

PILGRIMAGE: A PARADIGM FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

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Introduction

Most Christian leaders would agree that spiritual formation is an important component of individual and corporate Christian life. Although North American Christians make use of a diversity of programs and resources for spiritual formation, how effective are these approaches for making disciples? Further, despite the seeming success of mega-churches and those who adopt their methods, recent research suggests that numerical growth of a church is not equivalent to spiritual growth. In 2004, Willow Creek Community Church, founder of the Willow Creek Association, conducted a congregational self-study that revealed that, despite being very involved in many Christian activities, a significant percentage of the congregants were either “stalled in,” or “dissatisfied” with their spiritual growth. Other churches and denominations have conducted the same study, with similar results.¹ In addition, along with spiritual immaturity, it appears that the character and moral fiber of church attendees is eroding,² and church attendance has been declining steadily over the past four or five decades, both in the United States and Canada.³ These trends persist, while the Great Commission

1. The study and its results can be found in a book written by Willow Creek’s executive pastor: Hawkins and Parkinson, *Reveal*.

2. For an examination of these trends see Wells, *Losing Our Virtue*.

3. For detailed studies of these trends in Canada during the 1980s and 1990s, see Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby’s work, particularly,

remains, to “go and make disciples, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you” (Matt 18:20).⁴ The means for reaching maturity in Christ is a matter for discussion. This paper will propose a way to think differently and more deeply about spiritual formation for the character and task of the church in twenty-first-century Canada.

To begin, I will adopt the term “spiritual formation” to speak synonymously of the making of disciples and discipleship, and will establish a working definition of that term. Next, I will briefly examine the concept of developing a paradigm for spiritual formation and will delineate criteria for such a paradigm. Subsequently, from the perspective of Practical Theology, the paper will engage with culture, Scripture and Christian tradition, and personal experience to create a viable paradigm for spiritual formation. From there, the paper will suggest how the paradigm of pilgrimage could be implemented for individual and corporate use. Finally, the paper will evaluate the pilgrimage paradigm in relation to the established definition of spiritual formation and the criteria for paradigms.

Although many definitions have emerged to capture the essence of spiritual formation, at times they are inadequate. While definitions might include ideas that spiritual formation is a process whereby a person is conformed to the image of Christ for serving others,⁵ the Westminster Shorter Catechism reminds us that, “The chief end of [people] is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.”⁶ Accordingly, it is good to develop a definition of spiritual formation that focuses first on the vertical *telos*, then the horizontal. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, *Christian spiritual formation is the transformative movement towards being conformed to the image of Christ for the glory of God and*

Fragmented Gods. For more recent and somewhat optimistic surveys see, Posterski and Barker, *Where’s a Good Church?*; Bibby, *Restless Gods*.

4. All Scripture references are taken from the NIV unless otherwise indicated.

5. For an example of such a definition, see Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 12.

6. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1674), line 2.

*service to others, in this life and the one to come.*⁷ Having established the *telos* of spiritual formation, this definition also reveals an inherent dynamism: the *changing* of transformation, and, the *shaping* into and by a Divine pattern, which results in *glorifying* God and *servicing* others. I have omitted the word “process” intentionally because it can signify or imply a structured, step-wise method of constructing something. Rather, spiritual formation must take into account the fluidity of life. As well, being conformed to the image of Christ means more than just the “doing” image of Christ, but also the “being” of Christ—the reflection of his character.

To provide a fresh way of thinking about spiritual formation, using a paradigm affords a creative means for doing so. At root, a paradigm is a way of seeing things. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, a paradigm is defined as “a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline.”⁸ Moreover, a paradigm offers the opportunity for reconfiguring familiar concepts or furnishing a framework for new ideas. Based on the writings of Henri Nouwen, Phil Zylla sees the paradigmatic as a viable, appealing approach to spiritual formation since “[p]aradigms function as a way of ‘sense making,’ taking very complex issues and ideas and folding them into a way of seeing or construing reality.”⁹ Innately, a paradigm is flexible and unbreakable, and so, in the context of spiritual formation, it allows for ambiguities and movement in life, as well as periods of stasis/rest and deeper reflection. Paradox and mystery are not to be avoided, but are included as part of life in general, and the Christian spiritual life

7. I am indebted to N. T. Wright for his eschatological perspective of spiritual formation. These ideas will be pursued further. See Wright, *After You Believe*.

8. This definition is cited by Zylla, “Contours,” 208.

9. *Ibid.*, 208. For a fuller exploration of this, see pp. 208–10. I am indebted to Dr. Zylla for many ideas underlying the criteria for developing a paradigm for spiritual formation as presented in his lectures in his course, “Spiritual Formation in the Church,” McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario: Winter Semester, 2009.

in particular. For something as intricate and profound as a human relationship with the triune God, paradigms present exciting possibilities.

How then, does one go about developing a paradigm for spiritual formation in the church? What are some elements that need to be in place for this particular paradigm to be effective? First, because spiritual formation comes under the discipline of Practical Theology, developing a useful paradigm entails engaging in a critical conversation or interplay with culture, Scripture and Christian tradition, and personal experience.¹⁰ Culturally, twenty-first-century Canadian Christians find themselves in an individualistic, pluralistic, and increasingly secularized post-modern milieu within which they, as the church, are striving to foster spiritual formation. Often adopting methods from elsewhere,¹¹ churches have employed strategies such as changing dress codes, styles of worship, and venues as attempts to attract people into the church and keep them. New models and pragmatic programs have been developed with the hope of making the church more relevant. Furthermore, some of the language of the church has been altered to reflect the vocabulary of the surrounding culture. For example, inclusive language is used more widely, terms such as “discipleship” have changed to “mentoring” or “coaching,” and senior pastors might be referred to as “executive” pastors. Despite these and other innovative ideas, spiritual growth to maturity has not been commensurate with numerical growth. This leads to the need for conversation with the second dialogue partner, Scripture and Christian tradition, in order to provide a theological rootedness for developing a viable paradigm. This paper will use specific biblical texts for developing the paradigm, but this use is not intended to provide an in-depth exegetical interpretation of Scripture, but rather to reflect on the texts from the perspectives of biblical,

10. While many pastoral theologians speak of or allude to these conversation partners, for a particularly helpful approach see Whitehead, “Practical Play.”

11. I am thinking of methods and models from the US such as Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church and Bill Hybel’s Willow Creek, and the British-based Alpha program.

pastoral, and spiritual theology, to observe relevant themes and patterns, while bearing in mind the original context of the passages. With this foundation, the paradigm will point to the *telos* of Christian spiritual formation as defined earlier. Following a reflection on Scripture and tradition, the third conversation partner—personal experience—needs to be engaged. There must be a respect for the validity of one’s own experience and that of others, to bring various voices into dialogue concerning the spiritual life. These experiences and voices reveal the complexities and ambiguities of life that demand a nuanced individual and corporate approach to discipleship instead of a systematized method.

Second, according to Phil Zylla, a viable paradigm must use language that symbolizes and signifies new articulations of “settled assumptions and core questions” of faith.¹² In some ways, paradigms are like extended metaphors or parables that contribute language for viewing life from different perspectives and postures; a paradigmatic approach to spiritual formation affords multi-dimensional understandings of the spiritual life.

Third, a paradigm needs to create and reflect a deepening hunger or thirst for the transforming spoken, written, and incarnate Word of God, which leads to maturity of Christian character and practice. In other words, a paradigm must be fruitful and life-giving, not merely productive;¹³ it is about “being” as much as it is about “doing.”

Finally, a paradigm must be flexible enough to accommodate seasons of obvious growth, while allowing for set-backs, or periods of stasis that are ultimately seasons of preparation, mystery, or hidden growth. Thus, to be viable, the paradigm must be able to portray an undulating path towards its *telos*, rather than a rigid process or a linear track.

12. I am indebted to Phil Zylla for many ideas underlying the criteria for developing a paradigm for spiritual formation as presented in lectures given by him in his course, “Spiritual Formation in the Church,” McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario: Winter Semester, 2009.

13. For a deeper exploration of this concept see Nouwen, *Lifesigns*.

Given the innate qualities of a paradigm and the criteria for developing one, what could be appropriate for depicting spiritual formation as defined earlier? Which metaphors or biblical themes could fulfill the requirements of a paradigm that is effective for spiritual formation? There may be several, but a major one is pilgrimage.

One does not have to read far in the Bible to notice that much travelling occurred. Individuals and groups moved in time from one geographical place and space to another, and perhaps back again, over diverse topographical terrains, for various purposes. Often, the journeying was characterized by wandering and sojourning in hospitable or inhospitable foreign lands. As in many other religions, Judaism and Christianity include specific kinds of journeys that are distinct from others: journeys that have literal and figurative spiritual destinations. Such travel is known as pilgrimage.

The *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* contends that “[a]lthough the words *pilgrim* and *pilgrimage* [italics original] are absent from most English translations of the Bible, the image is a major one, encompassing some of the deepest meanings of what it means to be a follower and worshiper of God.”¹⁴ Further, “In both Testaments, pilgrimage becomes a metaphor for the shape of the earthly life of anyone who is headed . . . [on] a journey to a sacred place . . . whether heaven or an earthly sacred place . . . the pilgrim is always a traveler, but a fixed and glorious goal is always the final destination that motivates the journey.”¹⁵ The Old Testament contains examples of small and large-scale pilgrimages, such as Abraham leaving Ur and sojourning in various places until he reached the land that God provided for him (Gen 12:1–3), or the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land, where Yahweh would inhabit an earthly dwelling place among his people. Yahweh’s Presence led Israel and provided a rear-guard to prepare the way and to protect the new nation (Exod 13:17–22; 23:20–33). In addition, within that greater narrative, Yahweh established three specific pilgrimages

14. Ryken et al, eds., “Pilgrim, Pilgrimage,” 643.

15. *Ibid.*, 643–44.

required as part of Israel's worship of their God. Exodus 23:14–33 describes the nature of those pilgrimage-feasts, which were annual events in the life of Israel. Although these were literal pilgrimages made to a specific place at designated times of the year, overall it could be said that pilgrimage was a way of life for God's people in the Old Testament, given all their wanderings, exiles, and sojourning. Gordon McConville observes, "As we seek a Biblical theology of pilgrimage we are faced with the fact that it is the Old Testament which gives us our basic texts and concepts, yet also poses difficult questions about particularity [for a Christian theology of pilgrimage]."¹⁶

In the New Testament, although Jesus, Paul, and other Jewish disciples continued to observe the Old Testament pilgrimages, Gentile believers were not required to do so. Kenneth Cragg points out that the church "neither needed nor possessed a sacred space, nor a sacred *ethnos* [original italics], nor a sacred tongue—or, rather, it received these in the meaning of faith in the Christ-event, so that its great locative was '*in Christ*' [italics mine]."¹⁷ However, the Old Testament idea of journeying to the dwelling place of God in Zion/Jerusalem is carried over eschatologically into the New Testament, with the concept of the heavenly city of God as portrayed in texts such as Heb 11:8–10; 12:22; Revelation 21 and 22. Moreover, the Old Testament points to the New Testament notion of God himself being his people's dwelling place. Psalm 90:1 states: "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations." This was particularly true for Israel during the times of exile when God's people could no longer make pilgrimages to Jerusalem; it was during these times that Israel learned of God's omnipresence. Similarly, for New Testament believers, it is the triune God himself who is the Dwelling Place in whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28; cf. Col 3:3). Yet, individually and corporately, we as the church are also the dwelling place of God (Rom 8:9–11; 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:22). Consequently, there is a sense of outward movement towards the external dwelling

16. McConville, "Pilgrimage and 'Place,'" 18.

17. Cragg, "Jesus, Jerusalem and Pilgrimage Today," 5.

place of God, both the future heavenly city, and being in Christ—conformity to the image of Christ—as well as a concurrent, inward movement towards Christ who dwells in us by his Spirit. These external/internal contours and dimensions of the Christian pilgrimage are mysterious and intricate. Craig Bartholomew notes that, conceptually, a pilgrimage “can be thought of as a micro-journey by means of which one explores the macro-journey of one’s life . . . It is vital that this connection with the whole of life is present in pilgrimage: the *journey in*, . . . becomes the foundation for the *journey out*. And this should be true not just at a personal level but at a communal and societal one too [original italics].”¹⁸

Following the biblical concepts of pilgrimage, in early Christian tradition believers made pilgrimages to sacred sites for various reasons such as devotion or penance. However, due to distortions and abuses of the biblical precedents, particularly during the Middle Ages, pilgrimage came under censure in the Reformation. It is not possible here to trace and engage with that history, but Dee Dyas finds some significant principles within medieval patterns of pilgrimage that are helpful for the purposes of developing a paradigm for spiritual formation.¹⁹

First, the medieval church held one over-arching theological concept that Dyas terms as “life pilgrimage,” together with three strands of practical interpretation that she classifies as “place pilgrimage,” “moral pilgrimage,” and “interior pilgrimage.”²⁰ Place pilgrimage focused on mobility, shrines, saints, relics, indulgences, danger, and temptation. Moral pilgrimage emphasized stability, calling, obedience, responsibility, community, service, and love. The interior pilgrimage was characterized in the monastic movement by stability, withdrawal/solitude, prayer/meditation, encounters with God, visions, and anticipation of heaven. Within this concept of life pilgrimage, one can observe both external and internal dimensions. To summarize, Dyas contends that “[t]he central, non-negotiable expression of

18. Bartholomew, “Journeying On,” 209.

19. Dyas, “Medieval Patterns,” 92–109.

20. *Ibid.*, 97. Dyas delineates these three dimensions on pp. 98–101.

life pilgrimage was to live in daily obedience to God in the place of one's calling, resisting sin and serving others"²¹ in whatever context one found oneself. Christian mystics such as Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, embodied this perspective when they viewed life as a spiritual journey [pilgrimage] that "has the shape of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the Way, so his life is the map . . . a transforming journey."²² Such a holistic approach to pilgrimage is important for guarding against an over-emphasis on experience or place at the expense of theology. This approach is foundational for spiritual formation in the post-modern culture in which Canadians find themselves.

With much focus on individual expression, personal experience, and a hunger for spirituality, it is not surprising that post-moderns are interested in place pilgrimage. Moreover, it is noteworthy that pilgrimages are becoming increasingly popular for Western Christians who are abandoning regular church attendance in record numbers.²³ Prophetically, Martin Robinson observes that "[t]he temptation therefore is to see such churchless Christianity as a kind of personal pilgrimage that features spirituality but rejects institution. However understandable such a response might be, that kind of pilgrimage, unrelated to mission, will never refound the Church and ultimately fails to see the value of true pilgrimage."²⁴ Robinson and others wonder whether these pilgrimages are more like spiritual tourism than true pilgrimage.²⁵ Dyas cautions against this tendency by calling for "substantial reconsideration of the Protestant objections to pilgrimage expressed at the Reformation," which majored more on experience than theology.²⁶ Developing pilgrimage as a paradigm for spiritual formation can draw on the cultural interest in pilgrimage, while providing a deeper theological perspective.

21. Ibid., 98.

22. Carmichael, "Catholic Saints and Reformers," 210–12.

23. For a study of this phenomena, see Jamieson, *Churchless Faith*.

24. Robinson, "Pilgrimage and Mission," 180.

25. Ibid., 187–92. See also, Wiederkehr, *Seasons of Your Heart*, 183–85.

26. Dyas, "Medieval Patterns," 104.

Theology/Typology of Pilgrimage

In order to avoid the temptation of regarding pilgrimage as spiritual tourism, but to consider it as paradigm for spiritual formation, the paradigm must engage with Scripture. Although in a broad sense the paper has done this earlier, and while many specific passages could be used from both Testaments, I want to consider two particular texts: Phil 3:10–14 and Psalm 84. Congruent with the mystic understanding of the Christian life, Phil 3:10–14 provides a pattern for spiritual formation. I will explore how this passage grounds a paradigm of pilgrimage theologically and conforms to my definition of spiritual formation as it establishes the *telos* of spiritual formation, and reveals its inherent dynamism: the *changing* of transformation, and, the *shaping* into and by a divine pattern, which results in *glorifying* God and *serving* others in this life and the one to come.

In context, the apostle Paul is recounting his spiritual history as a “faultless” Jew in terms of a legalistic righteousness that was dependent on outward actions: obedience to the Law (vv. 4b–6). Now he counts all that as loss compared to his faith in Christ, which engenders a righteousness that “comes from God and is by faith” (v. 9). Following this, Paul theologically articulates the reorientation that has occurred in his life. Although he does not use the words “spiritual formation” or “pilgrimage,” Paul’s intentions overlap with these paradigmatic concepts. He asserts that his spiritual destination is “to know Christ and the power of his resurrection” (v. 10). For Paul, the life of faith and righteousness involves a close relationship with Christ that finds its source and is centered in Christ’s death and resurrection.²⁷ The power that brought about Christ’s resurrection (cf. Eph 1:19–20) points not only to the actual future bodily resurrection of individuals, but has the capacity to transform the present life of believers, increasingly conforming them to the image of Christ. It is plausible that the use of the Greek word *anastasis* for

27. Marshall, “Philippians,” 320.

“resurrection” in this verse also refers to Paul’s figurative, spiritual motif of the transformation from being dead in sin, to being alive in Christ (cf. Rom 5:12–8:25).²⁸

Verse 10b reveals that the movement towards the goal of knowing Christ involves “sharing in the fellowship of [Christ’s] sufferings, becoming like him in his death” in order to somehow attain “the resurrection from the dead” (v. 11). Thus, Paul’s relationship with Christ is not merely an intellectual knowledge of Christ’s life, but a personal reality in which Paul “shares in the actual experiences of Jesus . . . the sufferings of Christ.”²⁹ Even though Paul did not experience death by crucifixion, he did follow “the way of weakness and self-sacrifice, the way that Christ followed to his death on the cross.”³⁰ In other letters, Paul enumerates his sufferings, which included physical, emotional/psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions (cf. 1 Cor 9–13; 2 Cor 6:4–10; 11–32). Many of these sufferings were similar to those that Christ endured, leading up to and on the cross, with its physical dimensions, along with shame, degradation, social rejection, and spiritual abandonment. Yet, in the context of Phil 3:10, Paul implies that, although not fully understood, these sufferings are necessary to “somehow attain the resurrection from the dead” (v. 11). Interestingly, here Paul uses a Greek word for “resurrection” that is unique in the New Testament: *exanastasis*. With its prefix *ex-* (out from), this word adds weight to the goal of a literal, bodily resurrection from the dead. Moreover, with the word “somehow” in v. 11 there is a hint of the mysterious interplay between human striving and perseverance towards the goal in the midst of suffering, and the participation of God for the ultimate accomplishment of that goal.

Ralph Martin suggests that Paul’s expression of “hope that complete conforming to his Lord (3:21) will come at **the resurrection from among the dead** [original emphasis and

28. For a thorough exploration of the implications for the church of Christ’s resurrection, see Wright, *Surprised by Hope*.

29. Marshall, “Philippians,” 320.

30. Achtemeier et al., *Introducing the New Testament and Its Literature and Theology*, 397.

italics] . . . is probably accounted for by Paul's emphasis on the necessity for a future resurrection to complete God's saving plan for his people" as a polemic against "those who denied the future hope on the mistaken ground that the only resurrection was a spiritualized one, already past."³¹ Verse 12, with Paul's use of *teteleiōmai* (perfect passive indicative of *teleiōō* in Greek), begins to elaborate the spiritual goal to which Paul is striving, when he speaks of being "made perfect." Although Martin suggests that it is not quite clear what the meaning of this phrase is here,³² it does point to the idea of ultimately being conformed to the image of Christ, which will come to completion in the resurrection from the dead. However, when Paul says, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect," he intimates that this spiritual formation is ongoing and life-long; he is being shaped while moving towards the *telos* that has been initiated by God himself.

N. T. Wright sharpens the issue when he posits that God's *telos* for resurrected humankind in the new heaven and new earth is for persons to become wholly and genuinely what God originally intended for humans, "reflecting the God in whose image we're made"³³ to be "the renewed world's rulers and priests."³⁴ Yet Wright points out that this movement towards the goal of being "made perfect" begins, or is anticipated, in the present life by means of the transformation of human character through virtue. For Wright, this is "practicing the habits of heart and life that point toward the true goal of human existence." He contends:

[the] truth about who you already are, and the moral life which flows from it, *anticipates* your own eventual bodily death and resurrection and the life of the coming new age . . . the full reality is yet to be revealed, but we can genuinely partake in that final reality in advance

31. Martin, *Philippians*, 135.

32. See Martin's exegetical exploration of this in *ibid.*, 136–37. However, Rienecker posits that "[t]he perfection referred to is moral and spiritual perfection." Rienecker, *Linguistic Key*, 2:212.

33. Wright, *After You Believe*, 26.

34. *Ibid.*, 67.

. . . in Jesus that future has already burst into our present time, so that in *anticipating* that which is to come, we are also *implementing* what has already taken place.³⁵

In other words, as Wright proposes, the goal for the present life is the life of fully formed, fully flourishing Christian character that anticipates the life to come, implementing what has already come. Further, this goal is achieved through “the kingdom-establishing work of Jesus and the Spirit, which we grasp by faith, participate in by baptism, and live out in love.”³⁶ Wright’s mention of participation in baptism alludes to the notions of death and resurrection that are portrayed in that act, and that are lived out as we put to death the sinful nature (vices) and put on the character (virtues) of Christ. This perspective reflects Paul’s sense of striving towards the spiritual goal as he shares in the fellowship of Christ’s suffering, with the hope of attaining the resurrection from the dead.

To further Paul’s themes, verses 13–14 allude to the metaphor of a race by shifting from *teleioō* (*telos*) in v. 12, to *skopos* in v. 14. Although the idea of a race is different from pilgrimage, a race does have some commonalities with a pilgrimage. First, both focus on a destination or goal that requires human effort, determination, and perseverance amidst potential distractions, setbacks, and obstacles. Within the context of Phil 3:10–14, Paul’s emphasis is not on a race itself, but on the movement towards a *spiritual* destination/goal that requires God’s participation. However, unlike a race that is competitive and only has one winner who reaches the goal to win the prize, all true followers of Christ will reach the goal successfully. Second, Paul’s metaphor reveals that the way to being conformed to Christ takes place individually as well as corporately; it is undertaken in the company of brothers and sisters. This correlates with the individual and corporate nature of pilgrimage. Third, in essence, Paul is a leader or model for others as he follows the example of Christ. Lastly, it can be said that spiritual formation, whether in the context of Paul’s race metaphor or a

35. *Ibid.*, 65–66.

36. *Ibid.*, 67.

pilgrimage metaphor, occurs within time and space, which involves a tension of movement “between time and eternity, secular and sacred, moving closer toward the goal of our travels while remaining within what is not-God and apart from what is God.”³⁷ There is a sense of the “already” and the “not yet.”

From this brief overview, we can see that Phil 3:10–14 provides a theological pattern for spiritual formation. Although no metaphor or paradigm is able to portray a concept completely, the overlapping of Paul’s use of *teleioō/telos* and *skopos* helps to strengthen the pilgrimage paradigm for spiritual formation.³⁸

Topography of Pilgrimage

While Phil 3:10–14 provides a theological framework for pilgrimage as spiritual formation, more delineation is needed for a better understanding of the paradigm. Although not technically designated as an ascent psalm, Psalm 84 poetically captures the contours and dimensions of pilgrimage. According to McConville, Psalm 84 holds the external and internal aspects of pilgrimage in tension. He speaks of “correspondences in the poetry of pilgrimage between the spatial and temporal journey and the inner, spiritual life.”³⁹ These correspondences are helpful for linking the external, literal pilgrimage with the internal, spiritual pilgrimage. Just as a literal pilgrimage is located within physical places and spaces, so is spiritual pilgrimage metaphorically. Classical spirituality sometimes described the Christian life in topographical terms—desert, mountain, and cloud—to symbolize the phases of purgation, illumination, and union respectively.⁴⁰ Psalm 84 helps to weave the literal, physical aspects of pilgrimage together with the internal, spiritual dimensions.

Just as Phil 3:10–12 pointed to Paul’s spiritual *telos*, Ps 84:1–4 depicts the literal destination/*telos* of the pilgrimage: the

37. Clingerman, “Walking into the Frame,” 24.

38. Although this discussion does not include Phil 3:15 and subsequent verses, there Paul returns to the ideas of perfection and maturity with the use of *teleioi*.

39. McConville, “Pilgrimage and ‘Place,’” 19.

40. Lane, *Solace*, 6.

dwelling place of God. The psalmist's deepest desire is to be in Yahweh's presence, which is inextricably linked with a place (v. 2). Verse 3 portrays the relationship with God and his dwelling place in intimate and safe terms, while revealing a posture of humility and vulnerability. The temporal and eschatological blessedness of the pilgrimage destination is expressed in v. 4, and indicates that the homecoming is not just for an individual, but for all who are truly God's people.

Despite this idyllic picture of dwelling with Yahweh, there is an interesting conundrum in v. 3c when the psalmist locates the swallow's nest in a "place near your altar."⁴¹ The verse implies that birds feel secure enough to build their nests near the temple altar[s]; there is almost a sense of intimacy. Yet, in Old Testament terms, one wonders, which altar? There were two altars in the tabernacle and temple: the altar of sacrifice and the altar of incense. Within the context of vv. 1–4, one might assume that it was the altar of incense, which would have been located closest to the Holy of Holies. Consequently, a bird's life would not be in danger there as it would be if it were near the altar of sacrifice. However, literarily, this mention of the altar could serve to prepare the reader for the next section of the Psalm, which alludes to suffering.

In keeping with the pattern of an external pilgrimage, where the topography is varied and sometimes fraught with natural and supernatural challenges that produce suffering, there are trials in an internal, spiritual pilgrimage. Verses 5–7 speak of pilgrims passing through the Valley of Baca—the Valley of Weeping—suggesting that some kind of suffering is occurring. Yet, as the pilgrims depend on Yahweh's strength, this place is transformed as they are transformed; their suffering is beneficial for God's creation.⁴² In addition, the pilgrims gain strength to reach their

41. It is interesting that the NIV and the JPS translate the Hebrew as singular, when the Hebrew is actually plural. Thus, as in the KJV, NASB, AV, NJB, it would be more accurate to say "your altars." However, the meaning of the phrase remains unclear.

42. Recent research on "place" and particularly a "theology of place," explores the dynamic interrelationship between people and their physical environment. See Berry, "People, Land and Community";

destination. Implicitly, this does not refer just to physical strengthening, but to character formation, which affords endurance and perseverance. As in v. 4, the psalmist portrays the corporate nature of pilgrimage that, in itself, is a source of strength. Verse 8 suggests that prayer is the means by which the pilgrims access this strength. Despite following a *selah* (pause), v. 9 appears to be a prayer for the king who would ideally provide strength of another kind for the people. This section also connects with Paul's recognition that the route to his spiritual destination involves suffering that would be transformed into spiritual and physical resurrection (Phil 3:10b–11), and that the route/transformation is ongoing (Phil 3:12–14).

Verses 10–11 in Psalm 84 return to the sentiments of vv. 1–2, which express the psalmist's desire to be in the courts of God. The posture of humility is reiterated in v. 10b when the psalmist declares that from his perspective, it would be better to be a doorkeeper (or to stand at the threshold [NASB] or be an abject [LXX]) in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of the wicked. Conceivably, the psalmist is declaring that it is a matter of moral choice or intention. This allusion to character is amplified in v. 11 when it speaks of the protection, favor and honor that Yahweh provides and bestows upon "those whose walk is blameless." Just as Paul strives towards the goal of being conformed to the righteousness of Christ, so Ps 84:11 implies that the spiritual pilgrimage/walk of God's people is not just external, but involves internal matters of character. Finally, Psalm 84 ends with the idea that the successful completion of the pilgrimage is dependent on the pilgrim's trust in God. This essential component of pilgrimage is inferred in Paul's confidence "somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil 3:11).

To summarize, McConville's correspondences between the external, spatial, and temporal journey, and the inner, spiritual life are helpful. In each section of Psalm 84, one can observe the interweaving of the psalmist's focus on the external, physical

dwelling place of Yahweh, and the internal emotional, psychological, and spiritual focus or desire for God's dwelling place, and even for the living God himself. This prompts the psalmist to trust and depend on God in the midst of the Valley of Baca, and to desire and choose to be in God's dwelling place rather than the tents of the wicked. Psalm 84 then, in conjunction with Phil 3:10–14, provides a Scriptural pattern for pilgrimage as a paradigm that is congruent with the definition of spiritual formation.

Itinerary of Pilgrimage

Having established a foundation and framework for developing a paradigm of pilgrimage for spiritual formation, we move to the next component of pilgrimage by recognizing that any extended travel with an intended destination is comprised of an overarching itinerary: preparation, departure, travel, and arrival. Even though there may be flexibility within the travel with regard to the time or route, these basic elements frame the entire trip. The same is true for spiritual pilgrimage, while other dimensions are present.

Preparation: From Inattention to Attention to Intention

Before a Christian spiritual pilgrimage begins, it would seem that a person must be aware that the possibility of such a venture exists, and that it is desirable. It is easy to be so preoccupied with other matters that this possibility may not always be apparent. However, at some point, most people become aware of a spiritual dimension in their lives, thus moving from a state of unawareness to awareness: inattention to attention. Classical spirituality depicts this as “awakening.”⁴³ Mulholland describes it as “an encounter with the living God; it is also an encounter with our true self. It is coming to see something of ourselves as we are and a coming to see something of God as God is.”⁴⁴

43. I am indebted to Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 79–101, for the delineation of the “classical Christian pilgrimage.”

44. *Ibid.*, 80.

Mulholland's description infers that this is a conscious attentiveness to God. The question arises: When does this happen and how? There is no definitive answer. For those who have been brought up in the church, it could be a growing consciousness of one's personal relationship with God, or it could be a dramatic, epiphanal moment. The apostle Paul's experience would represent the latter. Alternatively, depending on one's Christian tradition, some would say that the spiritual pilgrimage begins at baptism, whether infant or believer's baptism. For those who have not had a Christian upbringing, the means and time of one's spiritual awakening can be as unique as each individual life. More radically, those like W. Paul Jones would say that spiritual pilgrimage begins within the womb, as part of the grand cosmological pilgrimage.⁴⁵

However, expanding on Mullholland's thoughts concerning a person's encounter with the living God, it must be contended that for a *Christian* spiritual pilgrimage to commence, there must be an encounter with *Christ*. Further, as Mulholland points out, an encounter with Christ may be a comfort or pose a threat. Paul's Damascus road experience was threatening, but nonetheless, it moved him to the next phase of pilgrimage preparation: intention. For others who encounter Christ in less dramatic ways and respond positively, it can be argued that at some point there is a conscious intention to follow Christ in pilgrimage towards knowing him, and towards being conformed to his image (Phil 3:10; Ps 84:5b). Elizabeth Canham sums it up well when she says: "Pilgrimage is a response to an inner call, a commitment to leave what is known in search of the holy."⁴⁶

Given the contours and dimensions of individual lives, it is difficult to say whether unconscious spiritual formation is a precursor to an intentional embarking on spiritual pilgrimage. This is a moot point within the larger framework of a pilgrimage paradigm, but it does reflect the flexibility of a starting point that a paradigmatic approach affords.

| 45. Jones, *Season*, 17–22. Jones presents a fascinating exploration of spiritual pilgrimage that stretches previous understandings of the paradigm.

| 46. Canham, *Table of Delight*, 23.

Departure: From Habitus to Liminality

A departure of any kind entails a leaving: leaving behind of location, goods, and people. It involves leaving one's "habitus"⁴⁷ or ritualized, familiar, and comfortable ways of doing things in life, and crossing a threshold [Latin *limen*] into "liminality," a place of unfamiliarity, unknowing, the in-between. Some see liminality as being between "the time we leave home and arrive at our destination."⁴⁸ Others depict it as being "betwixt and between [where] the old world is left behind, but we're not sure of the new one yet."⁴⁹ This movement is particularly true within Christian spiritual pilgrimage; it means taking a risky step into unfamiliar territory with unknown topography. Even though God will lead the way, he is not known well. Classical spirituality designates this phase of spiritual formation as "purgation." Mulholland summarizes it as "the process of becoming integrated into the new order of being in Christ," which involves a renunciation of former ways.⁵⁰ For our purposes, "departure" and "purgation" refer to the initial step following the "intention" of leaving and renouncing one's past orientations, then entering into a "sense of being in no man's land, where the land appears completely different, there is no discernable road map, and where the journeyer [pilgrim] is jolted out of normalcy."⁵¹ As a response to an inner call that has a divine purpose, it entails risk, "to give the spiritual pilgrim the opportunity to have previous patterns of attitude and action deconstructed and disempowered so that one can more truly come to find God as the true and ultimate source of security and life."⁵² The context of Paul's

47. Lane, *Solace*, 9–14.

48. Franks and Meteyard, "Liminality," 215 (citing Paul Tournier, *A Place for You*. New York: Harper and Row, 1968, 163).

49. Franks and Meteyard, "Liminality," 216 (citing Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*. New York: Crossroad, 1999, 132).

50. Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 82.

51. Franks and Meteyard, "Liminality," 216.

52. *Ibid.* (citing Demetrius Dumm, *Flowers in the Desert: A Spirituality of the Bible*, New York: Paulist, 1987, 58–59).

expressed intention in Phil 3:10a reveals that he too, left his privileged Jewish “habitus” behind and moved into a “liminal” relationship with Christ.

Departure not only involves leaving behind, but also taking some things for travelling. Early pilgrims were known to take a cloak and a walking stick for protection and support. For spiritual pilgrims, these objects could represent symbolically two essential items for pilgrimage. The cloak can be thought of as a prayer shawl, which could symbolize the necessity of prayer in the spiritual life. Classical pilgrimage and spirituality grounds itself in contemplative prayer. In the Russian tale, *The Way of a Pilgrim*,⁵³ the pilgrim travels from place to place trying to find out how to pray unceasingly. Finally, he learns about the classic Jesus prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner—the Greek *kyrie eleēson*. For the remainder of his travels, the pilgrim disciplines himself to recite this prayer hundreds of times a day, until he completely internalizes it. The prayer sustains the pilgrim for the duration of the journey.

The walking stick could be a symbol of trust and dependence on God. Walking sticks give support, stability, and strength, especially over rough or difficult terrain; the user must trust that the stick will not break. For the spiritual pilgrim, Ps 84:8, 12 implies that prayer and trust are elemental for the pilgrim, signifying his/her ongoing dependence on God for strength and perseverance during the pilgrimage.

Travel: From Intention to In Tension

Just as an external pilgrimage goes from place to place over diverse topography, and encounters various people, so does the internal pilgrimage of spiritual formation. Any type of pilgrimage may begin with the eager anticipation of a great adventure under the leadership of a trustworthy guide. There will be times of wonder, and delightful experiences of new sights, new companions, seasons, and places of rest and hospitality. As well, there will be periods of travelling alone or in the company of other pilgrims and friends, or of strangers and foes.

53. Savin, trans. *Way of a Pilgrim*.

Nevertheless, as with the Israelites, God may not always lead his people on the most scenic, direct route to his destination, but might take them through wilderness and desert terrains where obstacles and set-backs may result in fatigue and discouragement, even despair. It is during this travel that the pilgrim encounters God, others, and him/herself in unprecedented ways. It is here that spiritual formation often happens—in the center of liminality—or when passing through the Valley of Baca (Ps 84:6a). It is in these places that the “sharing in the fellowship of [Christ’s] sufferings” can occur. Following the classical phases of spiritual formation, “purgation” is interwoven with “illumination.” When as Christian pilgrims we encounter God in circumstances and other people, we find ourselves in tension with “aspects of our old life that are clearly and unmistakably inconsistent with God’s will for our wholeness.”⁵⁴ Moreover, God through his Spirit reveals the “deep-seated attitudes and inner orientations of our being out of which our behavior patterns flow . . . essentially our ‘trust structures,’ especially those deep inner postures of our being that do not rely on God but on self for our well-being.”⁵⁵ In essence, God deals with our character. Often during these times, various dimensions of suffering occur, which act as catalysts to enable us to become like Christ in his death. Like Paul, we may not suffer the physical agonies of the crucifixion, but as we take up our own crosses to follow Christ, we may experience other forms of physical suffering, as well as mental and spiritual anguish, humiliation, rejection, and abandonment similar to what Christ endured. Another aspect of becoming like Christ in his death is to be in such union with the Father that we, like Jesus, are able to say: “Yet, not as I will, but as you will” (Matt 26:39). Then, as Christ, “who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2), his pilgrim followers will also “somehow attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

54. Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 83.

55. *Ibid.*, 85.

Trevor Hudson, a South African pastor, echoes these thoughts when he posits that the concept of pilgrimage rests on three essential ingredients—*encounter, reflection, transformation*—which “represent three critical movements of the authentic Christ-following life.”⁵⁶ He states, “As Jesus’ disciples, we are called into an ongoing engagement with our suffering neighbour, continued reflection upon our lives in the light of scripture, and a never-ending process of growing into Christlikeness.”⁵⁷ Moreover, he agrees with the traditional Christian perspective that the external pilgrimage experience reflects the daily, internal pilgrimage life of Christ followers. For Hudson, it means daily encounters with those who suffer. He observes, “In my personal experience, my suffering neighbour is where I meet the crucified and risen Christ.”⁵⁸ Philippians 3:10 highlights this essential ingredient of pilgrimage, and Psalm 84:3c alludes to it with the mention of the altar. Harold Attridge, in his commentary on Hebrews, develops this idea. Hebrews 13:10–16 links the Old Testament concept of “altar” with the New Testament by speaking of Christians having an altar from which “those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat” (Heb 13:10). The pericope goes on to compare the Old Testament “destruction of sacrificial animals ‘outside the gate’ (v. 11) with Christ’s death ‘outside the gate’ (v. 12).”⁵⁹ Attridge posits that “[t]his correspondence clarifies the nature of the ‘altar’ at which Christians worship, as the place where the ‘once for all’ sacrifice of Christ took place” and that “Christians are called to follow their leader ‘outside the camp.’”⁶⁰ Attridge summarizes the pericope by saying: “Having a share in Christ’s altar means finally to follow him on the road of suffering, to worship God through sacrifices of praise, and to devote oneself to loving service of other members of the covenant community.”⁶¹

56. Hudson, *Mile in My Shoes*, 20–22.

57. *Ibid.*, 22.

58. *Ibid.*, 41.

59. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 391.

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*

As Hudson came to see himself as “a pilgrim in daily life,” he realized that “[e]veryday pilgrims seek to cultivate a particular attitude toward life—an attitude that sees the living Christ present in all things, especially in our encounters with those who suffer.”⁶² That attitude, as it becomes increasingly conformed to the image of Christ, is one of caring and compassion. According to Hudson, 1 Corinthians 13 points out that compassionate caring “is *the* distinguishing mark of faithful discipleship” and that this transformation to compassionate caring calls for “disciplined effort and planned co-operation . . . It usually comes as a grace-soaked gift to those who intentionally, consciously, and regularly place themselves before God.”⁶³ Psalm 84:5–8 captures these observations and reflects the core characteristic of “illumination” as “a radical shift of the deep dynamics of our being, a profound transformation of our relationship with God . . . the experience of total consecration to God in love.”⁶⁴

Nonetheless, when a person is in the depths of liminality, at times the pilgrimage can become overwhelming. This may require what David James Duncan calls “strategic withdrawal: to step back, now and then, from the possible to take rest in the impossible: to stand without trajectory in the godgiven weather till the soul’s identity begins to come with the weathering.”⁶⁵ Feasibly, Christ might impose his strategic withdrawal on us, by leading us into a dark night of the soul in order to reveal himself in unparalleled ways, or to accomplish his deeper, mysterious, transforming work within us. Alternatively, we ourselves may recognize that we need an intentional period of rest and reflection. Either way, these seasons of stasis should be embraced as integral parts of the pilgrimage of spiritual formation that will, in God’s time, lead to our *anastasis/exanastasis*.

Although “travel” comprises a large part of the pilgrimage of spiritual formation, it can be said that within the time and space of travel, there are many seasons of preparation and departure;

62. Hudson, *Mile in My Shoes*, 23.

63. *Ibid.*, 24.

64. Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 94.

65. Duncan, “Strategic Withdrawal,” 14.

there is always an inward movement and an outward movement as pilgrims are attentive to God's activity in, through, and around them. As Christ leads his people through new, unknown territory, illumining areas of their lives that do not conform to his image, repeatedly they will find themselves renewing their intentions to follow him—departing from their old ways to share in the fellowship of his suffering, becoming like him in his death, and somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. We have seen how Paul articulates this ongoing pressing and straining towards the goal in Phil 3:12–14, as does Ps 84:5–10.

Arrival: From Transformation to Destination

Unlike postmodern tourists who are “in search of amusement . . . travelling through other people's space, while prepared to pay for the privilege of doing so, . . . with no goal or ultimate destination,”⁶⁶ Christian spiritual pilgrims keep their eyes fixed on their spiritual destination, and in God's timing, eventually they will arrive. According to classical spirituality, this final phase of spiritual formation is “union,” which “characterizes those experiences of complete oneness with God in which we find ourselves caught up in rapturous joy, adoration, praise and a deep peace that passes all understanding.”⁶⁷ Psalm 84:1–4 captures the essence of this union metaphorically. This union will be the culmination of our spiritual formation when we will be “in Christ,” who is our ultimate dwelling place, and to whose image we will be conformed perfectly when we are resurrected physically to the dwelling place of God—the New Heaven and the New Earth.⁶⁸

66. Tidball, “Pilgrim and the Tourist,” 188. Tidball is exploring sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's paradigm of “tourist” to describe postmodern identity.

67. Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 97.

68. Based on N. T. Wright's understanding of God's final *telos* for humankind, I would suggest that he concretizes the classical conception of “union” with God, and thereby challenges many popular misperceptions of what the resurrected life will be like. The life in the recreated heaven and earth will not be just one of enraptured bliss, but will be one of purpose and activity that has some continuity with the present life.

However, Scripture and Christian tradition present many examples of those who had a foretaste of this eternal union in their earthly life pilgrimage.⁶⁹ As wonderful and rapturous as these experiences were, these people were not yet completely conformed to the character and image of Christ. They were still very much alive in the flesh with all its temptations and battles; the undulations and tensions between the temporal and eternal, the “already,” but “not yet,” were still evident.

Implementing a Paradigm of Pilgrimage

It is one thing to develop a paradigm of pilgrimage for spiritual formation, but it is another to consider how to go about incorporating it into one’s own life and the life of a local church. Hudson recounts from his own experience that he saw it being lived out powerfully. After attending a meeting where Jean Vanier (founder of L’Arche) and others told their stories of living “amid crushing deprivation and oppression,”⁷⁰ Hudson came away with the renewed awareness that “many of the most Christ-like spiritual leaders were men and women who lived in close relationship with those who suffered.”⁷¹ From this epiphanal experience, Hudson wondered if “intentionally exposing [his church] to the suffering of others would change us and help us respond in appropriate ways.”⁷² Subsequently, “Pilgrimages of Pain and Hope” were born. Hudson’s book delineates how he carefully prepared his congregation for many of these

69. For example, when Moses ascended the mountain alone (Exod 19; 24:1–32:7; 33:7–34:35), or with the selected leaders of Israel (Exod 24:9–11), he and they directly experienced Yahweh’s Presence. The prophets such as Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, had divine visions and experiences. In the New Testament, Peter, James, and John were present at the transfiguration of Christ. Paul’s Damascus road experience, and his reference to a vision in 2 Cor 12:1–4 are other examples of a “union” with God. Various Christian mystics also have had experiences that would be classified as “union” with God, but these were not permanent states.

70. Hudson, *Mile in My Shoes*, 18.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*

external pilgrimages, and then, how he incorporated this paradigm into his own daily life and encouraged others to do so, especially if they were not able to participate in the actual Pilgrimages of Pain and Hope.

Having embraced the idea of pilgrimage for daily life, Hudson wondered how to go about “cultivating a pilgrim attitude”⁷³ He developed three essential, “interwoven ingredients of a pilgrim posture.”⁷⁴ First, there is “learning to be present.”⁷⁵ This concept might be understood as moving from being scattered and pre-occupied—everywhere and nowhere at the same time—to being “now-here,”⁷⁶ or being attentive to the “sacrament of the present moment.”⁷⁷ For Hudson, it means being fully focused on “what the present moment holds,” which indicates a “willingness to be influenced, even transformed” by everyday experiences and people.⁷⁸ There is a sense of openness, vulnerability, and non-possessive engagement with life. Second, Hudson advocates “learning to listen”⁷⁹ to God and to the suffering stories of others, in order to be truly compassionate. By listening first to our own suffering, we are able to share in the sufferings of Christ as they appear in the lives of others. Third, “learning to notice”⁸⁰ the Divine Presence, “discerning what God is doing and saying in our midst [which] lays the foundations for the faithful pilgrim’s responses.”⁸¹ By developing this disposition, as pilgrims we gain hope and courage, knowing that God is working around, in, and through us; we are not alone on the pilgrimage.

73. The following points are found in *ibid.*, 28–39.

74. *Ibid.*, 29.

75. *Ibid.*, 29–32.

76. Manning, *Ruthless Trust*, 149–61. I am indebted to Manning for this term.

77. De Caussade, *Sacrament*. De Caussade’s classic volume was one of the first to introduce this concept.

78. Hudson, *Mile in My Shoes*, 30.

79. *Ibid.*, 32–35.

80. *Ibid.*, 36–40.

81. *Ibid.*, 37. In his book, Hudson provides practical exercises as spiritual disciplines to develop all three ingredients of pilgrim posture for spiritual formation.

In addition to Hudson's ideas, there are other creative ways to live out pilgrimage as a paradigm for spiritual formation that could help churches become acquainted with the concept. Those who have already adopted this paradigm could use pilgrim language in daily conversation and/or through informal book studies of *Pilgrim's Progress* or *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Retreat settings would be ideal for presenting the pilgrimage paradigm. Sunday morning contexts of teaching, preaching, hymns and spiritual songs/choruses, and visuals, could introduce the pilgrimage motif in a variety of ways. Churches that follow the seasons of the liturgical year have a traditional Christian framework for incorporating the pilgrimage paradigm into the life of the congregation. The possibilities are numerous.

Evaluating the Pilgrimage Paradigm

Although this paper has developed a paradigm of pilgrimage for spiritual formation, and Trevor Hudson powerfully demonstrates how it can be implemented, does this paradigm actually fit the basic criteria that were laid out earlier for a spiritual formation paradigm? Returning to those requirements, we are reminded that as spiritual formation falls under the discipline of Pastoral Theology, developing a paradigm for spiritual formation must engage with culture, Scripture and Christian tradition, and personal experience. This pilgrimage paradigm has done so. Moreover, by adopting the concept of pilgrimage, the paradigm has provided an ancient, but fresh way of viewing and encouraging spiritual formation with language that challenges settled assumptions of faith. For some Canadian Christians, receiving Jesus Christ into their hearts as Lord and Savior is a secure ticket to heaven and a guarantee against suffering; the "already" is here and thus suffering is no longer part of this earthly life. The pilgrimage paradigm challenges those assumptions by showing that spiritual formation is ongoing throughout the life pilgrimage, and that it does indeed entail suffering. Accordingly, the paradigm respects and validates the complexities and ambiguities of individual and corporate lives that call for nuanced approaches to discipleship rather than systematic

methods. Using the selected Scripture passages provided patterns of a deepening hunger for the transforming spoken, written, and incarnate Word of God. Finally, the pilgrimage paradigm is flexible enough to allow for the various seasons of spiritual formation.

Next, does the pilgrimage paradigm conform to the definition of spiritual formation that was established earlier? Christian spiritual formation was defined as: *the transformative movement towards being conformed to the image of Christ for the glory of God and service to others*. By theologically grounding the paradigm in Phil 3:10–14 and Psalm 84, it has been demonstrated that the paradigm does fit this definition.

Further, is the ancient motif of pilgrimage appropriate for twenty-first-century Canadian Christians? The motif is appealing on a number of levels because first, it links contemporary Christians with their Old and New Testament roots, as well as Christian tradition. Furthermore, it connects contemporary believers with the present as it resonates with the current renewed interest in pilgrimage. Also, when properly understood, authentic pilgrimage, both external and internal, has a sense of purposeful adventure for divine ends; it protests against self-centered spirituality and the tourist mindset that typifies much of the surrounding postmodern culture as well as the Canadian Christian sub-culture. To state it succinctly: “When tourists go home they leave their litter behind for someone else to clear up. When pilgrims pass through, they transform the world for the better.”⁸² This also points to how traditional Christian pilgrimage was connected with mission. In addition, the paradigm implicitly addresses issues of character formation, which develops a moral vision to focus on others, thereby challenging what has been deemed to be the narcissistic ethos of Western culture over the last fifty years.⁸³ Lastly, the pilgrimage paradigm is radically counter-cultural in an age where arriving quickly at the destination is more important than paying attention

82. Tidball, “Pilgrim and the Tourist,” 196.

83. Much has been written about this topic. See works such as Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*; Taylor, *Malaise*; and Wells, *Losing Our Virtue*.

to the travel itself; the paradigm offers an alternative way of living as it sacramentalizes time and space, while holding them in tension with the infinite and eternal.⁸⁴ The value of the paradigm is summed up well when Dyas says that, among other things,

[pilgrimage] provides a context into which spiritual experiences of all kinds can be incorporated and against which they need to be measured. It is also a meta-narrative which still makes sense to many inside and outside the Church because the idea of journey is so deeply ingrained within the human psyche. It needs to be reclaimed from the slightly old-fashioned associations of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" because this is not quaint allegory but profoundly challenging spiritual reality.⁸⁵

Ultimately, pilgrimage as a paradigm for spiritual formation might be considered as an echo of the cosmological pilgrimage of the Triune God's his-story of Creation—Fall—Re-creation: Heaven—Earth—New Heaven/New Earth. As pilgrims within that grand meta-narrative, we can only respond in awe and with prayerful trust as we move forward towards our final destination in Christ.

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84. These ideas are my summative understanding of some themes found in Clingerman, "Walking into the Frame."

85. Dyas, "Medieval Patterns," 102.

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