing spiritual rest and retreat. Jesus invites each one of us to come and find our rest in him. Think on the following words from Matthew’s Gospel:

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly. (Matthew 11:28-30, The Message)

Never before has there been such a need to rediscover missional spirituality. It is essential that we allow time during each day for spiritual rest and solitude from all of the busy distractions of our complex world. If we are not careful, the multitude of distractions of this world will keep us from finding rest for our souls. Our souls need to have scriptural rest in the same way that our physical bodies need rest; otherwise, we will experience spiritual burnout. God promises rest to his people. The biblical word for rest literally means a resting place, a quiet place, peace, trust, and reliance. Rest is the reason why God commanded us to keep the Sabbath. Jesus said that the Sabbath was created so that man may have rest. As we shall see, rest and mission are not antithetical to one another, but instead are essentially symbiotic.

The Missional Spirituality of Lindisfarne

Sometimes, we have to go a long way to find what we are looking for. One of the best examples of missional spirituality comes to us from a tiny island in northern England. Lindisfarne Island is the site of one of the most important centers of early Christianity in England. Over the ages, it has been home to saints and scholars, including St. Aidan and St. Cuthbert, and famously produced the medieval illuminated texts known as the Lindisfarne Gospel, an artistic masterpiece. From its shores, missionary monks spread the gospel like wildfire across northern England. This island also witnessed the first recorded Viking invasion in 793 A.D. Today, the island's history, beauty, and wonder continue to inspire a new generation for mission. So, what can a body of land that only measures three miles from east to west teach us about doing mission today? We believe that the missional spirituality of Lindisfarne Island still has many lessons to teach us.

In 633 A.D., King Oswald of Northumbria desired to bring Christianity to his kingdom and requested the monks of Iona in Scotland to come and bring Christianity to his people. The first monk who was sent, Cormac, met with little success. He returned to Iona and reported he was unable to minister to the people because they “were ungovernable and of an obstinate and barbarous temperament.”⁶ Not willing to give up, the monks of Iona had a conference to discuss what they should do next. Aidan, who was at the conference, issued these comments to the failed missionary monk: “Brother, it seems to me that you were too severe on your ignorant hearers. You should have followed the practice of the Apostles, and begun by giving them the milk of simpler teaching, and gradually nourished them with the word of God until they were

capable of greater perfection and able to follow the loftier precepts of Christ.”⁷ This observation by St. Aidan convinced all in attendance that he was the man to continue the failed missionary work in Northumbria. It was unanimously decided that Aidan would be sent out from Iona to establish Christianity in northern England.

Aidan was consecrated a bishop and arrived in Northumbria around 635 A.D. accompanied by twelve other monks. King Oswald gave him the small island of Lindisfarne (also known as Holy Island) as a home base for his monastic work. Aidan established the monastery on the Island of Lindisfarne that eventually became an epicenter for spirituality and mission for northern England; a “thin place.”

The landscape of Lindisfarne Island is littered with monuments, markings, and ruins that once boldly stated, “This is a thin place. This is holy ground.” During our last visit, Winfield and I (Mark) looked at each other and asked if we both sensed that the very ground itself seemed to be calling out, “Come here and be transformed.” In moments such as these, visitors to the island today can feel the connection with the people whose spirits first marked these spots and all the pilgrims who have visited since.

Lindisfarne provided both solitude and a base for missionary work, being cut off from the mainland except for twice a day during the periods of low tide. When the tide was in, the island was completely surrounded by water and became a solitary place. When the tide went out, it again was connected to the mainland. This rhythm of the tides coming in and going out formed the spiritual rhythms of the missionary monks on Lindisfarne. The monks would retreat on the island for worship, prayer, and rest, and then carry God’s presence back out into mission. Lindisfarne became a center of learning to train missionary monks for Northumbria and eventually helped found other monasteries throughout the region.⁸ The monastic missionaries who trained on Lindisfarne went out from there and helped bring the gospel to much of Anglo-Saxon England, especially in northern England.

What made Lindisfarne such a successful missionary hub? We believe that it was due to the missional spirituality of its leader, St. Aidan, who was a humble man of God with a deep spirituality that included a life of prayer, reading the scriptures, and proclaiming Christ in word and deed. Aidan, whose name means “little flame,” lit a fire that burned brightly across northern England.

Bede described him as a “man of outstanding gentleness, holiness, and moderation” who was endowed with the “grace of discretion.”⁹ In addition to living a holy life, he gave his clergy “an inspiring example of self-discipline and continence,” never caring about worldly possessions, and loved to give to the poor.¹⁰ Aidan refused to use the king’s horse for his missionary journeys, but instead chose to travel on foot, reading the scriptures and talking to everyone he met about God. He preached widely throughout Northumbria, working together with the king to evangelize the people. Since Aidan could not speak the language of the people, the king even translated for him until he became proficient in English. Bede summarized Aidan’s life in the following words:

He cultivated peace and love, purity and humility; he was above anger and greed, and desired pride and conceit; he set himself to keep as well as to teach the laws of God, and was diligent in study and prayer. He used his priestly authority to check the proud and powerful; he tenderly comforted the sick; he relieved and protected the poor. To sum up in brief what I have learned from those who knew him, he took pains never to neglect anything that he had learned from the writings of the evangelists, apostles, and prophets, and he set himself to carry them out with all his powers.”¹¹

Such was the spiritual life of the monks who lived on Lindisfarne. Ray Simpson reminds us, “The pattern of outreach and withdrawal, advance and retreat, was another feature of Aidan’s, as of Christ’s, way of life.”¹² The monks of Lindisfarne carried God with them far and wide out of a deep place of rest and delight in God’s presence. Just like breathing, missional spirituality is marked by the ebb and flow of the Christian life. So it should be with us; our mission to the world should flow from a deep well within us, from the very presence of the living God. These practices form the heart of missional spirituality.

The ultimate fruit of spiritual formation is not retreat from the world, but missional engagement with the world. Robert Mulholland reminds us that , “Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.”¹³ This definition of spiritual formation reminds us that the telos or goal of our own formation as missional leaders is for the sake of others. To be a Christian leader is to be a part of a missionary movement that has a long and rich heritage of holistic mission. This heritage reminds us that God’s love inspires us to be missionaries to the world around us.

In conclusion, God's love inspires us all to be missionaries to the world around us. As N. T. Wright says, "The link between worship and mission is so close that many prefer to speak of them in terms of each other. Glad, rich worship of God revealed in Jesus invites outsiders to come in, welcomes them, nourishes them, and challenges them....Thus, though I continue to speak of worship and mission as separate activities, I also insist on integrating them."¹⁴ As the body of Christ, we come together to worship God *in order to be sent back out into the world through mission*. Let's end with a prayer that is attributed to St. Aidan that embodies the rhythms of missional spirituality.

Essential Thought

Missional spirituality is a way of Christian living that connects spiritual practices with missional practices and reminds us that our mission to the world should flow from the very presence of the living God.

Reflection Questions

1. What questions have arisen for you regarding missional spirituality?
2. What insights have you gained about the idea of connecting spiritual and missional practices?
3. What observations can you make about your own missional spirituality?

Action

Take at least half day for personal spiritual retreat to reflect on developing a more robust missional spirituality in your life. Bring with you a Bible and a journal to reflect on how you can develop a deeper missional spirituality that includes the balance of your spiritual breathing: worship and mission.

CHAPTER 2

MISSIONAL FORMATION COACHING MODEL

“If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

By now, you probably realize that we believe that ongoing coaching is essential for the health of pastors, pioneers, and church planters and for the long-term health and success their ministry and the churches that they lead. We believe that there is a significant value for leaders who have coaches and mentors in their life. Therefore, the need for coaching and mentoring in Christian ministry is essential to the life of being a leader in the twenty-first century.

There are numerous so-called “Christian” coaching models. The problem with many of the coaching models is that they are influenced by psychology and business practices and do not actually have a Christian foundation. Most ministry coaching focuses specifically on pragmatic church growth techniques rather than the health of the minister, and ignores the various dimensions of the leader’s life. More than ever before, Christian leaders serving churches and non-profits need to rediscover practices for spiritual formation that will sustain them for mission in today’s world.

So what is coaching? In *The Coach Model for Christian Leaders*, Keith E. Webb reminds us, “How you define coaching reveals much about the values, mindset, and approach you bring to working with other people. You will act in accordance with your beliefs.” He defines coaching as “an ongoing intentional conversation that empowers a person or group to fully live out God’s calling.”¹⁵ Webb gives us a helpful reminder of the importance of the definition of coaching. According to Gary Collins, “*Coaching* is the art and practice of enabling individuals and groups to move from where *they* are to where they want to be. Christian coaching is the art and practice of enabling

individuals and groups to move from where *they* are to where God wants them to be.”¹⁶ In Christian coaching, God is the one who makes all the difference!

At this point, you may be asking yourself, “What exactly is *Missional Formation Coaching*?” *Missional Formation Coaching* (MFC) is a reflective approach to coaching that uniquely connects spiritual practices with missional practices to promote healthy rhythms that will help you flourish wherever God has planted you, and draws on the past to nurture the Christian leaders of today. Here is an overview of the process that includes sample questions that can be used as a reflective practice in preparation for your monthly coaching sessions.

1. PRAY

Open each coaching session by welcoming the Holy Spirit to come and guide the time together. Pray “Come, Holy Spirit!”

2. CELEBRATE

Share some things you are thankful for in your life, family, and the church. Identify signs of God’s grace.

3. REVIEW

Review what is going on in the church. Reflect on what has happened since the last meeting.

4. REFLECT

Reflect on the challenges, shortcomings, or areas that your coachee needs to focus on during this session.

5. RESOLVE

Resolve what action your coachee needs to take before your next session.

Coaching Ecosystem

Finally, *Missional Formation Coaching* provides coaches with a framework or ecosystem for the coaching relationship whether it be one-on-one or group coaching. We like the language of an ecosystem because it reminds us that coaching is a dynamic, organic, and living relationship between the coach and the person being coached. An ecosystem is a community of living things that interact with each other, requiring continual change and adaptation. The coaching relationship is no different. In the same way, *Missional Formation*

Coaching provides an ecosystem that allows the coach to help those who are being coached to grow and develop as a result of the coaching relationship. The MFC ecosystem can be adapted and used in various contexts, regardless of whether it is one-on-one or group coaching.

Essential Thought

Missional Formation Coaching is a unique model of coaching that connects spiritual practices with missional practices to promote healthy rhythms that will help you flourish wherever God has planted you.

Reflection Questions

What questions have arisen for you with regard to the *Missional Formation Coaching* model?

What insights have you gained about the *Missional Formation Coaching* model from this chapter?

What observations can you make about how you can use the *Missional Formation Coaching* model in your own coaching practice?

Action

Practise the MFC model firstly on yourself, and then with a close friend, family member, or colleague. As with anything, we learn by doing. Coaching is meant to be put into practice. Remember the only way to perfect a new skill is to practise, so open your heart and mind to what God might teach you through your new found skill-set of coaching.

CHAPTER 3

NEXT STEPS

“The Road goes ever on and on / Down from the door where it began / Now far ahead the Road has gone, / And I must follow, if I can...”

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

We have come to the end of the book, but we hope that it is not the end of our journey together. Rather, we hope it is only the beginning of an exciting adventure of faith of missional partnerships for the Kingdom. Throughout the book, we have introduced you to elements of *Missional Formation Coaching*. For coaches, we hope that this book has also given you an adaptable framework that you can utilize with the people that you will be coaching. As we close this book, we want to offer a few next steps that will help you wherever you are on your missional journey. We have developed resources to help promote spiritual and emotional health for Christian leaders for today’s world.

Missional Formation Coaching

Are you looking for space to reflect with a seasoned practitioner? Our Missional Formation coaching is a reflective approach to coaching t designed to help leaders thrive by promoting healthy rhythms that connect spiritual and missional practices. Although founded on an ancient model, we believe that this framework can help missional leaders thrive in today’s globally diverse world. We offer one-to-one, group coaching, learning communities, and consulting.

Missional Formation Course

In the Missional Formation course you will learn to thrive by integrating healthy rhythms that connect your spiritual and missional practices. This is an online training that is designed for Christian leaders, whether they be pastors, planters, or community leaders.

Missional Formation Coaching Course

We offer Missional Formation coach training that is geared both to an individual, or a large-scale church/organization like a diocese that seeks to integrate a culture of coaching. This online course will assess your understanding of MFC coaching. It is on a unique mobile-ready platform which means you can complete it on your cell phone or desktop. Further, this certification training suits your lifestyle as it can be taken all at once or in bite-size pieces of learning.

Missional Formation Podcast

The Missional Formation Podcast is designed to help leaders thrive by promoting healthy rhythms that connect spiritual and missional practices. Hosted by two friends, An Irishman and an American. The Missional Formation Podcast is about sharing stories of hope and resilience. Grab a cup of coffee and join us for the conversation!

Finally, we would love you to keep in touch and join our conversations on the Missional Formation Podcast. Let us know how this book has impacted your life. Please stay in touch. God speed to you as you continue on the journey!

www.missionalformationcoaching.com

A Blessing for Missional Leaders

May you know that history is not just in the past,
it is also in the present, and that you carry history within you.

May your heart be imbued with a longing for beauty,
meaning, order, creativity, kindness, and love.

May you find the precious treasures of your soul in the challenges you face.

May you have a sense of adventure as you bring something new to the world.

May the flow of spiritual creativity, imagination,
and innovation wash over the intimacy of your soul this day.

May the parched deserts of your heart be refreshed by the waters of your
baptism in Christ.

May you find a new beach in your heart after the storms in your life.

May your kindness cast a different light over the darkness and confusion
of life – an evening light –

with a depth of color and patience to illuminate what is complex
and rich in diversity.

MARK DUNWOODY

Endnotes

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- 3 See Alan and Eleanor Kreider, *Worship and Mission After Christendom*.
- 4 Henri J. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude. Three Meditations on the Christian Life*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2004. 17.
- 5 Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. *The Lord of the Rings*. United States: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. 32.
- 6 The earliest and most accurate account of the life and ministry of St. Aidan comes from the British historian Bede (672-735 A.D.) who lived shortly after Aidan's time. Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*. London: Penguin Classics, 1968, p. 149.
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- 8 Simpson, Ray, and Brent Lyons-Lee. *St. Aidan Way of Mission. Celtic Insights for a Post-Christian World*. Oxford: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2016 and Smither, Edward L. *Missionary Monks: An Introduction to the History and Theology of Missionary Monasticism*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016, pp. 64-81.
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- 10 Ibid, 148.
- 11 Ibid, 169.
- 12 Simpson and Lyons-Lee, *St. Aidan Way of Mission*, 98.
- 13 M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey. A Road Map For Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993, 12.
- 14 Borg, Marcus, and N. T. Wright. *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1999, p. 207.
- 15 Webb, Keith E. *The Coach Model for Christian Leaders*. Nashville: Morgan James Publishing, 2019, p. 13.
- 16 Gary Collins, *Christian Coaching*, 23.