

**Candidate Number: 2005**

**A critical examination of the theological basis of a Christian charity engaged in  
community ministry**

**Degree: MA Contextual Theology**

**Title: Dissertation**

**Word count: 14 702**

**Luther King House, University of Manchester**

**July 2017**

## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a critical examination of the theological basis of a Christian charity engaged in community ministry. Through using Theological Action Research (TAR) as my methodology I identified the 'Theological Voices' of this charity and hopefully enabled formative transformation for practice, but also to allow practice to contribute to the transformation of theology. In undertaking the research I conducted ten in-depth, semi-structured interviews with open ended questions and also administered twenty four questionnaires. Based on the three theologies of mission, according to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,35-72), Type C: Transformation and Liberation was endorsed by the participants as the charity's espoused theology. However, data also revealed that Type A: Mission as Saving Souls and Extending the Church and Type B: Mission as Discovery of the Truth were also prominent theologies. Yet despite these differences and the different denominations of staff members, the charity clearly unites in practice. Their key biblical text headlining their website, expressing their vision, is Isaiah 61:1 which is in line with the espoused theology of transformation and liberation became their normative theology. Incarnation and kenosis were unanimously endorsed by interviewees as an appropriate operant theology for this charity. This operant theology is brought in conversation with the formal theological voice of John Vincent and his vocational cycle (2013,59) and the transformation that took place through the eyes of his discipleship cycle (2013,61).

This theological methodology used in conjunction with interdisciplinary dialogue in this dissertation took place alongside theologies of mission, such as Bevans & Schroeder, (2005,2011), Bosch, (1991), Davey, (2010), and Frost & Hirsch, (2003); as well as reflecting on and dialoguing with different models of community work and social action such as Ledwith (2005), Morisy (1997) and Ballard & Husselbee (2007) and finally, also by

listening to the challenging voices of liberation theologians such as Vincent (2013), West (1999) and Brueggemann, (1998).

## **Acknowledgements**

To all the staff at Luther King House, thank you for your support and guidance over the last four years, you have kindled my love for learning.

To all the staff at Urban Outreach, thank you for your hospitality and for inspiring me and the many people that are working alongside you, to live out our faith in practise.

To Hein, Emma and Minke, I could not choose better companions on this journey.

**A critical examination of the theological basis of a Christian charity engaged in  
community ministry.**

<b>Table of Content</b>	<b>Page no</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Methodological Approach</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.1 Theological Understandings of Practice</b>	
<b>2.2 Research Design</b>	
<b>2.3 Research Justification</b>	
<b>2.4 Ethics Statement</b>	
<b>2.5 Preparation for Fieldwork</b>	
<b>2.6 Research Process</b>	
<b>Chapter 3: Contextualising the practice of the Christian Charity</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3.1 Rationale for research alongside the Christian Charity</b>	
<b>3.2 The disclosure of an Espoused Voice of Theology</b>	
<b>3.2.1 Constants in the Christian Mission</b>	
<b>3.2.2 Three Types of Theology of Mission</b>	

<b>Chapter 4: Operant Voice of Theology</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>4.1 Incarnation &amp; Kenosis</b>	
<b>Chapter 5: Formal Voice of Theology</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>5.1 Vocational Cycle of John Vincent</b>	
<b>5.2 Transformation through the discipleship Cycle</b>	
<b>Chapter 6: Normative Voice of Theology</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Chapter 7: Conclusion: Returning to the espoused</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>7:1 Learning for the Christian Charity</b>	
<b>7:2 Learning for the church</b>	
<b>7:3 Learning for theology</b>	
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>69</b>

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The Christian charity started thirty years ago by providing short term care for troubled young people. It then responded to the street homeless concern by launching an overnight winter cafe called Winter Watch. This provided hot food and shelter. As Winter Watch also became a place of safety for street sex workers, the charity developed its outreach support to both rough sleepers and prostitutes, establishing an office base in the red light district. As many of the men and women being supported had an offending history and/or had been child runaways, the charity expanded to support men leaving prison, children missing from home and then female offenders. In more recent years, the charity has developed its work in health and complex needs, troubled families and food poverty. They deliver a range of commissioned and grant funded work in four main areas:

- Offender Support
- Health and Homelessness
- Children and Families
- Food and Cold Weather Provision

The Christian charity consists of a board of trustees, founder and chief executive, office administrator, operation manager, strategic development manager, deputy chief executive and team leaders of the different projects regarding homelessness, offending and complex needs, children and families' team, food team and volunteers. The twenty six staff members are also supported by over 250 volunteers in the areas of food handling and sorting, foodbank and winter café volunteers. They are also supported by local businesses, schools, 103 churches, the council and support drawn from the public, private, voluntary and community sector. The charity states the following

vision, aim and mission on their website which seems to underpin some of the basis of their theology:

**The vision:** To “bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free” (Isaiah 61:1)

**The aim:** Our aim is to be the most dependable, creative, challenging and inspirational provider of support and care in our town.

**The mission:** Our mission is to meet the needs of children, young people, families and individuals through professional practice and the delivery of high quality services, as a practical expression of the Christian faith. Our support is based on the needs of the whole person; physical, emotional, social, educational and spiritual (Urban Outreach,2017).

This dissertation builds on a dissonance/tension identified by members of this charity between social action and evangelism. This charity works mainly with the marginalised by listening to the challenging questions of the ‘non-person’ instead of trying to answer the questions of the ‘non-believer’ (Graham, Walton & Ward,2005,171). However, the tension identified by this group between social action and evangelism motivated me to reflect with this charity on their motivation or the theologies behind their practise in their community ministry. According to Ballard & Husselbee (2007,57) a particular Christian community needs to explore the relationship between its own self-understanding and the perspectives involved in their missional practice. Therefore it is important to ask questions such as: in what sense does a commitment to faith shape and influence the approach to working in the



wider neighbourhood? Are there any theological principles that should inform a Christian approach to their practice?

To endeavor to answer these questions through critical examination of the theological basis of a Christian charity's engagement in community ministry, this dissertation adopts a theological framework by using Theological Action Research (TAR) called 'Theology in Four Voices' (Cameron et al, 2010,54). These voices are the espoused, operated, normative and formal voice. This methodology allows practice to 'speak' and discloses theology through conversational method (Cameron et al, 2010,56) (Appendix 9).

My aim is to demonstrate how this holistic, integrated approach to doing practical theology honours practical wisdom inherent within practices; nurtures renewed attentiveness towards and/or appreciation of existing practices; sharpens collective ownership/discernment of meanings behind a group's articulated espoused theology; and sometimes leads to a group or individual adjusting practices (or their espoused theology) to participate more faithfully in service of God's mission (Duce,2011,5).

## **Chapter 2: Methodological Approach**

### **2.1 Theological Understandings of Practice**

Practical theology is a discipline committed to making whole and dynamic the truthfulness of Christian thoughts and action, through the bringing together of aspects of faith. (Cameron et al,2010,20). It engages in the personal experiences and practice of the practical theologian him/herself as well as the theological tradition through theological reflection (Cameron et al, 2010,24). A serious question for the practical theologian is how the practice concerned is to be analysed or 'read'. According to Cameron et al (2010,23) part of the difficulty of making practice our theological starting place and end is that practice resists any exhaustive account of itself. Practice is a thing done, a thing experienced and articulation of that thing done or experienced, it is never complete or the reality itself.

To study practice is to study what we actually do. However, we cannot study what we do without studying the ideas that shape what we do. According to Bhatti, et al. (2008,25) practice in this study is understood as "bearers of theology" which "express the contemporary living tradition of the Christian faith". We have a responsibility as theologians to understand how those ideas relate to our Christian tradition. According to Swinton and Mowat (2006,20)

Practices, then contain values, beliefs, theologies and other assumptions which, for the most part, go unnoticed until they are complexified and brought to our notice through the process of theological reflection. Importantly, practices are also the bearers of traditions and histories. They are not therefore simply individual actions. Rather they are communal activities that have developed within communities over

extended periods of time. Practice has pastoral, practical and political dimensions which are related.

To be able to analyse practice, an interdisciplinary relationship with social science is valuable. Qualitative and quantitative research methods have played their part in enabling practical theologians to develop a clear picture of the realities they speak about (Cameron et al,2010,23).

## **2.2 Research Design**

In my approach to engage with the underpinning theologies of the Christian Charity I made use of TAR, which is best done in a partnership between an insider and an outsider team. The insider team owns the practise that is the subject of the research and has a commitment to exploring and reflecting upon the practice, with the aim of changing the practice and/or developing their theological understanding of that practice, while the outsider team facilitates the research, builds the capacity and deepens the reflection by bringing different knowledge and perspectives (Cameron et al,2010,70-71). Although I act, as an individual, as the ‘outsider team’ I still chose to work with Cameron’s TAR model because it gives me a vision for better understanding and articulating the mystery of “God in practice” (Cameron et al,2010,50).

The TAR methodology is distinctive in the sense of how different stages of the method are worked out. ‘Experience’ is articulated and documented using an action research process and social science methods to gather data. The experience of the practitioners is embodied in a text, shared with both practitioners and researchers, where both identify important learnings from the particular perspectives, and make suggestions for transformed action and theology.

TAR is both practical and research based, and a shared, conversational approach to theological reflection (Cameron et al,2010,50). Furthermore, theology does not just come in at the reflection stage but research is explicitly theological from its first stage and the framework that informs the practice of TAR is described as “theology in four voices” (Cameron et al,2010,51). TAR’s primary characteristic is its fundamental conviction and commitment to the idea that research done into faith practices is “theological all the way through” (Cameron et al,2010,51). All the material, written or unwritten, textual, practical and theological is seen as “faith seeking understanding” and this means that the practices participated in and observed are themselves bearers of theology. The idea of the “living Christian tradition” as a way of understanding Christian practice is key to the methodology and that practice is its own proper ‘articulation’ of theological conviction and insight (Cameron et al,2010,51). The naming of faith-full actions as a theological voice draws practice into a dynamic set of other theologies, and it is also important that the espoused theologies also ‘come from somewhere’ (Cameron et al,2010,53), whether they draw their sense of views from Scripture, Church tradition, liturgy or from the influence of a theological movement such as liberation theology, which make present the normative and formal theologies.

TAR locates itself within dynamic and distinct, but interrelated and overlapping ‘voices’. The ‘four voices’ (Appendix 9) are defined as follows:

- Espoused Theology: What we say we do
- Operated Theology: What we actually do
- Normative Theology: The theology the group names as authoritative
- Formal Theology: The theology of academic theologians and dialogue partners from other discipline

A potential weakness of action is that the knowledge generated can be short lived because it is particular to a context. Although action research emphasises its ability to generate changed meanings as well as changed practices, there can be a concern that action research becomes purely interested in 'what works' and ignores the espoused value basis of the organisation taking part. During my research I specifically tried to put the emphasis on the development of the charity's espoused theology. Another potential weaknesses relating to action research is that power relationships are replicated rather than democratised. I endeavoured to use a consultative model, both to empower staff and by learning together and from each other. Finally, with action research it can potentially feel that there is no investment in time and trust. However, I worked with this charity as a volunteer for six months, as part of the team, to build relationships and trust, before I started my research (Cameron et al,2010,42-43).

### **2.3 Research Justification**

I will conduct my research within a Christian charity which is involved in practical theology in the North West of England. The focus group I plan to involve in the research project will be twenty four members of staff from the charity who represent a variety of Christian denominations.

The qualitative measures will involve the following:

I will develop and administer a structured questionnaire (Appendix 5), which contains open-ended questions. These questionnaires will be filled in electronically and participants will

have a week to reply. The intention is that this will allow more in-depth theological reflections and will also possibly reduce the anxiety of the participants.

I will conduct ten in-depth, semi-structured interviews with open ended questions (Appendix 6). The group of participants will consist of members from different ecumenical backgrounds; six members from the different teams (projects), two members of the management team and the two founders of the charity. I plan for the interviews to be no longer than forty minutes. All interviews will be digitally recorded to ensure accuracy.

To have minimum impact on the workload and normal working day of the members of staff involved I will make sure the interviews are held at a time that is convenient for them. I plan to design the questionnaire in a way that will be user friendly, easy to complete and will not have a significant on their time/work demands. I therefore also designed an interview schedule, so that I can work around times that suit participants.

My primary method of data collection will be to take field notes during non-transcribing interviews. Recording is helpful in content analysis and allows you to identify categories or themes or to summarize and note comments that are particularly interesting. It also enables the interviewer to look interested by making eye contact. I plan to use both these methods to avoid the potential of significant data loss during the data gathering but also because I cannot assume that all respondents will be willing for their comments to be recorded (Bell & Waters,2014,184). I decided against video recording because most people feel self-conscious when there is a camera involved, and this might influence the quality of the data obtained. I will use the constant comparative method to identify themes during the data analysis of the interviews (Thomas,2010,200).

Qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes, values or perceptions (Bell,2014,9); things that cannot necessarily be observed or

accommodated in a formal questionnaire. Furthermore, Bridget Byrne (2004,36) suggests that open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretation of events, understanding of experiences and opinions. When qualitative interviewing is done well, it is able to achieve a level of depth and complexity that is not available to other approaches, particularly survey-based ones. Interviews do not tell us directly about people's 'experiences' but instead offer indirect 'representations' of those experiences. Byrnes (2004,36) stated that: "few researches believe that in the course of the interview, you are able to 'get' inside some one's head". What an interview produces is a particular representation or account of an individual's views or opinions'.

In interviewing the participants I will use the questionnaire to conduct a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. This method combines the structure of specific issues relating to my aims but also allows the respondents to reply in whatever way they want and gives me the freedom to follow up certain points as necessary, for example measuring the experience of the human insight (Thomas,2010,162). Unlike an unstructured interview, it also has the benefit of being easily and quickly administrated and the responses can be quite easily coded (Thomas,2010,162). I considered using unstructured interviews but decided against this because not all the staff have the same in-depth knowledge and would therefore be unable to determine the important issues needed to be covered and also they might not cover the specific issues related to the aims of the research project.

I also decided against a group interview at this stage, because according to Thomas, (2010, 169), people behave differently in groups, and there is an inclination for a group to display what is called a 'risky shift phenomenon', a tendency well established in social psychology. This group consists of many participants with theological degrees or staff that have been

working for this charity for more than twenty years and I did not want these voices to be overpowering, and therefore chose to do individual interviews instead of group interviews. According to Hayes (2000,395) groups have to be carefully balanced in terms of age, sex and ethnic status of respondents because they can feel socially constrained and not contribute freely to the discussion.

Furthermore, I already have an existing professional relationship with this group by working alongside them as a volunteer on placement as a minister in training. Therefore, good relationships have been established with them and among the members of the group. Hopefully this will also minimise the power and status dynamic and will reduce the possibility of interviewees feeling intimidated and pressured. However, inside research can adversely influence the attainment of objectivity and gaining confidential knowledge has the potential for affecting future relationships with participants (Bell & Waters,2014,57).

It was also important to me that staff from a variety of denominational backgrounds were represented in the interviews because the theological emphasis is often different from denomination to denomination.

Although I agree that one of the major advantages of the interview is its adaptability and that a skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which a questionnaire can never do, I do think there was a place for a questionnaire in my research (Bell & Waters,2014,178). My research group never formally reflected on the theology that underpinned their practice and never voiced their espoused theology, other than through their website and encounters with schools and churches. I therefore decided to make use of questionnaires that include using rating scale questions or a Likert Scale. According to Thomas (2010,178) the Likert Scale was developed by the psychologist Rensis Likert primarily for measuring attitudes: respondents indicate their levels of agreement to statements



provided by the researcher relating to that attitude, belief or characteristic. This rating scale enabled me to measure the general attitude of the group towards their espoused theology. According to Punch (2005,28) there are occasions when qualitative researchers draw on quantitative techniques, “qualitative research not only uses non-numerical and unstructured data but also, typically, has research questions and methods which are more general at the start, and become more focused as the study progresses”.

I would like to return to this charity to be able to present my findings and to discuss suggestions for transformed action and theology in the group, in order to embed the cycle of continuous reflection and to enable them to move from general to more detailed discussions regarding their practice.

### **3.4 Ethics Statement**

First I will conduct and sign the declaration from my college to confirm that I have considered the ethics of conducting their research (Appendix 1). This process also includes the conducting of separate research information sheets (Appendix 2) and research consent forms (Appendix 3) for the staff involved in the research. I will pass on this to the course tutor for approval. I will then ask for permission from the chief executive of the Christian charity to do the fieldwork and to use the staff in the research. I will then send out the consent forms to gain written consent before I start my fieldwork.

It is highly unlikely that this research project will contribute to any risk to the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of the participants. However, there is a minimal risk that a question may cause a participant to re-experience previous memories that may lead to

some emotional and psychological distress associated with the memory. However, all participants will be provided with information sheets, which contain the contact details of the researcher. Participants will be advised that should they require any further information or have additional questions about the study, they would be free to contact the researcher.

I will also take all the necessary steps to reduce the sense of intrusion and to put the participants at ease. I plan to do this by explaining to participants every step of the process and the reasons for and benefits of the research. By doing this I hope to reduce their anxiety and give participants a space to ask questions.

The research engages with healthy adults who are able to give informed consent. I will ensure that all participants understand the research process, and before they sign the consent form explain why their participation is necessary and that the finished work will be obtainable through the college library. I will operate within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant differences.

To have minimum impact on the workload and normal working day of the participants involved I will make sure to do the interviews at a time that is convenient to them and by designing an interview schedule (Appendix 4). However, participants will be informed of their right to refuse to answer questions about which they feel uncomfortable or to withdraw from the project at any time, in the information sheet they are given initially and also verbally at the start of the interview

I meet the legal requirements, by means of a DBS check, in relation to working with the Christian Charity and the URC.

Every effort will be made to make all identifying information anonymous by ensuring that there will be no personal identifying data on the questionnaires except for the name of the denomination and group they belong to. This will enable the researcher to support the thematic analysis and theme mapping (Bell,2014,51) (see Appendix 8). I will make use of pseudo names in my reference throughout the dissertation, for example when participant's qualitative feedback from the questionnaires and interviews are used.

I will carry out the collection, storage, security and dissemination of data during my research with in the conditions of the Data Protection Act, 1998 (The National Archives,1998). All data (electronic information) will be kept confidential by using a password protected document on a password protected computer. All data from the research will be destroyed and deleted on completion of the research.

### **3.5 Preparation for Fieldwork**

Prior to the onset of the research project I plan to meet up with the members of staff to explain the methodology and the motivation, reasons, aims and benefits behind the research project. I prepared an information sheet to explain the methodology (TAR and' four voices') of theology as a visual resource, to include people with different learning styles. This session will also be beneficial to address possible questions, anxieties and uncertainties, if there are any.

In designing the questionnaire for the staff, I made use of a combination of questions including closed, open ended and Likert scale questions. I designed the questionnaire by starting off with fairly simple questions, to put them at ease.

I also worked very closely with the office administrator; she supported me in sending out the questionnaires electronically, identifying staff from different teams and ecumenical backgrounds to take part in the interviews and in filling the interview schedule that I designed beforehand.

### **3.6 Research Process**

The intervention stage lasted for a period of three weeks. Everything went according to plan, other than one of the staff did not want to be recorded but I took field notes instead.

Initially, I did not plan to make use of graphs for my data analysis. However, I decided to introduce graphs as after I received the questionnaires and started ‘eyeballing’ (Thomas, 2010, 212) the questionnaires’ Likert scale, I was surprised to see how close the most frequently occurring value (mode), in identifying the espoused theology in the ‘derived statistics’ were. According to Thomas (2010,213) descriptive statistics are about the simplification, organisation, summary and graphical plotting of numerical data, thus it supported me in getting a broad view of the charity’s espoused theology.

### **Chapter 3: Contextualising the practice of the Christian charity**

#### **3.1 Rationale for doing research alongside this Christian Charity**

The rationale for my research is strongly influenced by the benefits of the TAR methodology, my strong views of the importance of doing contextual theology and the influence of Liberation Theology on my practice and theology.

According to Cameron (2010,152) the benefit of using TAR as a disciplined, methodical way is that the experience is especially open to:

- the fresh insights of ‘living traditions’, in other words it give room for attentiveness to what is going on in some of the ‘hidden’ theological voices of Christian life: voices of practice and ordinary discipleship. Discernment through conversation with the other, more establish theologies, our practice can in turn be shaped, renewed and interpreted afresh and vice versa.
- TAR can also empower people with a language with which to speak about faith and practice, to grow in confidence and to develop pedagogy in speaking about God where we can all learn from each other. New concepts and terminology hopefully enables them to dialogue and go deeper in dynamic exploration which hopefully

energises and excites them while grappling with the dialectical appreciation of the Christian theology (Cameron et al 2010,152).

- The conversational method within teams of different Christian traditions has allowed TAR to enable “ecumenically receptive theological learning” (Cameron et al 2010,152). Reflection and shared data from different perspectives seems to enable Christians to focus on the similarities of the common reality of Christian living in a shared context and with common purposes or mission instead of ecumenical differences.
- TAR can also enable interdisciplinary integration through inter-personal listening, challenging and learning. Through reflection it allows the coming together of different kinds of expertise that are part of the group (Cameron, et al,2010,152).
- TAR can enable and support learning and growth among practitioners. My hope is that the TAR will enable formative transformation for practice and allows practice to contribute to the transformation of theology (Cameron et al,2010,153).
- As a contextual theologian I agree with Speckman & Kauffman (2009,27) that more rigorous and comprehensive analysis must be done by theologians (all people) in the areas of political, cultural, economic and psychological analysis so that we can be conscious of the influence that the context has on our thinking, especially on our theology.
- It is also important that we should see different contexts in relation to each other. It calls for greater co-operation around the world. Contextual theology should not become a narrow-minded theology. We should work on the insight that any Christian can and should do theology. According to Speckman & Kauffman (2009, 27) this means that the “academic monopoly over theology” will have to be broken. We have

to empower people to do theology together in groups or as a community instead of doing theology in isolation as individuals.

- Liberation Theology has an “epistemological” privilege of the poor’ (West,1999,2) and it asserts that full salvation must include liberation from structural bondage (Rowland & Vincent,2013,39). This charity works mainly alongside the marginalised.
- Finally, I agree with Zoe Bennet (2004,28) when she expresses the desire to discern what the missional task is in any particular ministry context:

God has made human beings to be curious creatures. The desire to learn, to find out where someone else is coming from and why others think and act as they do, is a wonderful antidote to judgementalism and narrow-mindedness. Curiosity is a driving force in learning; it may also be a driving force in loving.

### **3:2 The disclosure of an Espoused Voice of Theology**

The espoused theology is embedded within a group’s articulation of its beliefs - in what they say they do (Cameron et al, 2010,54). According to Cameron’s practices of faith, the practical actions of Christian groups being reflected or researched on are generally already consciously aligned to an articulated theology (espoused theology). It might be that the espoused theology is less reflected on than their actual practice (operant theology) or the relationship between it and the action carried out is not always clear or coherent. In my opinion, this charity’s espoused theology is less developed than their operant theology. People who are ‘doers’, and focus on the practice of their faith often find it hard to reflect on the theory, their theology, behind their doing. It was important to me to enable them to stop, think, reflect and discover fresh insights on what they say they are doing.

The Christian Charity states the following espoused theology (what they say they do) on their website (Urban Outreach, 2017):

Our charitable objects are to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of people in necessitous circumstances by reason of homelessness and economic circumstances and in particular:

- to advance the Christian religion
- the relief of poverty by the provision of temporary accommodation
- to advance the education of such people by training in life skills

Through my questionnaire, I endeavoured to reflect on the group's espoused theology as well as Bevans & Schroeder's (2005,35-72) three types of theology of mission.

I will therefore define the three types of theologies according to Bevans & Schroeder and attempt to identify which of these theologies are most prominent in the espoused theology of this charity.

### **3.2.1 Constants in the Christian Mission**

According to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,33) the church is missionary by its very nature as it continues Jesus' mission of preaching, serving and witnessing to God's already-inaugurated yet still-to-be-consummated reign, growing and changing and being transformed in the process. However, Walls (1996,3-15) also sees another level of connection, despite the varying statements of differing groups, where there is in Christianity an "essential continuity" by which it remains itself as it transforms itself in missionary outreach. According to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,34) despite the differences of language, context and culture, there are certain constants that help to define Christianity in its missionary nature. These constants in



Christianity relate to questions about Jesus, the church, the future, salvation, human nature and human culture. Bevans & Schroeder (2005,34) are of the opinion that these constants in Christianity have certainly varied through the two thousand years of Christianity's existence, as the church has lived out its missionary nature in various contexts. Bevans & Schroeder (2005,34) propose six constants in Christian mission: Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, salvation, anthropology and culture.

Despite the fact that Bevans & Schroeder (2005,34) describe six constants of mission, I focused specifically on salvation and culture due to the fact that the research is concentrated on a Christian charity's community ministry in a deprived area.

I will define salvation and culture according to the three types of theology of mission by means of research data obtained through questionnaires, interviews and information from the charity's website. By using González's (1999,16) three distinct types of theology I will endeavour to disclose the charity's espoused theology.

### **3.2.2 Three Types of Theology of Mission**

#### **Type A Theology: Mission as Saving Souls and Extending the Church**

According to González (1999,22) the word *law* best describes this theology as God is described as a lawgiver and judge, creation is conceived as wholly complete and ordered, and sin is described as going against this order and breaking divine law. Humans are seen as born as sinners, having inherited sinfulness from the first parents who originally broke God's law and disrupted the world order. Jesus is seen as the new Moses and the gospel a new law, which is a law of repentance. Therefore if somebody submits to that law in baptism, they will be saved and thereby avoid God's punishment, provided they obey the laws of God's church and the prescriptions of the Holy Scripture. At the end God will resurrect and judge the entire

human race and those saved will be with God forever in a state where order will be restored and all will forever obey the divine commandments.

Salvation is perceived as something that happens after death and out of this world (O'Meara, 1997, 150). According to Bosch (1999,394), missionary activity was always linked to some kind of charitable work, but this was not seen as witnessing to or bringing God's salvation already now breaking into the world, but more as a process of pre-evangelization. Salvation is also seen as personal as it is something that happens to an individual and only with their full consent; that is when they accept Jesus as personal saviour. Furthermore, salvation is restricted to interior, spiritual renewal and transformation and does not include structural, political or cosmic renewal.

Culture, according to Lonergan (1972, xi), can be conceived as either classical or empiricist. From the classicist perspective, culture is normative, universal and permanent and there is only one culture which is the culture of the West which has reached its final achievement in Western modernity. However, from the empiricist perspective, culture is defined as a set of meanings that informs a way of life. It is neither normative nor universal, nor can it be seen as a permanent achievement. It is simply the way in which people have sought and continue to seek to make sense of their lives in particular situations. From this perspective no culture can be considered as better than another. According to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,48) Type A theology would most likely regard culture from a classicist perspective. What was Christian is implicitly assumed to be Western, and what was Western, in the same way, was assumed to be Christian. Type A theology seems to adopt a more counter-cultural stance and the gospel is meant to confront and judge culture, and not to be enriched by it.

In summary, the mission in the context of Type A theology might be characterised as the effort to save souls and extend the church.

We cannot evangelise because of constricts on funding, we have to signpost clients to churches, we have to evangelise covertly (Interview, Maria).

Without the saving knowledge of Christ offered by the church, the reign of God on earth, people cannot avail themselves of the means of salvation. Culture, although it has no religious significance per se, might be used to make Christianity clearer, to better communicate the gospel or to help Christians to better express their faith. The influence of Type A theology is today flourishing within some evangelical circles (Bevans & Schroeder,2005,49).

Although this charity works mainly in the community, as a Christian charity and not as a church based project, and with openness to culture, they express a longing to evangelise more explicitly and to provide for the clients a place of spiritual support.

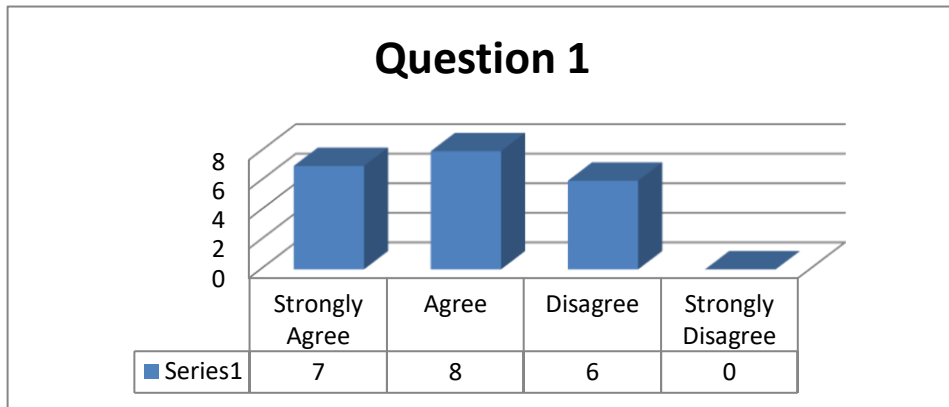
Although we previously signposted many of our clients to a variety of churches nearby, we recently bought a church building. We often found that the churches we sign-posted clients to are not a 'good fit' (Interview, Harry).

The clients found it hard to belong due to their trust and attachment issues. Our existing relationship with the clients enables us to work better on an emotional and spiritual level. The clients often struggle with church language and are expected to conform in churches (Interview, Peter).

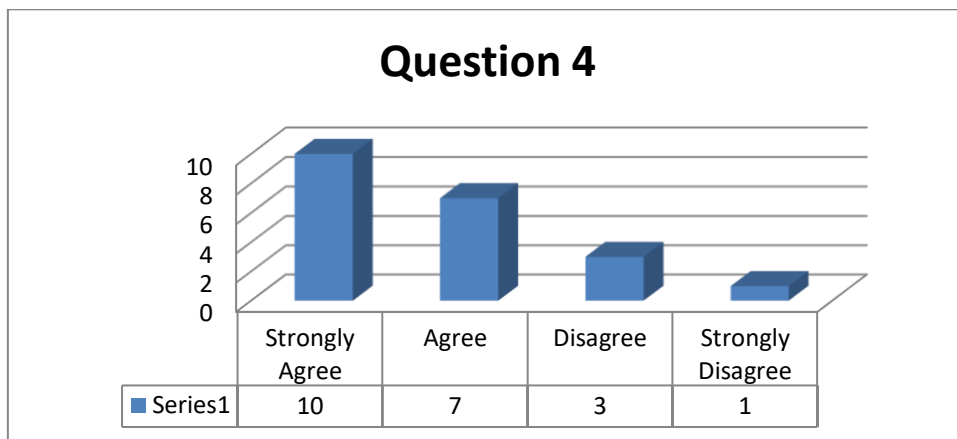
The tension identified by this group between social action and evangelism is also supported by the data, showing that there is strong support for Type A theology.

### **Type A Theology: Mission as Saving Souls and Extending the Church**

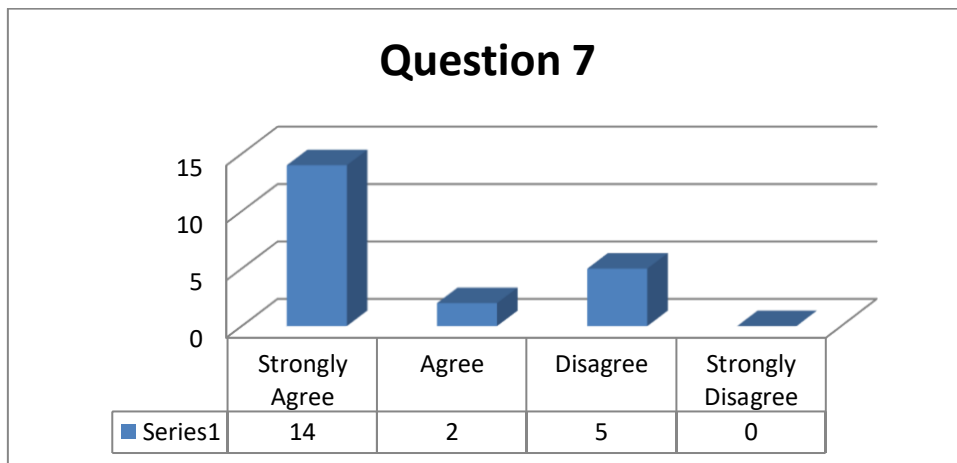
Question 1: Our mission is to save souls



Question 4: Our mission is extending the Church



Question 7: Our mission is to enable people to experience personal salvation



71% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that their mission is to save souls; 81 % indicated that they agree or strongly agree that their mission is to extend the church; 76% agreed or strongly agreed that they view their mission as enabling people to experience personal salvation. The following responses from members support this statement:

Although we can't pro-actively evangelise, we pray for the needs of our clients and their families and we pray for breakthrough and salvation and we have faith to see God do the impossible: to bring people to the Lord and to move people from their chaotic life styles; where possible, to introduce them to the wider church community (Questionnaire, Barbara).

I believe that the Gospel referred to by Jesus was that the Kingdom of Heaven had come, but for people to appreciate the fullness of that Kingdom and its benefits they need to come to a personal realisation of their need for redemption and salvation and therefore it is also in our 'gift' to provide opportunities for people to make this profession of faith and thereby be inheritors of all that Christ has for them (Interview, Stuart).

### **Type B Theology: Mission as Discovery of the Truth**

According to González (1999,25), Platonic philosophy believed that God was absolutely transcendent, above all change and beyond all time. They believed that humans had been created as wholly spiritual beings who fell into sin and that the divine mercy has provided people with the material universe where they may find their way back to wholeness. Both reason and revelation were the means that God had given humanity to recover its original holiness and each was perfectly compatible with the other. Type B theology's watchword is *truth*, as for them the basic insight into Christianity was this perfect compatibility between reason and revelation, philosophy and faith. For Type B theology, human experience, enhanced through the power of philosophical reason, can serve as a basic hermeneutical tool to understand the meaning of Scripture and the nature of Christianity. It attempts to present Christianity in terms that are compatible with people's contemporary mentality.

Initially Type B theology, similar to Type A, focused on the *salvation* of the soul. However, with the dawn of modernity, traditional spiritual understanding of salvation was strongly challenged. Bosch (1991,395) describes this change as “liberation from religious superstition, attention to human welfare, and the moral improvement of humanity”. This was an understanding where humans were active and responsible agents who used science and technology in order to enable material improvements and contribute to socio-political change in the present. According to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,59), salvation was conceived in terms of enlightenment of ignorance and the Western mission was the great educator for the unenlightened. Today, Type B theology persists in regarding human experience and human reason in a very positive light but, like Type C theology, understands salvation as holistic and integral.

Supporting clients to see their unique inherent value and worth as individuals, listening closely to their needs and encouraging and enabling them to access appropriate support (Questionnaire, Zara)

We believe that all people have amazing potential despite life events or background and we seek to support them to build a stronger future. We want the people we work with to have the opportunity to flourish, realise their full potential and live lives which are free from abuse, poverty, neglect, crime, controlling substances or a sense of failure (Website).

Modern expressions of Type B theology regard culture from more of an empiricist perspective which views culture as something good and trustworthy and a context in which one may encounter the divine. It would interact with culture through the use of an anthropological model of contextual theology by listening attentively to the culture in an

attempt to discern the presence of God who is understood as having been in the culture even before the beginning of Christianity (Bevans & Schroeder,2005,60). The method of evangelisation would begin with a thorough “mission in reverse” where the word of the gospel will only be preached after it had itself been evangelised by the God who is already there.

In summary, Type B theology is characterised by a search for the truth, through attention to human experience and human reason (González,1999,120-121). Mission is carried out as a search for God’s grace that is hidden within people’s cultural, religious and historical context. Mission is therefore an invitation to discover the Truth and in that Truth lies human salvation, already realised and present in human experience and human culture. The church in mission, according to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,61) is the great sacrament of what being human is about, which is a community in which one has access to the mystery and community of God.

The charity understands salvation as holistic and integral. One of the members said: ‘Salvation is not just about the confession of faith’ (Mary, Interview). They regard human experience and human reason in a positive light.

To provide holistic love, to enable physical, emotional and spiritual renewal and self-worth (Questionnaire, Paul).

However, I am not sure that the staff members understand the concept of “mission in reverse”, yet. Nevertheless, evidence of their holistic approach to salvation is clear in their practice.

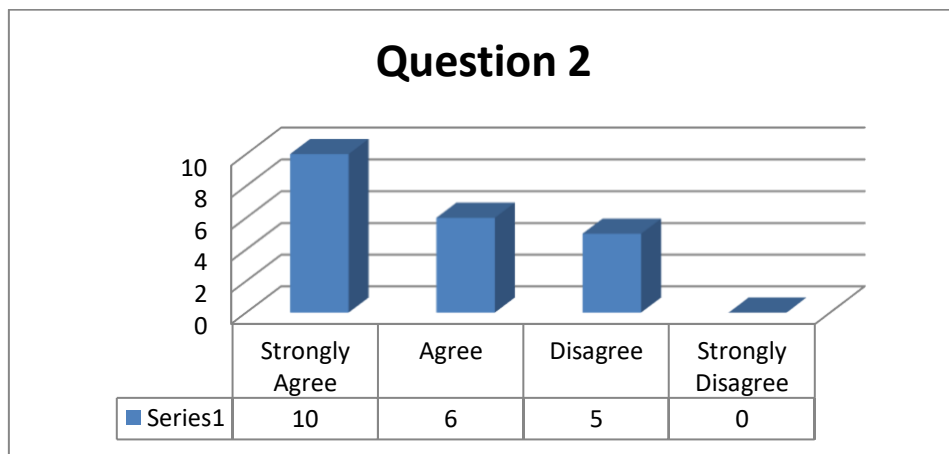
The work of the charity is to address the needs of the whole person, to provide physical, emotional, economic, education, social and spiritual support; Economical:

poverty, unemployed, poor housing; Emotionally: traumatic experience, dysfunctional upbringing, relationships broken down, school and education, mental health, criminal record; Physically: rough sleeping, addiction, lack of self-care, lack of food, prostitution, slavery, domestic violence and debt; Spiritual: hope for future, praying behind the scenes, and wholeness in God- spiritual break through (Interview, Milly).

Further evidence of the support for Type B theology can be seen in the data from the research.

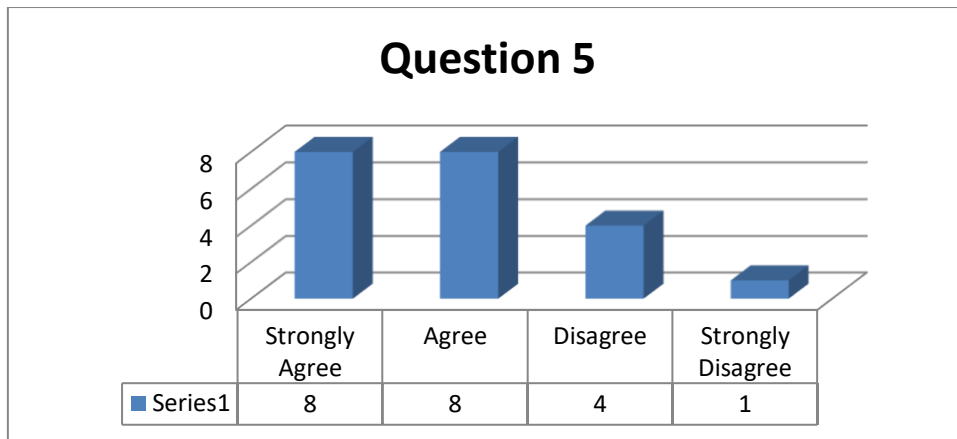
**Type B Theology: Mission as Discovery of the Truth**

Question 2: Our mission is the discovery of Truth, so that people can discover their full potential in Christ

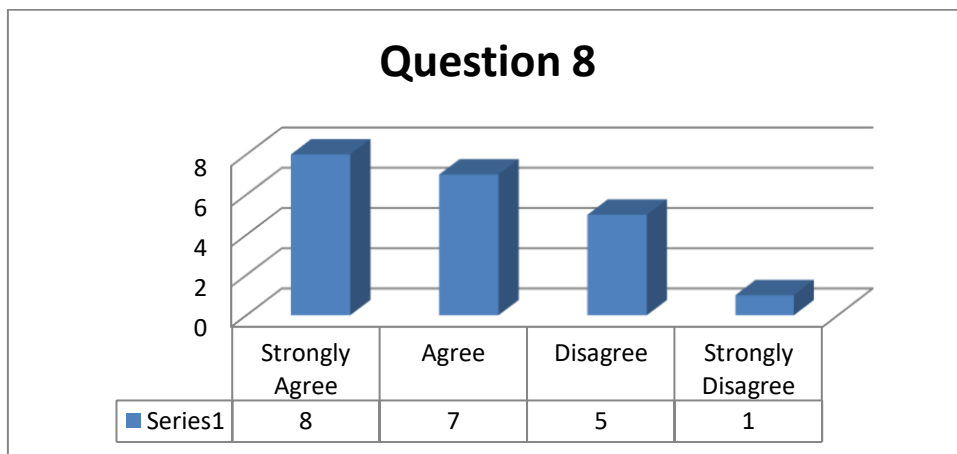


Question 5: Our mission is an invitation to discover the truth – human salvation





Question 8: Our mission is to respect, value, support and promote difference and diversity whilst rejecting and challenging any form of oppression, discrimination and sectarianism



76% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that their mission is the discovery of Truth, so that people can discover their full potential. 76% indicated that they agree or strongly agree that their mission is an invitation to discover the truth - human salvation; 71 % agreed or strongly agreed that they respect, value, support and promote differences and diversity whilst rejecting and challenging any form of oppression, discrimination and sectarianism.

### **Type C Theology: Mission as Commitment to Liberation and Transformation**

According to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,61) Type C theology is less legalistic and abstract than the other two theological perspectives. It is more concrete and based on events that many of its originators had witnessed. The keyword describing this theology is *history*, not as an accurate description of past events but rather in the sense that everything takes place within time and is guided towards God's future. According to this theology, history was part of God's plan from the beginning and not a result of a fall of some eternal state of perfection or contemplation. God had created people in his image but with the task of growing into His full likeness. Therefore people are born 'imperfect' but are 'perfectible'. Type C theology has always been very pastoral in outlook and remains centred on the mystery of Christ while always recognising the importance and dignity of humans.

According to Type C theology, *salvation* involves both material and spiritual dimensions. David Bosch (1991,399) speaks of "comprehensive"; "integral", "total" or "universal" salvation as an understanding that avoids the two extremes of (1) something that takes us out of this world, or only involves a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ" or (2) falling into positions that reduce salvation to economic, justice, liberation and human solidarity. Jerald Gort, according to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,69) describes four aspects of the church's mission in light of the understanding of salvation. Firstly, that the church proclaims salvation by preaching reconciliation – with God, with humanity and nature. Secondly, that mission invites people out of their aloneness and into a community without barriers and division. Thirdly, the church in mission must involve itself in the ministry of mercy, by which the community extends help and assistance to the poor and those who suffer. Finally, mission that serves and witnesses to salvation will be a ministry of justice, a ministry of the poor and with the poor that addresses itself to the structures that keep people poor.

Within Type C theology *culture* is regarded as basically good because of human sin and the enslavement to the powers that sin involves, it needs to be purified, perfected and healed

(Bevans & Schroeder,2005,71). Therefore the Christian faith might best interact with culture in terms of the “praxis model” of contextual theology where culture is conceived more from the perspective of the dynamics of social change and that humanity responds to the call to have the gospel interact with the culture. The gospel is viewed and understood as being involved in the very construction of culture. The focus is on discerning and working for the fullness of salvation within a particular cultural context, and calling that context to greater growth and sensitivity to God’s saving action in history.

In summary, Type C theology focuses on history as the ‘place’ in which people live and in which they are called to change and grow, as well as recognising history’s essential ambiguity as a situation enslaved by sin, and therefore a situation where growth without God’s grace is impossible.

To set God’s people free from the strongholds, such as poverty, poor housing and unemployment (Interview, Carla).

Mission is therefore focused on working towards the liberation and transformation of humanity and the world. The liberation and transformation that comes from Christ does not take humanity out of the world but rather as being of this world. Missionaries view themselves as agents of God’s liberating and transforming work (Bevans & Schroeder,2005,72). The following qualitative data supports this argument:

We are co- workers and participating in the transformation of the Kingdom on earth - in the here and now (Interview, Sandra).

This charity works in a ‘place’ where they feel they are called to be the agents in this earthly kingdom (the world) to enable transformation and liberation where God’s people are enslaved by structures that keep them poor.

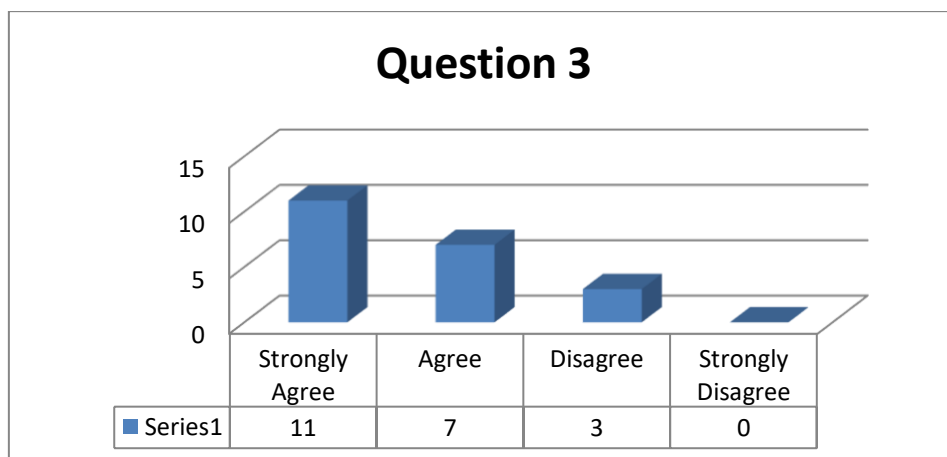
On a day to day level each of the different teams are focused on their individual projects, each of which is about improving people’s lives, reducing poverty and addressing the underlying issues that have caused the client to be in the situation they are currently in (Questionnaire, Paul).

Although I agree that the charity brings transformation on a personal level by addressing the symptoms of the structures that keep them poor, I do not think that they liberate the clients by challenging the structures that keep them poor.

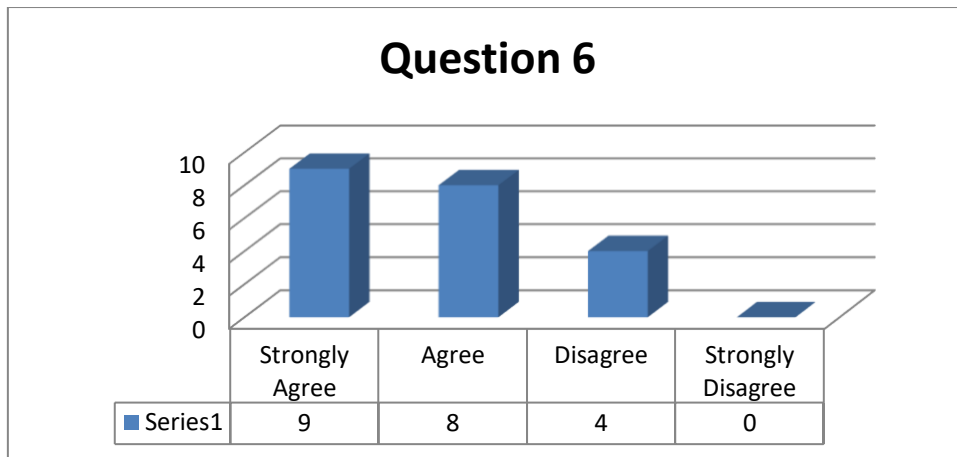
Further evidence of the support for Type C theology can be seen in the data from the research.

**Type C Theology: Mission as Commitment to Liberation and Transformation**

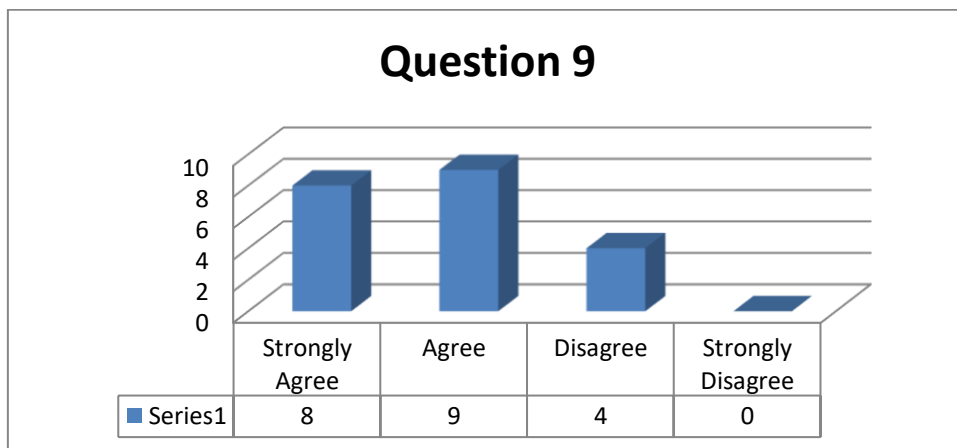
Question 3: Our mission is a commitment to liberation and transformation



Question 6: Our mission is to work for a more just and equal society which recognises environmental, political, cultural and economic issues



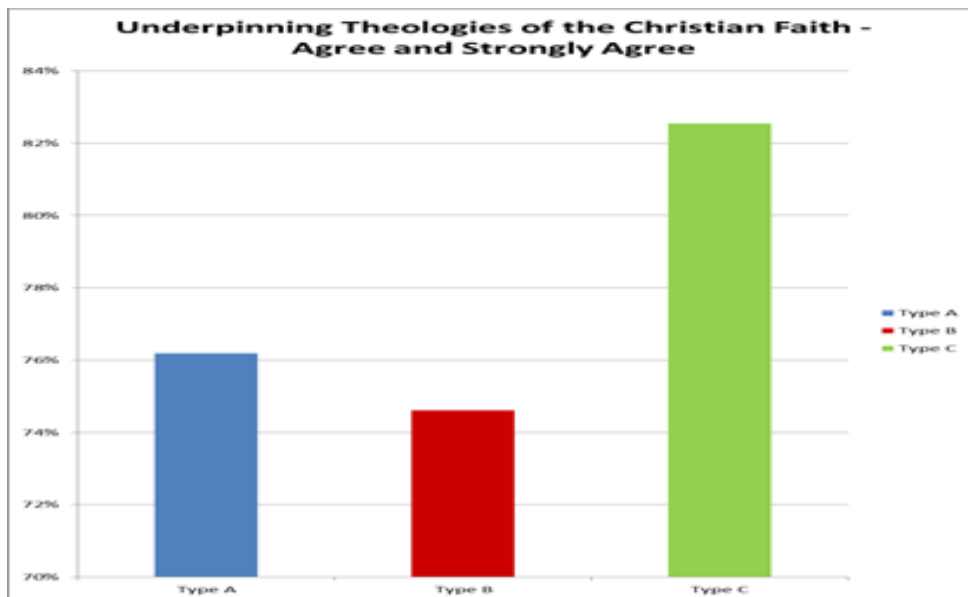
Question 9: Our mission is to promote active participation of people within communities, using power of a collective voice and goal.



86% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that their mission is a commitment to liberation and transformation; 81% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that their mission is to work for a more just and equal society which recognizes environmental, political, cultural and economic issues; 81% indicated that they agree or strongly agree that their mission is to promote active participation of people within communities, using power of a collective voice and goal.

According to Bevans & Schroeder (2005,35) these types of theologies are likely to have elements of the other types or paradigms evident within them but have a certain perspective

which is distinct and tends to determine all doctrinal expressions of faith and pastoral decisions that embody it. There may be no ‘pure’ exponents of any of the types, but every church decision, every theological position and therefore every attitude in mission can be seen as a logical consequence of a distinct perspective that is characteristic of one of the three (Bevans & Schroeder,2005,35).



However, if we look at the summary of the research data we come to the conclusion that Type A, Type B and Type C theologies are all prominent in the charities espoused theology but that Type C theology (Mission as Commitment to Liberation and Transformation) features as the most prominent espoused theology of this charity - in other words what they say they do. More than 82% of the participants agree or strongly agree that Type C theology is their prominent espoused theology of mission. 76% agree or strongly agree that Type A theology is a prominent espoused theology of mission and 74% of the participants believe that Type B is a prominent espoused theology.

## **Chapter 4: Operant Voice of Theology:**

### **4.1 Incarnation & Kenosis**

The operant theology is the theology embedded within the actual practice of a group (Cameron et al,2010,54). When participants were asked in the interviews: If you can give one word to describe what the ‘working out’ of the charity is, what will that be? many in the group articulated incarnational mission and kenosis. When we talk about incarnational mission we draw inspiration and motivation from that unique act that God entered into the world and into the human condition in the person of Jesus Christ (Frost & Hirsch,2003, 35). Incarnation places the concerns of the divine in human space and place. An evocation of a divine option for the poor among marginal people often leads to an identification with the person and work of Jesus Christ “who for our sake become poor”.(2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus was Immanuel, God alongside us. This notion of incarnational vocation can be a call to cross boundaries and relocate socially, culturally or geographically, it is to meet people where they are (Davey,2010,90).

According to Frost and Hirsch (2003,35) when we talk of the incarnation we refer to the act of sublime love and humility whereby God took it upon himself to enter into the depths of our world, our life and our reality in order to achieve reconciliation and so a consequent

union between God and humanity may be brought about. Following Christ must be a call to imitation, a kenotic vision of becoming vulnerable. Kenosis comes from the Greek verb *kenoō*, “to empty.” The foundational text for this theory is Phil 2:6–8; of which verse 7 says that Christ “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave” (NRSV). The TNIV alternatively translates the verse as “he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant” (Stewart,2012,103). One of the staff said the following:

Each member of staff has their own take on how to live out the gospel but we try to ensure that being a servant or even just being in the service of others creates an atmosphere and environment that declares the Kingdom of Heaven (Questionnaire, Ben).

Christians have to follow a “journey downwards” (Vincent, 2013,66) in the same way Jesus followed a downward movement. Moreover, the disciples find themselves challenged by their lifestyle, people’s needs and socio-economic securities. Incarnation means entering into the pain and anger of a community, at times it can be a counter sign, standing out and standing up, offering a different set of values which challenge those accepted by the prevailing order. According to Davey (2010,91) to be incarnated within a culture, one can begin to understand the power and forces which impact in the context and start a process of discernment for appropriate action, thus transforming, reconciling and disrupting human society.

The Christian Charity identified with the kenotic vision of incarnation, vocalising it during the interviews by describing the ‘working out’ of the charity as ‘ambassadors of Christ’, ‘voice of Christ’, ‘being the hands and feet of Jesus’, ‘imitating Christ’, ‘co-workers of Christ’, ‘participating with Christ’ and ‘servants’ (Appendix 8). The founder of the charity shared a vision that reoccurs during her prayer time:



Initially, I saw us with brooms in our hands, sweeping the streets of the town, but now I see us going down on our knees and scrubbing the streets with brushes. Humble ourselves even more, to be servants for Christ.

It is important that we, as the fruit of God's Incarnation, should ourselves be and become incarnational, it must define and change the way we do mission in any context (Frost & Hirsch,2003,37). Firstly, it is important that the gospel becomes a genuine part of a people group without damaging the innate cultural framework. I do believe this charity does their mission with a "spirituality of inculturation" (Bevans & Schroeder,2011,89). This means evangelism should be carried out with ideas and practices which could open people up to the Spirit in a way that an understanding and expression of Christianity emerges, in a loving, creative and sometimes critical dialogue with a particular social and cultural context, such as the marginalised. This is supported by the following response of a staff member:

The various projects meet people where they are at in their lives, there is no judgement or ulterior motive, simply a desire to help - to love others as God loves us (Questionnaire, Caren).

Secondly, incarnational mission will mean that in reaching a group of people, we will have to find possible ways to identify with their culture, without compromising the truth of the gospel itself. This will differ from every context and for every person in the context but involves a personal 'buy-in', a partaking or stake holding so that we can understand their perspective, their grievances and causes; their real existence (Frost & Hirsch,2003,37). The great danger in failing to practise mission incarnationally is cultural imperialism. The 'church' or body of Christ can become an isolated, alien body in the midst of people. However, the practise of incarnational identification with a group of people should not be limited to work among the

poor. It should apply to all forms of mission; the power of the gospel to transform, whatever the context. Vincent (2013,108) said the best we can achieve as middle class incarnate practitioners and ministers is to work “alongside the poor”, not work “for the poor” or “of the poor”.

Walking alongside people, building relationships. Being honest and listening to the need or trying to find it (Questionnaire, Sharon).

Getting alongside them and journeying with them, identifying areas where they need help and assistance, letting the Gospel speak through our actions (Questionnaire, Harry).

Vincent (2013,108) goes further by saying that we cannot be like the person in need, but you can be perhaps named as a friend, as Jesus was by the publicans and sinners. The charity staff members could identify strongly with their response of the ‘working out’ of the charity:

Being a competent friend, show compassion and listen, build a relationship, acceptance, small acts of kindness such as a listening ear, a smiling face and a warm welcome. (Questionnaire, Julie).

Thirdly, incarnational mission implies a real and abiding with incarnational presence among a group of people (Frost & Hirsch,2003,39). Jesus moved into the neighbourhood (John1:14, the Word became flesh and blood), he experienced its life, its rhythms and its people from the inside and not as an outsider. Although staff members do not all live near the actual base of the charity, many attend churches in the area and the location of the base of the charity is incarnational in the sense that it is in the ‘inner city’, located in a deprived area where it has easy access for the clientele. Its location is within walking distance from the Town Hall, a church and many agencies who clients get signposted to for benefits and support with addiction, housing and other support for their complex needs. However, Vincent says in his

book, *Hope from the City* (2000,141) that what is lacking in areas like that is adequate schools and other ancillary educational provisions and professionals which exist in more affluent areas. Incarnational does not mean buildings. It means enfleshment, that you are putting flesh around a presence which is more than your own. According to Vincent (2000,131) “immediately when you come in, compelled with God-presence within, being filled with God’s presence within, being filled with the fullness of God (Eph.3.18), then that position determines your way”. You are enfleshing God’s presence in yourself and the world, in their place.

Fourthly, in terms of its missional stance in relation to context, incarnational mission implies a sending impulse rather than an attractional one (Frost & Hirsch,2003,41). Although the charity is at its core a sending impulse community, a community which meets people where they are, I believe there is also a place for being an attractional community. This charity is not so much attractional in inviting people to church related meetings but more into inviting the community to partake in developing critical consciousness. According to Ledwith (2005,41) critical consciousness is to indicate an alternative way of seeing life based on equity and justice. Critical consciousness comes together when we seek to make sense of the world in order to transform it as a collective experience of dialogue, thinking and ideas with the community.

The strength of Ledwith’s critical praxis model lies in the incorporation of internal and external forces in the community and therefore provides a more critical understanding of how it impacts on the local lives. I believe that this charity uses its influence and excellent relationships with allies (council, private sector, voluntary sector, schools, churches) to attract and invite the community to be part of the critical consciousness. This is evident in the following response of a staff member:

This is outworked through the offer of specialist support targeting a variety of different areas of people's lives; from housing and debt management, to family support and food provision. We also signpost individuals and families to other organisations and agencies who may be able to support more effectively than ourselves. We have good relationships with many of these organisations which increases the quality and efficiency of the support given (Questionnaire, Dan).

However, in juxtaposition, hegemony (Ledwith,2005,41) is the way in which ideological consent is gained in order that we accept the policy decisions that govern us. Ledwith's model (2005,42) also aims to locate power and domination within a social and political framework, and gives an idea of how subordination is reinforced. The local, regional, national and global policies influence our communities and are described as hegemony. Our ideas and experiences are not sterile but contextualised in the community, which is in itself in dynamic with hegemony (Ledwith,2005,42). In my opinion, this charity can better use their influence by challenging the hegemony, for example the austerity policies of the government (Poinasamy,2013). This charity makes use of Sure Start centres as an outreach venue for their food projects but also works closely with the council to support them in identifying people who need support. Many of the Sure Start centres closed under the austerity policy of the current government (Torjesen,2016). I am therefore of the opinion that the charity should challenge the hegemony of austerity which is the root source of oppression.

Finally, incarnational mission means people will get the experience of Jesus on the inside of their culture and their lives because of our embodiment of the gospel in an incarnationally appropriate way. The charity embodies the gospel within many sub cultures and within their own communities at the Winter Watch, Food bank etc.; projects where they meet the homeless, the street workers, the poor, the marginalised in the same missional mode (incarnational) in which God himself engaged with the world (Frost & Hirsch,2003,40-41).

It is vital that these clients experience salvation in a way that does not dislocate them from their organic groups but rather allows them to encounter Jesus in a way that seamlessly connects with life as they understand it through their own histories and experience.

## **Chapter 5: Formal Voice of Theology**

### **5.1 Vocational Cycle of John Vincent**

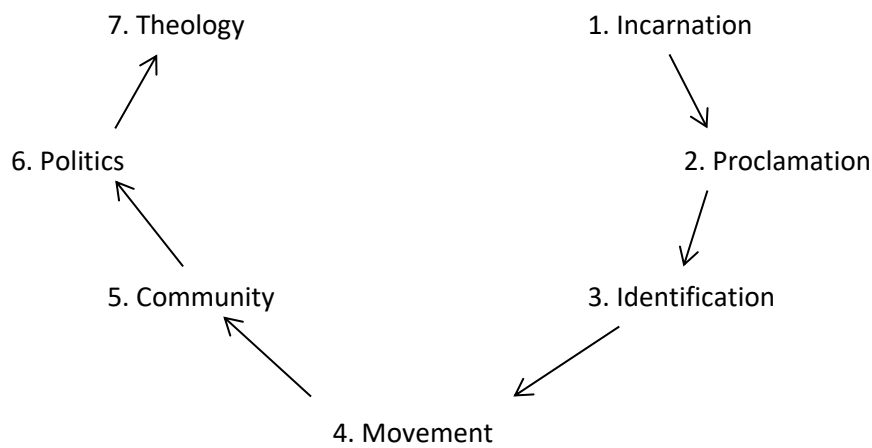
The formal theology voice can be a critical voice in this quartet; it shines a light on practice and on accepted authorities. It has a positive role to play by offering developed modes of thoughts that can enable reflection on practise and the articulation of the espoused theology (Cameron,2010,55).

Following on from identifying the operant theology as incarnation, I chose to focus on Vincent's work on his Jesus Vocational Cycle (2013,58-59) and his Discipleship Cycle (2013,60-62) as the formal voice of theology. The formal voice is the theology of the academy, of the 'professional theologian'. Vincent (1982,1), as founder of the Urban Theology Unit (UTU), incarnationally lived and worked with his family, for many years on Abbeyfield Road, a deprived, multicultural, inner city area in Sheffield. Vincent asserts the value of both kinds of knowledge, practical and academic, and he sees the need to bring them together; he calls UTU a "community of study and action" (Vincent, 2000,142).

Vincent believes incarnation is the result of an encounter and call to discipleship. He believes 'taking flesh' is the movement of flesh and blood into a particular space and culture - challenging and sanctifying, affirming the value of human life through demonstrating the love of God. Jesus' own vocation can be understood through following the seven elements

of the Jesus Vocational Cycle. During my time working alongside the charity I could identify most of the element of this cycle in their practice.

### Jesus' Vocational Cycle (Vincent, 2013,58)



Firstly, there is incarnation (Vincent, 2013,58). Jesus begins from outside, from God, or from a human home (Luke and Matthew), or from Galilee (Mark). He becomes ‘incarnate’ in the world to perform his vocation or mission, he faces temptation to deny it but then immerses himself into it. Both the founders of this charity grew up in houses with no faith. God called them and prepared them through different careers for this vocation and mission.

Secondly, for Jesus there is a proclamation (Vincent, 2013, 58). Jesus begins his ministry by proclaiming the presence of the ‘now’ on earth, in time the Realm/Kingdom of God. He declares the purpose of his calling and the nature of his practice as to celebrate and to extend

God's Realm, God's will on earth. The founder of the charity 'proclaimed' the following when I asked what he sees as the main vision of the charity:

To enable all people both inside and outside the church to experience the Kingdom of heaven here and now, in doing this creating opportunities for people to 'touch' Jesus through His people and have their needs met both miraculously and naturally. By living out the gospel and being in the service of others, creates an atmosphere and environment that declares the Kingdom of Heaven (Interview, Mark).

Thirdly, there is identification (Vincent,2013,58). Jesus's mission is especially to the people outside of normal Judaism, with its Synagogue, Law and Temple. He goes to find the poor, the crippled, blind, lame, (Luke 14: 13, 21) the demon-possessed (Mark 1: 21-34) and the law breakers (Mark 2: 13-17). The identification of this charity started with their work with children who were overlooked by the welfare system and street gangs. Later on, as they put it, 'when God opened the door' they started to work with sex workers in a derelict building in a deprived area. One of the founders said:

Standing with the broken is what Jesus demonstrated (Interview, Margaret).

Fourthly, Jesus inaugurates a movement (Vincent, 2013,58). He became a champion of the dispossessed (Mark2.17). He embodies the dispossessed. He celebrates his messianic banquet with the dispossessed (Luke 4: 7-25). He makes his disciples become one with the dispossessed through the teaching of the Beatitudes (Luke 6:20-23). Since the charity was established thirty years ago, many projects organically developed that are in line with Jesus' movement of becoming a champion for the marginalized and his teachings on the Beatitudes, for example, projects such as the health and homelessness project, food project, offender support and children and families in broken situations.

Fifthly, Jesus creates a community to carry forward his own practice and to repeat the cycle (Vincent, 2013,59). The twelve disciples are a micro-praxis, enabling a model for the community. This community has been formed by the staff of the charity and with some of the partners and agencies such as probation, churches, the council, schools, Christians Against Poverty, many volunteers etc. as can be seen in the following comment by one of the staff members when asked about their practice.

By providing services that support and enable those on the outskirts of society. By engaging with churches and volunteers to build a community where clients can be supported and encouraged by members of the wider Christian community (Questionnaire, Jo).

I also believe we have a duty to 'Seek the welfare of the City' in that we serve the local authority and businesses to prosper in order that all might prosper (Interview, Martin).

As previously discussed, this charity is also in the process of forming a new community for their clients in the form of a church. This will hopefully address the tension that they experience in the restrictions on evangelism and will provide a place where they can support their clients spiritually. One of the staff members said the following:

I see this as a community, a place of neutral ground, an academy, a school, a place where we can equip people with general life skills but also to be disciples. We do not want it to be another denomination (Interview, Gareth).

Although I can see the benefit in this new community, I would want this charity to be aware that theologies of liberation require that we not only make 'an option for the poor but that we accept the "epistemological" privilege of the poor' (West,1999,12). We therefore have to



make an epistemological paradigm shift in which the poor and the marginalised are seen as primary dialogue partners in reading the Bible and theology. Liberation hermeneutics starts with the reality, experiences, needs, interest, questions and the resources of the poor and marginalised (West,1999,12). This is different from the First World theology, it is not just that liberation theology has a different content but also a different methodology. It is important the reflections cannot be assessed on the basis of the established epistemology of First World theology, but that the origin, structure, methods and validity of knowledge has to come from the marginalized. The contribution of the marginalised should be seen as a challenge to the basic consensus and not just reform of the existing framework (West,1999, 13). An example of this is the base communities which are associated mostly with Latin America. These communities are a grass-roots, bottom-up development which takes a different shape in every culture (Hebblethwaite,1993,1). These communities are composed of a relatively few members as a permanent body, like a cell of the larger community (Hebblethwaite,1993,8). According to Gutierrez (1982, 116) “base” means the poor, oppressed, believing people: marginalised races, exploited classes, it lies outside intra-ecclesiastical boundaries. It is to be found in the world, they are communities and a church made up of persons involved in the movement who seek to live their faith and break bread in such a community. Although base communities are associated with Latin America, we have to remember the first base community was the community of Jesus and his twelve disciples. Following on, the early Church communities were all basic Christian communities (Hebblethwaite,1993,10).

Moreover, mission in this new community must be done in a prophetic dialogue with openness and respect for the other, but also recognising God was present before our arrival and the Spirit has sown the seeds of the word long before we were there (Bevans & Schroeder,2011,38). It is also important for this charity not to see their clients simply as those

who are served or seen as having above all “spiritual needs” (humble) and then they satisfy them together with material needs. For a group whose members are poor and see themselves as powerless, such a way of serving makes those who are evangelised into an object of conversion and not a valuable creation of God. It also does not acknowledge how we are often evangelised by those we encounter in the dialogue of evangelism (Bevans & Schroeder,2011,38). It has to be bottom-up development, where the origin, structure, methods and validity of knowledge has to come from the marginalized.

Sixthly, from a political perspective Jesus relates the reality of his work to the wider world which can be seen in Mark 2:17 (Vincent,2013,59), which states that Jesus came to invite sinners to be his followers. He challenged both society and those in power in a subversive manner. According to Vincent (2013,69) the implications of this today are that we have to engineer “unilateral initiative” through the embodiment of Jesus. This means that Jesus embodies the values and life of God’s realm - God’s will on earth. He proposes an alternative personal existence and also an alternative community which is described below.

Vincent (2013, 69) goes further and says that we have to be “acted parables” through the subversion practised by Jesus. Thus, we have to inwardly subvert the authority by trying to pioneer an alternative society. I do believe that the Christian charity subverts the austerity attitude of the current government, for example towards reduced funding for councils, education and on the NHS (Poinasamy,2013). The charity’s practice is of generosity instead of austerity. They set up ‘Christmas dinner on Jesus’, ‘BL17’, ‘Winter Watch’ and a food store. These are food programmes that provide families with a Christmas dinner and packed lunches during school holidays for families who are on free school meals or who cannot afford food such as the homeless. They also work very closely with the police, probation,

housing associations, council and the NHS through referrals. The charity often stands in the gap between the restrictions and limitations of statutory funded organisations and the client, but could do more by standing up or standing with others who campaign against austerity.

Furthermore, Vincent (2013,70) states we have to be counter- contextual, or according to Romans 13 be in ‘critical- solidarity’ with the state. I do think that this charity could be more critical towards the state/government. Through the years they have gained much respect through serving the community and have developed good relationships with partnership organisations. The founder of the charity received an MBE to acknowledge the charity’s contribution in the community. Therefore, I think they could use their influence to be more critical towards choices that the government makes which benefit the rich and impact on the marginalised through austerity.

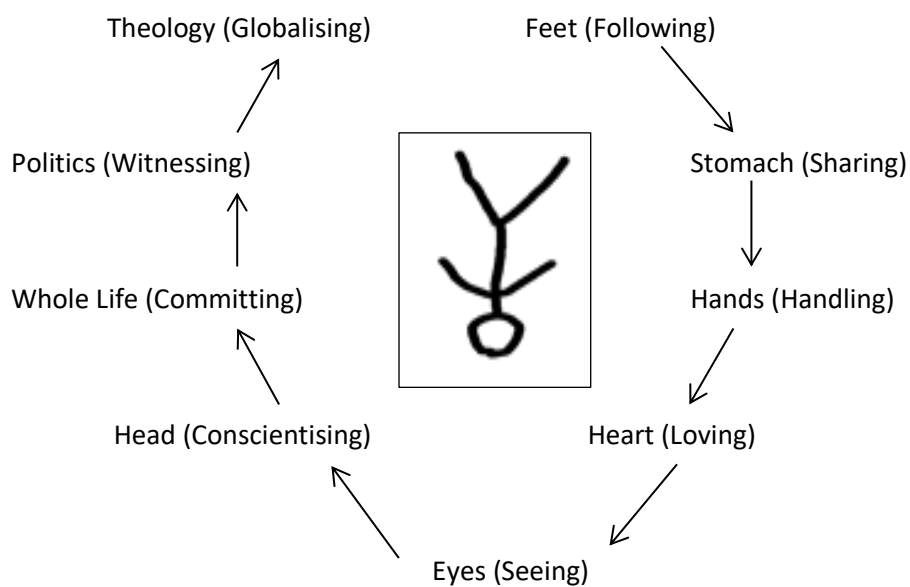
In conclusion, Vincent (2013, 70) articulates that we have to create “alternative politics” by doing political analysis of biblical passages. Vincent says we create the Gospel in our own time by repeating bits of the action of the Gospel in our own context. We need Gospel stories to discover stories we are being called upon to re-enact, but also which context, problems, issues, people and communities these stories belong to (Rowland & Vincent,eds,2001,108).

Seventhly, Jesus expands upon the total significance of his practice as a basis for an alternative faith and theology which establishes new truth for the world (globally) (Vincent,2013, 59). This brings fulfilment not just in the afterlife but in the Kingdom on earth.

## **5.2 Transformation through the Discipleship Cycle**

Vincent (2013,62) believes our theological practice of the discipleship cycle is based upon the imitation of the practice of Jesus. He believes Jesus does not initially ask people to believe in him with their heads or did not initially ask his disciples to love him with their heart. He asked them to follow him with their feet and then share a common life. Vincent expressed this through the ‘upside down’ image to illustrate the different stages of transformation during the downward journey of discipleship (Vincent2013,62).

### Discipleship Cycle (Vincent,2013,62)



According to Type C theology (Bevans & Schroeder,2005,72), which the charity view as their most prominent espoused theology and which sees mission as commitment to liberation and transformation, missionaries view themselves as agents of God’s liberating and transforming work. It is unmistakable that staff members of the charity already made the decision to follow Jesus with their feet and in doing that, they enable:

a) Transformation through *following* (feet)

Not only do they do the following but also walking alongside the marginalised and inviting the critical consciousness (voluntary organisations, schools, churches, volunteers, lottery funders etc.) to follow with them. Moreover, they invite the hegemony (the policy makers of austerity such as governments, MPs and the council) to discover a new place. It is the 'cross over' to unfamiliar territory (Green, in Davey, ed.,2010,10-12).

b) Transformation through *sharing* (stomach)

Through sharing the lives of new people and new realities and in following the path of generosity, compassion and care, the lives of the staff members transform through engaging with the marginalised and prophetic dialogue. However, it is also the lives of the people that this charity invited along and those of the clients which are transformed. The client's lives are transformed by having food on their table to eat, by being liberated from their addiction, finding a home or new job etc.

c) Transforming by *handling* (hands)

Through sharing in action, packing foodbank parcels, 'Christmas dinner on Jesus', preparing pack lunches for the 'BL17' project, preparing and sharing a meal at 'Winter Watch' and chatting to people, the hearts of the staff, volunteers and stakeholders are transformed.

d) Transforming through *loving* (heart)

When you meet people where they are it moves your heart, by giving you empathy and compassion. By loving the other, it transforms the person you love but also yourself.

e) Transforming through *seeing* (eyes)

Transforming by seeing “enlightened /converted” (Vincent,2013,62) the eyes. You start to see the other through Jesus’ eyes; you see the other not as the other but as a fellow human being, a creation of God who has value.

f) Transforming through *conscientising* (head)

Transforming comes through perceiving and being deeply conscious of realities.

When the heart touches the head, the thinking engages with possibilities and opportunities to enable Jesus’ Kingdom on earth. Churches, volunteers, stake holders, clients start to see opportunities. The charity members saw the opportunity to address the spiritual needs through the purchase of the church building.

g) Transformation through *giving your whole life* (committing)

Transformation by experiencing the new reality as whole, volunteers, stakeholders and clients become part of the movement community, learning to share in parts of the common life. They become part of Jesus’s practice and create some practical response. This community is necessary to keep the Discipleship cycle going but it must never be an end in itself. Therefore the charity can address their Type A theology of mission by extending the church and saving souls, however that should never be an end in itself. The church should be a signpost towards God’s kingdom.

h) Transforming through *politics* (witnessing)

The transforming of people involved comes through the reorientation of themselves in society. It transforms their priorities, their focus, the way they spend their time, talents and money inside their context or community.

i) Transforming through *theology* (globalising)

Transformation enables us to see the mysteries of life and fulfilment only within and after these first practices. To act on these is what ‘faith’ is. People become aware of where God is in it all, which is theology. Their theology influences their practice and

their practice influences their theology. Practices and theologies contain values, beliefs, and attitudes which were moulded in the transformation through the following, sharing, handling, loving, seeing, conscientising, committing and witnessing alongside God's mission.

## **Chapter 6: Normative Voice of Theology**

### **Unity in a Shared Vision/Mission**

The idea of the normative voice of theology is concerned with what the practicing group names as their theological authority. The authority can correct as well as inform their operant and espoused theology. The normative voice is often related to the ecclesial identities and relationships of the group (Cameron et al,2010,54) The charity staff members represent many different denominations and although the authority of scripture plays an important part, the staff members are united in the same vision or mission. One of the founders coined the phrase: "It is not unity as a vision but unity with a vision". For most staff members denominations are irrelevant:

At present I am part of Assembly of God, but have been in an Evangelical Church of England in the past, although I don't like putting a denomination, I'm a Christian (Questionnaire, Martin).

However, in contrast with the refrain ‘doctrine divides, service unites’, proponents of theological dialogue contend that cultural, linguistic, racial and geographic factors are at the root of division. Thus, we have to insist that theological dialogue remains an essential element of the process of coming to know one another as Christian brothers and sisters (Jesson, 2003,1). As we could see in the evidence of the data represented in their espoused theology (three theologies of mission), just as respective denominations emphasised different theologies of mission, the charity’s staff members have different emphases on mission but they unite in their practice. Many of the staff members do not see themselves as part of a denomination but only as a Christian.

I don’t belong to any denomination. The church I go to is part of New Frontiers which is an evangelical church but I don’t see myself as belonging to any particular denomination. We are all one family (Questionnaire, Rita).

When I became a Christian I attended a Pentecostal Church and a Baptist Church, and have been attending a church plant which doesn’t belong to a denomination for the past 3 years. I don’t feel I belong to any denomination in particular (Questionnaire, Michelle).

### **The Vision of the Charity, Isaiah 61:1**

I believe that theory and practice are inextricably joined and that the practice is both the origin and the end of theological reflection. Therefore the scripture the charity has chosen as their vision, Isaiah 61:1, is authentic to their gospel living and their motivation behind their commitment to a struggle for human emancipation. If we look at Isaiah 61:1 it says: “to bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free” and it continues with the primary accents of chapter 60 concerning the coming reversal of the fortunes of Jerusalem, the abundance and prosperity of Jerusalem (Breuggemann,1998,212). However, this verse includes one element



quite different from that of chapter 60, namely the cruciality of the human agent who will undertake and enact the intention of Yahweh. The human agent speaks in verses (in verse 1-7 and verses 10-11 in this chapter) but Yahweh speaks in the middle of the chapter as the first person in verses 8-9. According to Breuggemann (1998,212) this indicates “how intimately connected are Yahwistic resolve and human vocation”. In Isaiah 61:1, which is also the vision of the charity, speaks a human agent who is authorised and energised to do Yahweh’s deeply transformative work in the community of Yahweh’s people. However the instigator of the human vocation undertaken here is Yahweh. Yahweh moves, summons and authorises what is to follow.

This interpretation mirrors the charity’s operant theology of incarnation and kenosis; that God instigated the transformative work by Christ (God incarnate), by emptying himself, he authorised and energised us to take part in his incarnational and kenotic mission and vision. In verses 1b-4 there is a series of infinitive verbs to list what this human agent will do: “to bring, to bind up, to proclaim, to release, to comfort, to set free, to give”. All of these actions are powerful ministries to the weak and the powerless to restore them to their full function in a community of well-being and joy. These verses are of special interest because they are quoted by Jesus, according to Luke 4:18-19, as his vision of his ministry. The vision of the jubilee that is profound hope for the disadvantaged is devastating for the people who benefit and value the status quo because it asks for a radical undertaking of the reordering of the human community. In the context of emerging Judaism, it might have meant the restoration of land, security and the wellbeing to the community as a whole or the reordering of the internal economics of the community and the judgement of the social relationships between haves and have-nots (Brueggemann,1998,214).

Reflecting on the models of Christian involvement in community and neighbourhood, the question is, whether this charity responds to the needs of the community (community

service), builds the community (community development) or whether they take part in community action that reorders the internal economics and judges the social relationship between the rich and the poor. (Ballard & Husselbee,2007,52). According to Ballard & Husselbee (2001,51), in practice these three approaches do not stand in contrast with each other but overlap and intertwine and there can often be a progression from one to another. I believe this is also the case with the charity. They started off by providing support and care for individuals but then progressed by developing their service through networking and coalitions at a local and wider level by forming partnerships in order to develop a collective critical consciousness. This implies a fairer distribution of resources within the social order. Instead of just being the ‘Good Samaritan’, they became servants, mission orientated and committed themselves to the social gospel and social responsibility as the human agent of Isaiah 60. I am of the opinion that if this charity really endeavours to see their vision come to fruition, to support their espoused theology of transformation and liberation and to challenge the hegemony of austerity, they will have to ‘speak against’ in words, speaking truth to power (Bevans & Schroeder,2011,47). This can be achieved by campaigning and lobbying for community social change, to radically modify or change the balance of power and resources so that the preferential option for the poor can be established in this earthly Kingdom (Ballard & Husselbee,2007,52).

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

By undertaking a critical examination of the Christian Charity's underpinning theologies through using the TAR model, I was able to gather, practical and research based data that was embodied in the text (experience). Furthermore, TAR enabled me to carry out theological reflection throughout by focussing on the overlapping four voices of the Christian Charity's theologies: espoused (three types of theologies of mission), operant (incarnation and kenosis), formal (John Vincent) and normative voices (unity in practise and the vision).

Moreover, attentiveness towards how Christian practices are located within the theology of mission and the essential place of theological reflection and critical theological engagement is vital if we are to be disciples and active witnesses to Christ. This requires interdisciplinary dialogue with literature on theologies of mission such as Bevans & Schroeder (2005,2011), Bosch, (1991), Davey, (2010), and Frost & Hirsch, (2003). It also requires reflection and dialogue on different models of community work and social action such as Ledwith (2005), Morisy (1997) and Ballard and Husselbee (2007). Finally, it needs discourse with the challenging voices of liberation theologians such as Vincent (2013), West (1999) and

Brueggemann, (1998). Including all these elements in the theological reflection process empowered me/the charity towards renewed learning.

### **7:1 Learning for the Christian Charity:**

Overall, in my opinion, incarnation and kenosis are an accurate operant theology of the Christian Charity. According to Davey (2010,90) through discipleship, the kingdom is made known when the missionary identifies with the difficulties and delights of the community, while he/she is calling the community to join in the transforming of the kingdom; this takes place by demonstrating the love of God through self-emptying. I can wholeheartedly echo that this is what this charity practices. However, I do think that their espoused theology is not as well reflected on as their operant theology. My research might enable them or make them more aware of the presence of the three theologies of mission identified and present in their espoused theology. Through bringing their context and espoused theology into greater harmony with the purposes of God through action and theological reflection on the action, in response to the context, the practice of this charity can become Christian praxis. By acknowledging our need to appraise what we do, we begin to make explicit the likelihood of getting things wrong, embrace an appropriate humility and be open to renewed truth, opportunities and change (Morisy,1997,112).

Through purchasing the church, the tension experienced by some of the members between social action and evangelism, might be addressed between the social action and evangelism and by addressing Type A theology identified as part of their espoused theology. However, the charity should stay true to its incarnational theology by engaging with a “spirituality of inculturation”(Bevans & Schroeder,2011,89), in order that their clients experience salvation in a way that is connected with life as they know it and they are not bombarded with church jargon and traditions which alienate them. It is important to remember that the community

that is formed (church) should never be an end in itself, but rather a signpost for the Kingdom of God and a way of enabling a repetition of the discipleship cycle.

It is also vital for the church to remember that mission takes place in a “prophetic dialogue” (Bevans & Schroeder,2011,38) and liberation theology requires that we not only make “an option for the poor’ but that we accept the ‘epistemological’ privilege of the poor” (West,1999,12). The poor should be our primary dialogue partners; we should read the Bible and undertake theology through their eyes. It is also important to remember that mission is a ‘prophetic dialogue’. According to Newbigin (Bevans & Schroeder,2011,44) we may be ”speaking forth” with words, proclaiming, “speaking against” without words, being a contrast community and “speaking against” in words, speaking truth to power. Although I think that the church proclaims with words and is a contrasting community, I do think if they truly want to bring transformation and liberation that is in line with their espoused theology and their vision (normative theology) they should prophesy by ‘speaking against’ in words, speaking truth to power. This will enable them to interchange from community service and community development to community action (Ballard & Husselbee,2007,52). If we do not speak truth to power, we are only addressing the symptoms of an unjust society instead of addressing the cause, the structural sin. As the ‘father of liberation theology’ Gustavo Gutierrez famously argued, the annunciation of the gospel involves at the same time the denunciation of anything which is contrary to it, in society or in the church itself (Bevans & Schroeder,2011,48).

Although incarnation has more of a sending impulse than an attractional one (Frost & Hirsh,2003,41), it is important to invite (attract) people to take part in the discipleship cycle. Although I think the church is good at inviting volunteers and stakeholders in the community, I am excited for them to be now in a position to invite clients to a place where they can learn from each other on a spiritual level. However, community ministry cannot function if

‘Christians only’ assumptions and practices predominate. Community ministry requires Christians and non-Christians to work alongside each other, because through dialogue which develops and experiences which are shared, a new integrity results which is open to new insights and it can also trigger an awakening of faith within those who have scarcely given the Christian faith a second thought (Morisy,1997,11).

I also think the charity can benefit from recruiting staff from a multicultural background, so that it can reflect the multi-cultural context in which they work. Otherwise there can be a great danger of cultural imperialism, as a white British-only group of staff members.

Including other cultures as part of the staff members, can enable them to embody the gospel in a more incarnational way, by better understanding other cultures.

Finally, the charity has to always embrace contextual theology where they endeavour to do rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the political, cultural, economic and psychological context of the time. This will enable them to be conscious of the influence that the context has on their practice and theological thinking. Moreover, it will enable them to address the hegemony and to work with allies that are part of the ‘critical consciousness’ (Ledwith,2005,42).

## **7:2 Learning for the church**

The church can learn from the charity that ‘ecumenism’ can be understood as different churches in a shared mission. The different denominations do not need to amalgamate but our aim is a shared mission, ministries, planning, personnel and resources (Vincent,2000,27)

The church can also learn to engage with the raw and abrasive aspects of life. The grace of God is such that those of us who have led a sheltered life can gain much ‘by proxy’ from those who in their lives have accumulated raw and harsh experiences (Morisy,1997,34)

Just like this charity, the church has to learn to theologically reflect on its practice and context so that its practice can become Christian praxis. The church has to remember that we are all theologians and the idea of the minister being the only theologian is incorrect.

The church can learn from the charity to take its discipleship seriously, to be incarnational in its community instead of just being attractional, through engaging with fresh expressions and mission opportunities and by working with allies in its community.

The church can also learn that in community ministry there is scope for everyone's contribution. In contrast to pastoral care in churches, which is usually undertaken by clergy or key lay people, community ministry invites everyone to take part and make use of an array of abilities (Morisy,1997,35).

### **7:3 Learning for theology**

Using TAR enables formative transformation for practice and allows practice to contribute to the transformation of theology (Cameron et al,2010,54). We also have to propose a deep connectedness of the Christian theological tradition and the human experience. It is theology in active mode, grappling with contemporary culture. We are all bearers of theology and we should not allow a narrow minded theology, where the academic has the monopoly over theology. Theology has to have an interactive performance (Cameron et al,2010,13).

## **Bibliography**

Ballard, P & Husselbee, L. (2007). *Community and Ministry: An Introduction to Community development in a Christian Context*, London: SPCK

Bennett, Z. (2004). *Incorrigible Plurality: teaching Pastoral Theology in an Ecumenical Context*, Edinburgh: Contact Pastoral Trust

Bell, J. & Waters, S. (2014). *Doing your Research Project; A Guide for First time Researchers (6<sup>th</sup> Ed)*, Berkshire: Open university Press

Bevans, S.B. & Schroeder, R.P. (2005). *Constants in Context, A Theology of Mission for Today*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books

Bevans, S.B. & Schroeder, R. P. (2011). *Prophetic Dialogue, Reflections on Christian Mission Today*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books



Bhatti, D., H. Cameron, C. Duce, J. Sweeney and C. Watkins. (2008). *Living Church in the Global City: Theology in Practice Research Report*. ARCS Project: Heythrop College and Ripon College: Cuddesdon.

Bible (NRSV & TNIV)

Bosch, D. J. (1991). *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll : Orbis Books.

Brueggemann, W. (1998). *Isaiah 40-66*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press

Byrne, B. (2004). Qualitative interviewing in C. Seale (ed), *Researching Society and Culture* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn). London: Sage

Cameron, H., Bhatti, D., Sweeney, J., Watkins, C. (2010). *Talking about God in practice*, London: SCM Press

Cameron, H. & Duce, C. (2013). *Researching Practice in Ministry and Mission: A Companion*, London: SCM Press

Davey, A. (2010). Christ in the City: The Density of Presence in A. Davey (eds) *Crossover City, Resources for Urban Mission and Transformation*, London: Mowbray

Duce, C. (2013). Church-based Work with the Homeless: A Theological Exploration of the Practices of Hospitality. *Practical Theology*, 6 (1), 87-103

Frost, M. & Hirsch, A. (2003). *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission For the 21<sup>st</sup>- Century Church*, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers

González, J. L. (1999). *Christian Thought Revisited: Three Types of Theology*, (rev. ed.), Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Graham, E., Walton, H. and Ward, F. (2005). *Theological reflections: Methods*, London: SCM

Gutiérrez, G, (1982). The Irruption of the Poor in Latin America and the Christian Communities of the Common People. In S. Torres & J, Eagleson (Eds.), *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities* (pp. 107-123). New York: Orbis Books

Hebblethwaite, M. (1993). *Base communities*, London: Geoffrey Chapman

Hayes, N. (2000). *Doing Psychological research: Gathering and Analysing Data*, Buckingham: Open University Press

Jesson, N. A. (2003). *Doctrine divides, service unites: Towards a vital and coherent theology*. Retrieved July 10, 2017 from [https://ecumenism.net/archive/jesson\\_doctrine\\_divides.pdf](https://ecumenism.net/archive/jesson_doctrine_divides.pdf)

Kurht, J. (2010). Going Deeper Together: Resisting Tribal Theology in A. Davey (eds) *Crossover City, Resources for Urban Mission and Transformation*, London: Mowbray

Ledwith, M. (2005). *Community Development*, Bristol: Policy press

Lonergan, B. (1972). *Method in Theology*, London: Dartman, Longman and Todd

Morisy, A. (1997). *Beyond the Good Samaritan: Community Ministry and Mission*, London: Mowbray

O'Meara, T. F. (1997). *Thomas Aquinas Theologian*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Poinasamy, K. (2013). *The true cost of austerity and inequality: UK Case Study*. Retrieved 10 July 2017 from <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-true-cost-austerity-inequality-uk-120913-en.pdf>

Punch, K.F. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, London: Sage

Rowland, C and Vincent, J. (2001). *Bible in Practice*, Sheffield: Urban Theology Unit

Rowland, C and Vincent, J. (2013). *British Liberation Theology for Church and Nation*, Sheffield: Urban Theology Unit

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction* London: Sage

Speckman, M.T. & Kauffman, L.T. (2009). *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology, Essays in Honour of Albert Nolan*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publication

Stewart, H. R. (2012). Self-Emptying and Sacrifice: A Feminist Critique Of Kenosis In Philippians 2. *Colloquium*, 44(1), 102 – 110. Retrieved July 10, 2017 from [http://colloquiumjournal.org/back-issues/Coll44.1/Stewart\\_44\\_1.pdf](http://colloquiumjournal.org/back-issues/Coll44.1/Stewart_44_1.pdf)

Swinton, J. and Mowat, H. (2006). *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. London, SCM

The National Archives. (1998). *Data Protection Act 1998*. Retrieved July, 10 2017 from <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

Thomas, G. (2010). *How to do your Research Project*. London: Sage

Torjesen, I. (2016). Austerity Cuts are eroding benefits of Sure Start children's centres. *British Medical Journal*, 352:i335. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.i335>

Urban Outreach. (2017). *Who we are*. Retrieved July 10, 2017 from <http://www.urbanoutreach.co.uk/who-we-are/about-us/>

Vincent, J.J. (1982). *Into the City*, London: Epworth Press

Vincent, J. J. (2000). *Hope from the City*, Peterborough: Epworth Press

Vincent, J.J. (2013). *Christ in the City, The Dynamics of Christ in Urban Theological Practice*, Sheffield: City Print Service

Walls, A. F. (1996). The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

West, G.O. (1999). *The Academy of the Poor, Towards a Dialogical Reading of the Bible*, Sheffield: Academic Press

## Appendices

### Appendix 1



#### **BA and MA Programmes DISSERTATION APPROVAL AND ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

All who planning to complete and submit a dissertation as part of their BA or MA programme of study at LKH are required to gain approval for the study they plan to do (title, methodology, etc.) and agreement that appropriate ethical guidelines are being followed. Such approval and agreement is given by the relevant Programme Committee. Please note that any proposed research with human participants must be approved prior to the research being carried out.

The normal process is as follows:

- A working title for the dissertation is agreed with the Research Methods tutor who also, in consultation with the student, identifies an appropriate supervisor and forwards details.
- The supervisor and student work together to develop the dissertation proposal and identify any ethical implications.

- The student completes this form and submits it to Registry for approval by the relevant Programme Committee.
- The Programme Committee gives approval for the research to proceed. It may ask for additional information or for the ethical safeguards to be improved.

Name of Researcher	[REDACTED]
Email address	hacm@hotmail.com
Degree course	MA Contextual Theology
Name of Supervisor	[REDACTED]

## Appendix 2



### Information Sheet and Consent form for research participants.

**As part of my MA in contextual theology at Luther King House I am undertaking a research project by doing critical examination of the Theological basis of the Christian Charity's practice and engagement in the community.**

The notion of Christian service and the motivation behind it are subtle and complex. My hope is that through Theological Action Research (TAR) we can identify the 'Theological Voices' of this charity and enable formative transformation for practice, but also allow practice to contribute to the transformation of theology.

I would be very grateful if you would help me by taking part in this research by completing the questionnaire.

All personal data which I collect will be stored securely and will be destroyed once the research is complete and my degree has been awarded. You have the right to withdraw at any point, or to request that I do not use your data. The completed dissertation will be read by my supervisor(s), another staff member at Luther King House, and an external examiner; and copies will also be made available through the library at Luther King House. I may also produce church reports, papers or journal articles which draw on this material.

It is my intention to do all I can to ensure that participants in this research remain anonymous. I will use pseudonyms, and as far as possible remove details which might identify you or the

context; however where networks are small, there is a possibility that others reading the finished work may be able to identify you.

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my research.

Contact details of researcher:

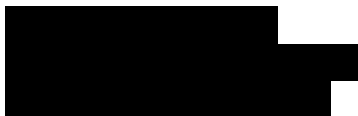


### Appendix 3



#### Participant consent form

Name and contact details of researcher



Award (MA in contextual theology at Luther King House)

Working title/topic of research

**A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF A CHRISTIAN CHARITY ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY MINISTRY**

If you are willing to participate in my research, please complete this form – return a copy to me and keep one copy for yourself.

I have read the participant information sheet and I am willing to take part in this research. I understand that pseudonyms will be used and that I will not be identified in the research. I understand that the finished dissertation will be read by members of teaching staff at Luther King House and an external examiner; and that copies will be made available through the Luther King House library.

Name of research participant .....

Contact details .....

**Appendix 4**



# Interview Schedule

(Allow for 30-45 min per interview)

Name	Date	Time




**Appendix 5**



### **Questionnaire**

**As part of my MA in contextual theology at Luther King House I am undertaking a research project by doing critical examination of the Theological basis of the Christian Charity’s practice and engagement in the community.**

The notion of Christian service and the motivation behind it are subtle and complex. My hope is that through Theological Action Research (TAR) we can identify the ‘Theological Voices’ of this charity and enable formative transformation for practice, but also allow practise to contribute to the transformation of theology.

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this Questionnaire*

How long have you been working at the Christian Charity? \_\_\_\_\_

Which Project of the Charity are you involved in? \_\_\_\_\_

Which denomination do you belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you see is the main vision of the Charity? \_\_\_\_\_

---



---



---

How does that work out in the activities of the Charity? \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

<i>For each of the statements below, tick the box that best reflects your view about the work your Christian Charity seeks to achieve.</i>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Our mission is to save souls				
Our mission is the discovery of Truth, so that people can discover their full potential in Christ				
Our mission is a commitment to Liberation and Transformation				
Our mission is extending the Church				
Our mission is an invitation to discover the truth – human salvation				
Our mission is to work for a more just and equal society which recognises environmental, political, cultural and economic issues				
Our mission is to enable				

people to experience personal salvation				
Our mission is to respect, value, support and promote difference and diversity whilst rejecting and challenging any form of oppression, discrimination and sectarianism				
Our Mission is to promote active participation of people within communities, using power of a collective voice and goal				

## Appendix 6



Semi-Structured interview for 6 members of Staff

Possible questions ask in interview

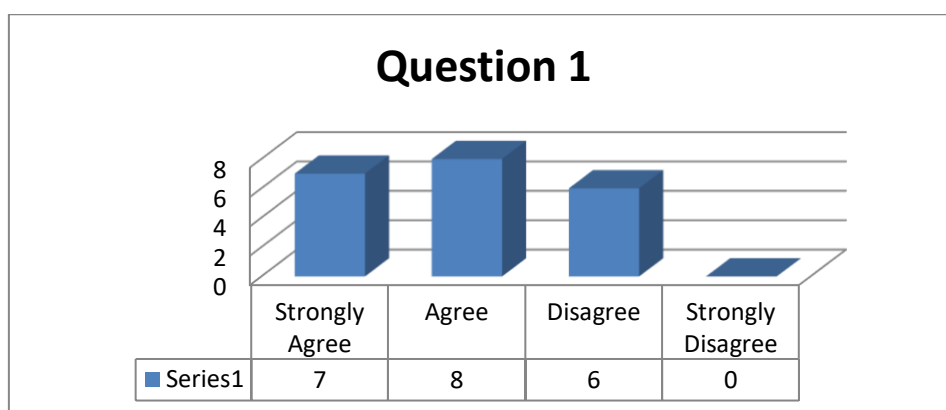
Theological voices	Possible questions
Normative Theology	<p>Do you know what the vision, which features on your website, for the Charity, is?</p> <p>If yes, what is the meaning of the scripture reading (Isaiah 61:1 "bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free), for you personally?</p> <p>If no, what is the meaning of the scripture reading (Isaiah 61:1 "bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free), for you personally?</p>

Operant Theology	<p>What was your motivation to start working at this Charity?</p> <p>How would you describe your own core values?</p> <p>What, in your opinion, are the core values of the Charity?</p> <p>Do your own beliefs and values come into tension with those of the Charity? If yes, why? If no, why?</p> <p>If you can give one word to describe what the 'working out' of the charity is, what will that be?</p>
Formative Theology	<p>Are there any Theologians you draw on that motivates you to do the work, you do? If yes, why?</p>

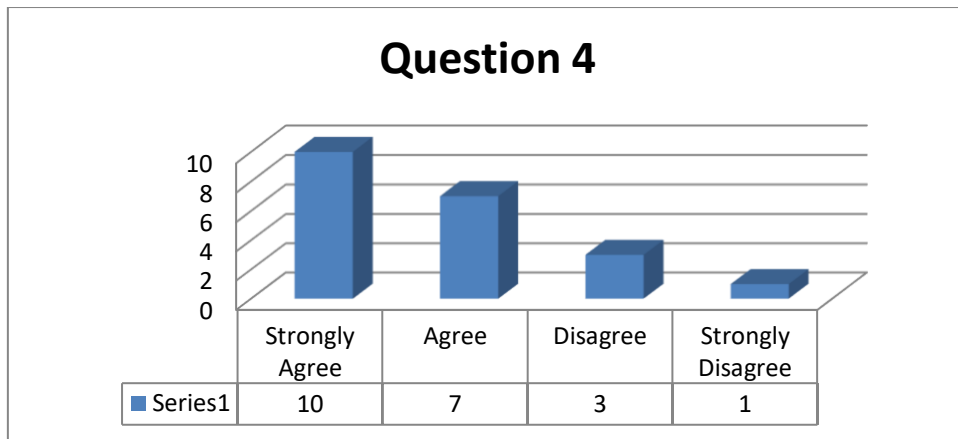
**Appendix 7: Outline of three types of theology according to Bevans & Schroeder (2005, 35 – 72)**

**Type A Theology: Mission as Saving Souls and Extending the Church**

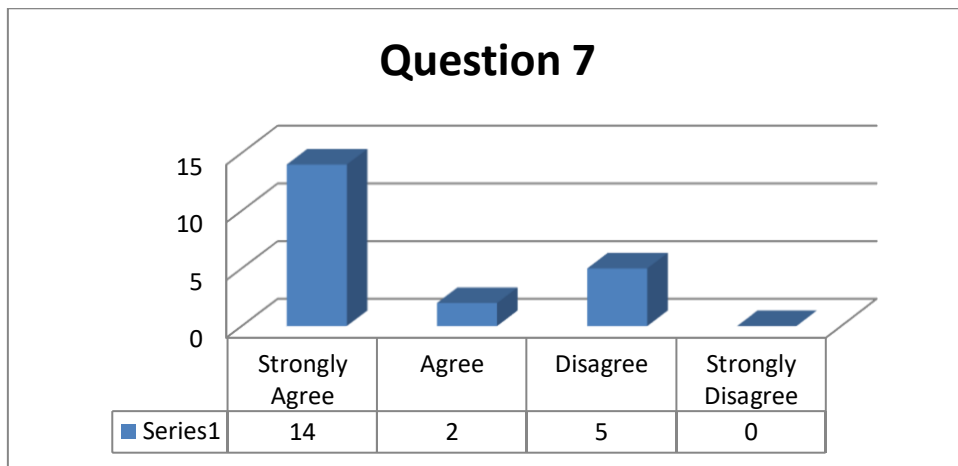
*Question 1: Our mission is to save souls: 71% agree or strongly agree.*



*Question 4: Our mission is extending the Church: 81% agree or strongly agree.*

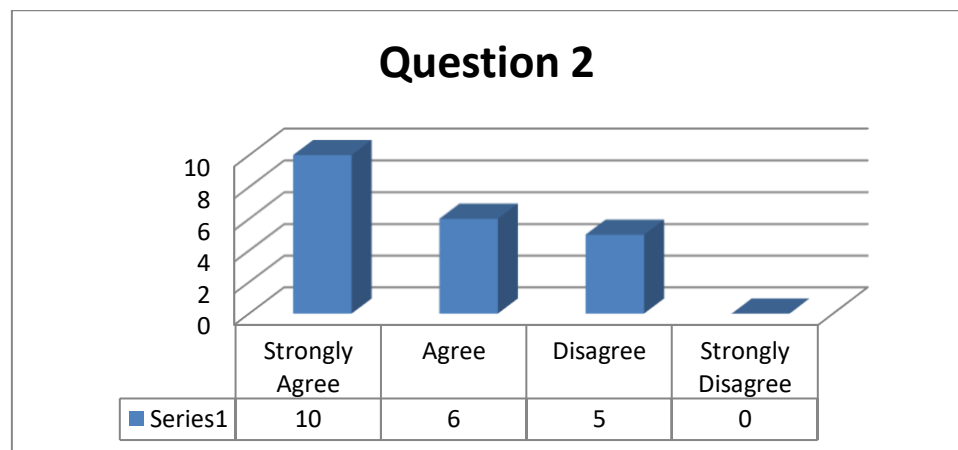


*Question 7: Our mission is to enable people to experience personal salvation: 76% agree or strongly agree.*

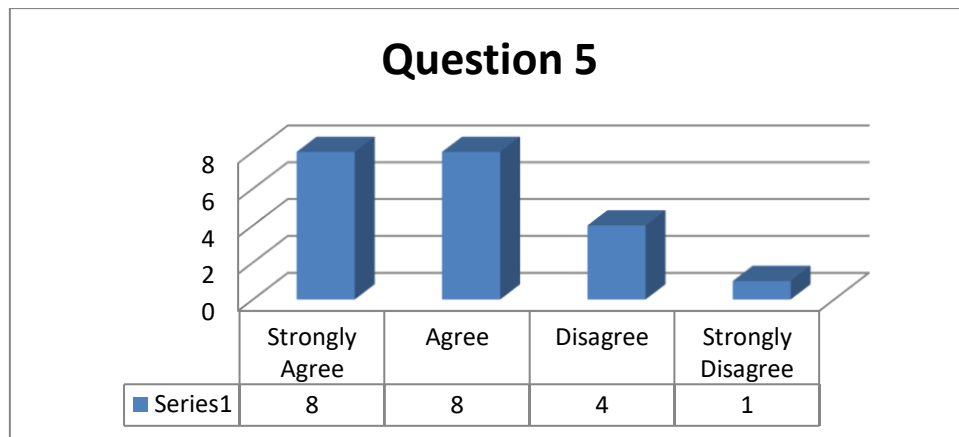


**Type B Theology: Mission as Discovery of the Truth**

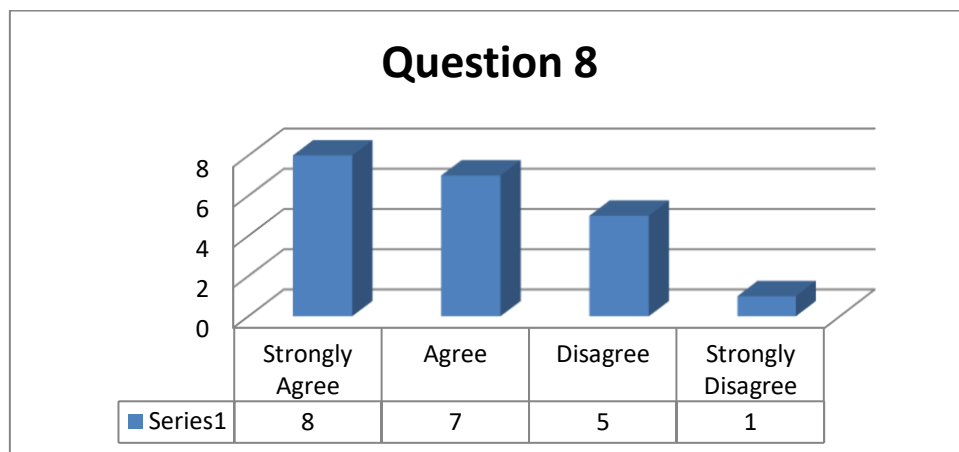
*Question 2: Our mission is the discovery of Truth, so that people can discover their full potential in Christ: 76% agree or strongly agree.*



Question 5: Our mission is an invitation to discover the truth – human salvation: 76% agree or strongly agree.

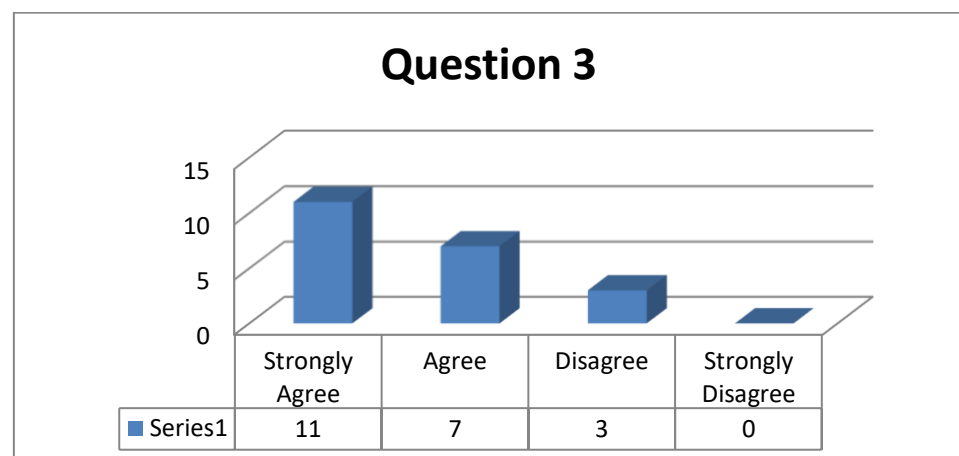


Question 8: Our mission is to respect, value, support and promote difference and diversity whilst rejecting and challenging any form of oppression, discrimination and sectarianism: 71% agree or strongly agree.

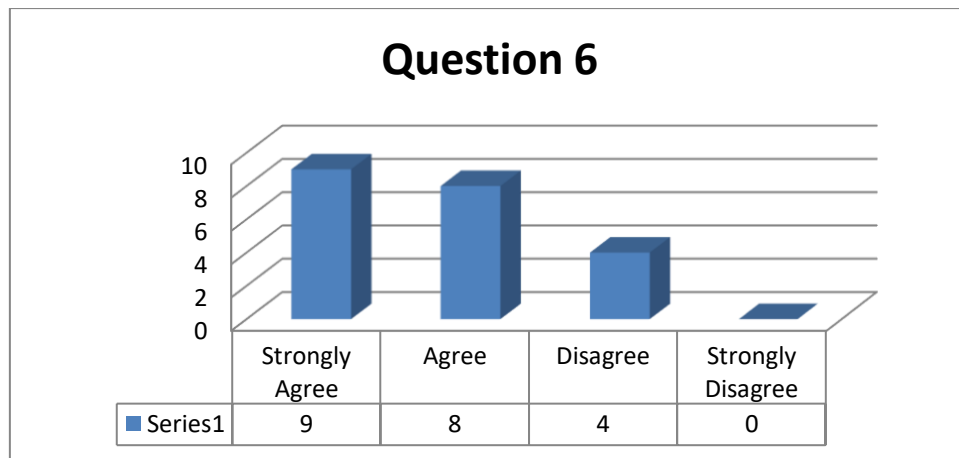


**Type C Theology: Mission as Commitment to Liberation and Transformation**

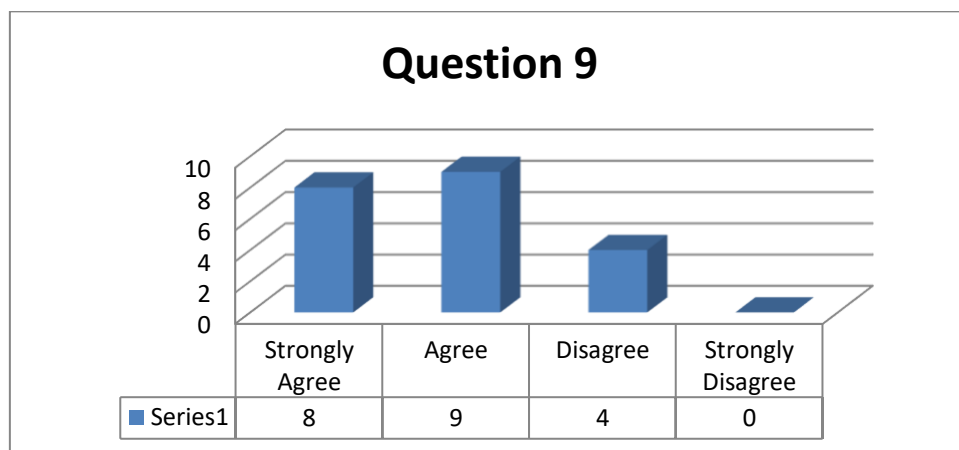
Question 3: Our mission is a commitment to Liberation and Transformation: 86% agree or strongly agree.



Question 6: Our mission is to work for a more just and equal society which recognises environmental, political, cultural and economic issues: 81% agree or strongly agree



Question 9: Our mission is to promote active participation of people within communities, using power of a collective voice and goal: 81% agree or strongly agree.






Appendix 8



## Semi-Structured interview Thematic Analysis and Theme Mapping

Theme mapping key:

	Themes of the “four voices of theology”
--	---

	Type A Theology: Mission as Saving Souls and Extending the Church
	Type B Theology: Mission as Discovery of the Truth
	Type C Theology: Mission as Commitment to Liberation and Transformation

Theological voices	Feedback
<p><b>Espoused Theology</b></p>	<p>Three types of theology according to Bevans &amp; Schroeder (2005:35-72)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type A Theology: Mission as Saving Souls and Extending the Church</li> <li>Type B Theology: Mission as Discovery of the Truth</li> <li>Type C Theology: Mission as Commitment to Liberation and Transformation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Normative Theology</b></p> <p>Do you know what the vision, which features on your website, for the Charity, is?</p> <p>If yes, what is the meaning of the scripture reading (Isaiah 61:1 “bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free), for you personally?</p> <p>If no, what is the meaning of the scripture reading (Isaiah 61:1 “bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free), for you personally?</p>	<p>Isaiah 61:1 “bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free but also Philippians 2 and <i>kinotic</i> vision</p> <p>To understand first what the brokenness is.</p> <p>Not saving people but to understand that brokenness exist in the completeness in Christ, in his Kingdom on earth.</p> <p>Salvation is not just about the confession of faith</p> <p>To transform on a journey of wholeness</p> <p>To be an disciple and make disciples, be servants</p> <p>Holistic support, love: emotional, physical, economical and spiritual.</p> <p><b>Economical:</b> poverty, unemployed, poor housing</p> <p><b>Emotionally:</b> traumatic experience, dysfunctional upbringing, relationships broken down, school and education, mental health, criminal record.</p> <p><b>Physically:</b> rough sleeping, addiction, lack of self-care, lack of food, prostitution, slavery, domestic violence and dept.</p> <p><b>Spiritual:</b> hope for future, praying behind the sheens, and wholeness in God- spiritual break through.</p> <p>Quotes</p> <p>To set God’s people free from the strongholds, such as poverty, poor housing and unemployment.</p> <p>Meeting the needs of Children, Young People, Families and Individuals through professional practice and the delivery of high quality services, as a practical expression of the Christian faith.</p>



We are co-workers and participating in the transformation of the Kingdom on earth - in the here and now.

“Supporting clients to see their unique inherent value and worth as individuals, listening closely to their needs and encouraging and enabling them to access appropriate support. Being ambassadors of Christ in the way we wisely and lovingly respond to the cries of people’s hearts, being people of a different attitude who always try to treat our clients with dignity and respect. Doing what we say we will do when we say we will do it – serving with integrity and going beyond the expected.

The activities of the charity are a practical expression of its vision, to bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free. We are in essence Jesus’ hands and feet”

“The work of the charity is to address the needs of the whole person (physical, emotional, mental, education, social and spiritual). On a day to day level each of the different teams are focused on their individual projects, each of which is about improving people’s lives, reducing poverty and addressing the underlying issues that have caused the client to be in the situation they are currently in.”

“The difference about doing this within a Christian environment is that we don’t ever give up on anyone and although we can’t pro-actively evangelise we pray for the needs of our clients and their families and we pray for breakthrough and salvation and we have faith to see God do the impossible. To bring people to the Lord and to move people on from there chaotic life styles”

“To provide the people of Bolton with quality services which improve their lives and that of their families. Where possible, to introduce them to the wider church community”

By providing services that support and enable those on the outskirts of society. By engaging with churches and volunteers to build a community where clients can be supported and encouraged by members of the wider Christian community. By being non-judgmental and welcoming people of every race, gender and religious background and ensuring that each person is dealt with as an individual with love and respect”

“The various projects meet people where they are at in their lives, there is no judgement or ulterior motive, simply a desire to help- to love others as God loves us”

	<p>“To enable all people both inside and outside the Church to experience the Kingdom of Heaven here and now, in doing this creating opportunities for people to 'touch' Jesus through His people and have their needs met both miraculously and naturally”</p>
<p><b>Operant Theology</b></p> <p>What was your motivation to start working at this Charity?</p> <p>How would you describe your own core values?</p> <p>What, in your opinion, are the core values of the Charity?</p> <p>If you can give one word to describe what the 'working out' of the charity is, what will that be?</p>	<p><b>Core Values - the 'working out' of the Charity</b>          Incarnational, ambassador, voice of Christ, hands and feet of Jesus, touch by Christ, imitating Christ, co-workers of Christ competent friend, show compassion and listen, never give up, navigate, guide, holistic love, everyone has potential, physical and emotional and spiritual renewal, self-worth, hope, transformation, never give up, relief, justice, freedom, relationship, acceptance, non- judgemental, serve, holistic support, participating with Christ, Self-emptying, kinoses, Philippians 2.</p> <p><b>How does that work out in the activities of the Charity?</b></p> <p>All our projects have their heart the desire to serve others albeit through support of food, a friend, an advocate or a champion. Each member of staff has their own take on how to live out the Gospel but we try to ensure that being a servant or even just being in the service of others creates an atmosphere and environment that declares the Kingdom of Heaven. Standing with the broken is I think what Jesus demonstrated, but also not being afraid to challenge people's life styles is also important if we want to see people having the opportunity to experience freedom. I also believe we have a duty to 'Seek the welfare of the City' in that we serve the local authority and businesses to prosper in order that all might prosper. I believe that the Gospel (the Good News) referred to by Jesus, was that the Kingdom of Heaven had come, but for people to appreciate the fullness of that Kingdom and its benefits, they need to come to a personal realisation of their need for redemption and salvation. Therefore it is also in our 'give' to provide opportunities for people to make this profession of faith and thereby be inheritors of all that Christ has for them.</p> <p>We provide love, care and support to those otherwise excluded from society as a practical expression of our Christian faith. By love, support and referrals to specialised services. Walking alongside people. Expect advice. Building relationships. Being honest and listening to the need (or trying to find it)          God is at the centre of this work through individual and corporate prayer and a deep reliance on His guidance and</p>

<p>Do your own beliefs and values come into tension with those of the Charity? If yes, why? If no, why?</p>	<p>provision.</p> <p>This is outworked through the offer of specialist support targeting a variety of different areas of people’s lives; from housing and debt management, to family support and food provision. We also sign post individuals and families to other organisations and agencies who may be able to support more effectively than ourselves. We have good relationships with many of these organisations which increases the quality and efficiency of the support given.</p> <p>To see the relief of poverty, the holistic care of the most vulnerable, complex and disadvantaged people of the town and the building of Gods Kingdom through the relationships with Churches and the empowering of Christians to reach their local communities. This is also supported by a generous volunteer base.</p> <p>I believe that true Christianity is shown through the “doing”. It may just be small acts of kindness, a listening ear, a smiling face and a warm welcome. It may also be much more intense hand holding exercise’s such as meeting a woman in prison, helping her sorting out a tenancy on release, taking her to appointments, setting up benefits, and registering with a GP.</p> <p>We seek to help people who are going through crisis and times of need where other people cannot offer help or assistance in a non-judgmental way, getting alongside them and journeying with them identifying areas where they need help and assistance, letting the Gospel speak through our actions.</p> <p><b>Tension with the core values of the Charity</b> Not with charity, but there is a tension that they cannot evangelise with constrict funding, have to signpost clients to churches, have to evangelise overtly.</p> <p>Commitment of staff to ministries at their local churches makes them sometimes feel torn between responsibilities.</p> <p>Size of Charity make communication difficult, transitional phase, structures can cramp vision, bought church building for space for spiritual support.</p>
---	---

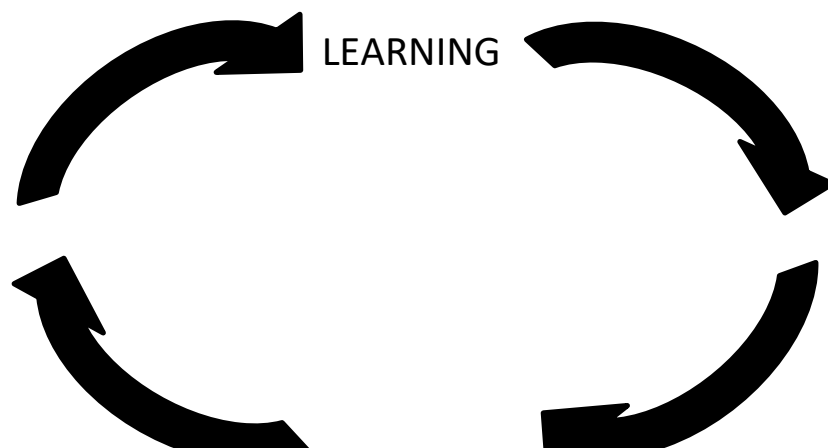
**Formative  
Theology**

Are there any  
Theologians you draw  
on that motivates you  
to do the work, you do?

John Vincent: The Jesus Vocational Cycle, The Discipleship Cycle,  
Gospel Cycle in Practise.

**Appendix 9**

**Theological Action Research (TAR)**



REFLECTION

ACTION

EXPERIENCE

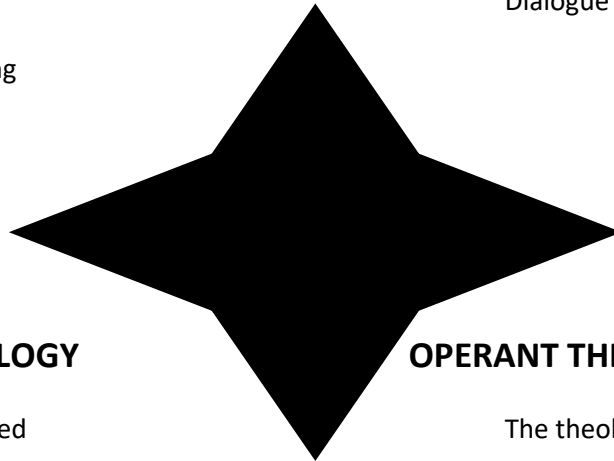
**The Action-Reflection Cycle**

**NORMATIVE THEOLOGY**

Scriptures  
The creeds  
Official church teaching  
Liturgies

**FORMAL THEOLOGY**

The theology of theologians  
Dialogue with other disciplines



**ESPOUSED THEOLOGY**

The theology embedded  
*within a group's articulation of its beliefs*

**OPERANT THEOLOGY**

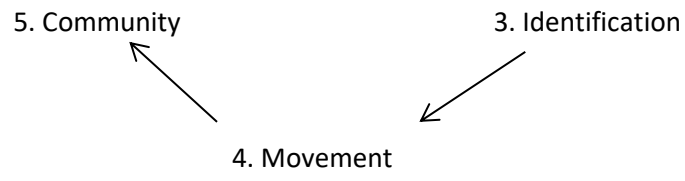
The theology embedded  
*within the actual practices  
of a group*

**The Four Voices of Theology**

**Appendix 10**

**The Jesus Vocational Cycle**





**The Discipleship Cycle**

