A Theology of Mission for Scriptural Reasoning

Guesthood: The Good Samaritan, The Incarnation, and Mystery

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Introduction

This dissertation is a theology of mission for Scriptural Reasoning (SR) that speaks into the context of evangelical non-participation in interfaith dialogue. Dialogue in SR is analysed through the dynamics of hospitality in order to claim that the key barrier to evangelical participation in SR is due to the requirement to assume the role of guest - the role of guest is perceived to be a problematic mode-of-being in mission because it is inherently vulnerable, carries fears of compromise, and is considered ineffective for the purposes of mission. I hypothesise that the priorities of Evangelicalism favour 'hosthood' and delegitimize 'guesthood' as modalities in mission.

The aim of my theological reflection is to establish 'guesthood' as a necessary and legitimate mode-of-being in mission in order to present SR as a unique opportunity for evangelicals to explore an alternative form of mission amongst other faiths.[1]

To accomplish this, I address three issues identified in 'guesthood' (vulnerability, compromise, and ineffectiveness) and challenge their legitimacy as grounds for non-participation in interfaith dialogue. Chapter I explains the connection between hospitality and SR and defines how vulnerability, compromise, and ineffectiveness are characteristics of 'guesthood'. Chapter II offers a literature review of two prominent titles on hospitality and highlights how 'guesthood' has been neglected as a missiological mode-of-being. Chapter III explores Sam Wells's exegesis of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), further substantiating Wells's work by realising the connections it holds with the dynamic of hospitality: our 'guesthood', Christ as host, and implications for interfaith dialogue. Chapter IV explores the inverse of the previous chapter, examining the incarnation as Christ's 'guesthood' and argues that this is a pattern for mimesis in mission. Chapter V offers an epilogue that ties together the questions and issues raised throughout this dissertation. Ultimately, I conclude that adopting the role of guest in mission amongst other faiths requires a holistic conception of reconciliation, which is a mystery. Evangelicals must increase their theological tolerance for mystery if they are to perceive the legitimacy and value of 'guesthood' in interfaith dialogue.

Clarification of Chosen Resources

Given that my theological reflection centres on Wells's exegesis of the Good Samaritan, the incarnation, and mystery, it is important to clarify that I am not seeking to defend Wells's thesis of 'being with', to advocate any particular vision for 'incarnational mission', or his own concept of mystery.[2] Critical engagement with Wells's notion of 'being with' is too broad a task to meaningfully undertake in this project, though it is no doubt relevant.[3] Likewise, the debate that surrounds 'incarnational mission' is both complex and controversial, and often ill-received by evangelical audiences.[4] I have intentionally not advocated use of the terms 'being with' and 'incarnational mission' for this reason. My objective is to offer a standalone reflection on the Good Samaritan and the incarnation *as it relates to guesthood in mission* without carrying the multitude of controversies that follow the 'being with' and 'incarnational mission' debates.

Rationale

The motivation for this dissertation's subject stems from my own vocational context working with the Rose Castle Foundation (RCF), a Christian organisation that equips leaders of all

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[1] Sarah Snyder, 'A word about the Word' in *New Perspectives for Evangelical Theology (*Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p.184

[2] Sam Wells, *Incarnational Mission: being with the world* (London: Canterbury Press, 2018); Sam Wells, *Nazareth Manifesto* (Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2015)

[3] SR is an opportunity for 'being with' others and God. See Wells: *Incarnational Mission*, pp.97-98

[4] 'John Starke article on incarnational mission: TGC', https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-incarnation-is-about-a-person-not-a-mission/ (13 September 2021); 'Tim Chester blog post on incarnational mission', https://timchester.wordpress.com/?s=incarnational+mission&submit=Search (13 September 2021); Ross Langmead, *The Word Made Flesh: Towards an Incarnational Missiology* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2004), pp.IX-X

faiths as reconcilers.[5] RCF specialises in working with conservative Abrahamic traditions where scripture is formative for identity, belief, and practice. SR, which focuses dialogue around scriptural texts, is the main tool used to build understanding and form relationships. Evangelicals are a key demographic for RCF to engage. However, establishing evangelical buy-in to 'interfaith' engagement remains a challenge because the interfaith space is not viewed as a legitimate or priority context for mission, particularly due to associations with a liberal ideology of inclusivism and relativism. If evangelicals are to prioritise relationship-building with those of other faiths, the activity and identity of 'interfaith' must be re-formed *by* evangelicals for purposes that are compatible with - better still, a rich expression of - the evangelical tradition. To accomplish this, further theologies of mission (of which this is just one kind) are required to stimulate perspective change.[6]

SR has the capacity to transform perceptions of what interfaith *could be* because of its focus on 'deep-to-deep' engagement between faiths. SR invites individuals of faith to build relationships out of the depths of their authentic religious particularities, offering a rare space where connection is driven by what makes us distinct from one another rather than relying on 'common ground'. Tension and disagreement are welcomed as an inherent quality of what it means for particular and exclusive faith communities to be in relationship with one another, which cultivates the art of 'disagreeing well' within those who participate.[7] Crucially, this approach enables every participant to engage from the fullness of their identity - evangelicals are welcomed to engage with other faiths, authentically, as evangelicals.[8] Evangelicals assume that the gospel will create division (Luke 12:51) when engaging with the religious other. SR anticipates this and welcomes the presence of evangelicals at the table.

SR is also a valuable missiological opportunity. If evangelicals are to engage with deeply committed members of other faiths, particularly other proselytising traditions such as Islam, they are unlikely to succeed in doing so with conventional methods of evangelism (e.g., the Alpha Course).[9] Committed members of other faiths will, like evangelicals, not willingly expose themselves to an overt proselytising agenda of another faith. Therefore, if there is to be engagement with committed members of other faiths *at all*, we must reconceive of mission in such a way that stabilises hierarchy, where no one proselytising tradition possesses increased power and influence over the other. SR provides this context. However, if evangelicals are to realise this opportunity, they must learn to view 'guesthood' as a legitimate mode-of-being in mission due to the mutual exchanging between host and guest roles that exists in the dynamic of SR.

Chapter I: Evangelicalism, Dialogue, Hospitality and SR
Dialogue in SR as hospitality
Dialogue in SR is understood as a hospitable dynamic because participants take turns to 'host' by momentarily welcoming strangers into their tradition through their scriptures.[10] Practically speaking, the 'host' reads their scripture, offers some contextual meaning, and may share the significance of the passage for their community and how it relates to current affairs and contemporary issues. Strangers become guests as they listen, learn, and seek further

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[5] https://www.rosecastle.com/rcf/home (13 September 2021)

[6] For a similar theological reflection see: Tom Greggs, 'Legitimizing and Necessitating Inter-Faith Dialogue', *International Journal of Public Theology* 4 (2010), 194–211

[7] 'Cambridge Interfaith Programme and Rose Castle Foundation SR website', http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/what-is-scriptural-reasoning.html (13 September 2021)

[8] I recognise that part of being authentically evangelical is to *evangelise,* an issue explored in Chapter V. See Darren Sarisky on SR allowing 'religious commitment to function in every aspect that matters': 'Religious Commitment in Scriptural Reasoning', *Modern Theology* 36:2 (2020), 317-335. See SR FAQs: 'Can members of a Scriptural Reasoning group try to convert each other?', http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/faqs.html (13 September 2021)

[9] Alpha relies on a 'hosting' model of evangelism, see: https://www.alpha.org/ (13 September 2021)

[10] David Ford, *The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p.5

understanding by entering dialogue with the host. Guidelines to practicing SR effectively will frequently cite the parallels with hospitality and exhort participants to be 'welcoming, gracious hosts' and 'curious, respectful guests'.[11] Crucially, this practice is mutual and reciprocal. Fruitful dialogue in SR requires successful interchange of the roles of host and guest as new texts are read.

Hospitality as a hierarchical dynamic

Whilst vulnerability characterises both host and guest in acts of hospitality that carry risk (such as Abraham's encounter with the three strangers in Genesis 18, and within the context of Christian persecution that undergirds the exhortation in Hebrews 13:2),[12] within civil acts of hospitality where there is rule of law, social norms, and customs, the guest is typically exposed to greater degrees of vulnerability while the host possesses greater degrees of power, control, and influence.

Civil hospitality is hierarchical because the host role is dominant. Hosts exercise power and influence over guests because they are in *control* of the key components of hospitality. The key components of hospitality are:

> 1) 'Welcome': hosts decide whom, how and if they welcome.

> 2) 'Place': hosts are 'linked with a sense of place that they define as their own and have control over'.[13]

> 3) 'Provision': an expression of self-identity that, likewise, is controlled by the host.

Sheringham and Daruwalla summarise this dynamic:

> 'the host in the provision of the act of hospitality is dominant, imposing their sense of order upon the other [...] the guest must actively interpret the culture patterns of the host in their effort to fit in'.[14]

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[11] Ibid.

[12] I suggest Abraham's rush to offer hospitality to the three strangers is to establish, by their acceptance of his hospitality, whether they are friend or foe.

[13] Colin Sheringham and Pheroza Daruwalla, 'Transgressing Hospitality: Polarities and Disordered Relationships?', in *Hospitality: A Social Lens*, 1st ed. (Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd., 2007), p.42

[14] Ibid., p.36

The host exercises power and influence by controlling 'welcome', 'place' and 'provision'; the guest is *subject* to the lead of the host in regard to these components. If hospitality is successful, guests should feel 'symbolically elevated'[15] by their hosts (i.e., not *feel* dominated). In acts of established and reciprocal hospitality this is usually the case (e.g., well acquainted friends who invite each other around for dinner). However, when we add the variable of stranger (or degrees of stranger-ness) to the host, the guest's perception or actual experience of vulnerability increases. One might imagine being invited to Buckingham Palace and the social exertion entailed in interpreting the 'culture patterns of the host'. All hospitable encounters sit on a scale of degrees of stranger-ness: the less familiar we are with one another, the greater degree of vulnerability experienced. Familiarity establishes trust and abates the sense of vulnerability. We are more likely to offer/accept hospitality to/from those *who are like us*.

The hierarchical dynamic of hospitality is further reinforced when we consider two additional qualities.

Firstly, 'guest indebtedness' is the experience of a guest receiving valuable provision from their host. Practically and symbolically, this casts the guest as one in *need* and the host as one who is able, through provision, to either meet or neglect these needs. A tacit social contract is established. Because the guest is receiving valuable provision from the host, their behaviour toward the host must be altered. Guests are willingly obliged (successful hosting) or begrudgingly coerced (unsuccessful hosting) to show deference, respect, and gratitude to their host. We can all recall white lies told over dinner plates that we would rather not have finished, with expressions of "that was delicious, thank you!".

Secondly, it is possible to amass the hierarchical privileges of being a host by *refusing to ever become a guest*, or, when assuming the role of guest, to break all expected norms and disregard for one's responsibility (and honour) to uphold the social contract of hospitality, thereby undermining the host. This takes strategic advantage of the hierarchy inherent in hospitality by conceiving of the host role as one's exclusive mode-of-being.

I refer to this hierarchical dynamic inherent in the roles of host and guest through the shorthand 'hosthood' and 'guesthood'. Both terms describe different modes-of-being in mission.

Guesthood and Evangelicalism: vulnerability, compromise, ineffectiveness

Evangelicalism is a diverse tradition. Therefore, it is important we offer a definition for reference before elucidating why evangelicals refuse guesthood. David Bebbington's definition is appropriate because it is simple, uncontroversial, and inclusive of most who would affiliate with the term 'evangelical'.[16] This implies that our thesis is not simply addressing a niche issue at the margins of Evangelicalism but should be relevant and significant to a broad audience of evangelicals:

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[15] Ibid., p.36

[16] Tom Greggs, *New Perspectives for Evangelical Theology* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.5

'There are the four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.'[17]

I hypothesis that the priorities of Evangelicalism favour hosthood and delegitimize guesthood in interfaith engagement. Primarily, this is because the priorities are underpinned by an understanding that the evangelical community are custodians of an exclusive, supreme, and superior claim to truth, whose reception by others is of ultimate soteriological significance. Conceptions of special agency and stewardship of 'the Truth' characterise the evangelical disposition toward those who do not possess 'the Truth'.

We can glimpse the validity of this claim when we envisage a few scenarios where an evangelical is asked to reciprocate as a guest with those of another faith: -

> An evangelical asks a Muslim if they would like to read the Bible with them. The Muslim agrees and they meet in a café. This has obvious opportunity for mission. Consequently, the Muslim offers to share the Qur'an with the evangelical. The evangelical now feels that the opportunities for mission have diminished and declines the offer.

> An evangelical invites a Muslim to their 'seeker friendly' Sunday service. The Muslim attends and brings a friend. The initiative and courage of the evangelical is praised by his fellow congregants. The next day, the Muslim shares his gratitude for the insights he gained by attending the service. He invites the evangelical to attend a Friday gathering at his mosque. Unsure of this, the evangelical politely declines.

What is going on here? I suggest the dynamic of reciprocal hospitality and the requirement to become a guest raises three main issues for the priorities of Evangelicalism.

i. **Vulnerability:** in the preliminary context of both scenarios, the evangelical retains control over welcome, place, and provision. Here, the evangelical is host and they do not need to become a guest. However, when there is reciprocity of these acts - when the Muslim offers welcome, place and provision themselves - the evangelical is invited to become a guest. Guesthood requires relinquishing power by forgoing the control inherent in hosthood and, by default, becoming more power-less, i.e., more vulnerable. We also see how conventional forms of power and influence are held within psychosocial assets: being in the majority group (amongst other evangelicals) and on home turf (in a church building). But what are the real risks of vulnerability in guesthood?

   Reciprocity may imply that the Muslim is a firm proponent of their own tradition and not 'susceptible' to the evangelical's efforts to proselytise. The reciprocal offer may also indicate the Muslim's own proselytising intentions. Here, the religious-other-as-host is perceived as a threat: "What if I find I am unable to rebuttal their claims against Christianity?"; "What if I find them convincing and confidence in my faith is shaken?" Refusing guesthood is considered a viable strategy for avoiding an uncomfortable encounter and challenge to one's faith.

   These insights lead us to wonder whether SR can be dismissed purely on the grounds that guesthood creates vulnerability. Are we holding on to hosthood for security and comfort? Are we cautious that subjecting ourselves as guests to the religious other may threaten our faith, or change us in unwanted ways?

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[17] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Leicester: IVP, 1979), pp.2-4.

ii. **Compromise:** 'compromise' relates to the perception that Evangelicalism's exclusive truth claims are being undermined in guesthood by a relativistic and inclusivist ideology (as opposed to competing ideologies described above in 'vulnerability').[18]

Firstly, there is an implicit assumption that a host's provision and place are *valuable* – why else would they be offered? In the context of interfaith dialogue, provision and place are also sacred. In the examples above, we might sense how the acceptance of an offer of hospitality may be given to the assumption (by one's own religious community and/or the host's) that a guest is affirming the value of the host's provision and place. In other words, in visiting a mosque or listening to the Qur'an it may be implied that one is affirming the veracity of these things in themselves. Mutuality is taken to imply mutual value. Within the context of SR, it is as if placing the Bible and the Qur'an alongside one another is an indication of their equal significance and worth (i.e., undermines biblicism). Refusing guesthood could be considered a clear and decisive expression of Christian superiority over other faiths. Lochhead commented on the perceived relationship between dialogue and an inclusive and relativistic ideology over thirty years ago. What he said then equally applies to evangelical perceptions today:

> 'To enter into 'dialogue' would be to give the impression that matters of faith were negotiable. Dialogue [is] a form of relativism. Dialogue devalue[s] the question of truth. One could not have a dialogue between truth and error.'[19]

Secondly, in a successful hospitality dynamic, we would expect the experience to be pleasant, cordial, and fun. It is possible that the presence of these characteristics is taken to be a further symbolic indicator of compromise. Social agreeableness with the religious other is conflated with theological inclusivism and relativism. Being well-mannered assumes agreement. These sentiments also apply to developing friendships with the religious other. Clearly, this is logically unnecessary, and perhaps a little absurd. Nonetheless, in the context of SR, I have encountered many individuals who struggle to understand that the practice can be civil and respectful *and simultaneously* host disagreement and tension (i.e., disagree well).[20] SR's proximity to the sacred is seen to be too 'awkward' a space to navigate alongside an exclusive faith commitment. Is a commitment to witnessing Christ conceived of, in the evangelical imagination, as incompatible with civil and respectful encounters because evangelism is viewed as an inherently hierarchical and destabilizing action? It is possible that the 'be civil and respectful' component of disagreeing well is viewed as a symbolic undermining of the supremacy of Christian truth (which challenges all four priorities of Evangelicalism).

Thirdly, the evangelical may find themselves questioning their integrity by accepting hospitality with intentions to proselytise. The tacit social contract of hospitality must be honoured, and evangelicals intuitively understand that the priority of conversionism does not honour the contract. They are torn between authenticity of evangelical expression and not usurping the host by trying to convert them. Evangelicals can welcome others into their place and offer their provision, but a reciprocated dynamic would leave evangelicals feeling disingenuous and insincere (compromised). It is easier and clearer to uphold the priority of conversionism by refusing guesthood.

These three 'compromise' issues demonstrate that the symbolic gestures of hospitality in SR contend with perceived associations with liberalism, whose inclusivist and relativistic ideology is considered incompatible with Evangelicalism. However, SR is

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[18] David Lochhead offers four types of ideologies to engage in interfaith dialogue with. Lochhead's 'ideology of Partnership' describes the liberal position that has been advocated by John Hick and others and is the predominant ideology within the landscape of 'interfaith' activity today: David Lochhead, *The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter* (Eugene, Wipf and Stock, 1988), pp.5-26

[19] Ibid., p.19

[20] My understanding of what 'respect' entails is elucidated on p.16 where I describe what it means to 'receive' from the religious other.

not driven by this ideology and welcomes exclusivist faith traditions. Therefore, reframing the meaning of the 'symbols' of hospitality is crucial for evangelical participation.

iii. **Ineffectiveness:** ineffectiveness describes the fact that guesthood as a mode-of-being in mission, and dialogue as context for mission, are perceived to be inconsequential and diminish the 'yield' of activism. I postulate that hosthood is believed to be related to a greater likelihood of converting the religious other and is considered a 'more effective' means of 'doing mission'. This is underpinned by an emphasis on the significance of our agency in affecting the outcomes of mission.

A basic observation to support this is that dialogue reduces the efficiency of communication for the purposes of conversionism because, by definition, equal airtime is given to the partner in dialogue. If one sees very little value in the partner's reciprocal 'provision' (as noted in 'compromise' above) then dialogue is wasted capacity.

Conversionism implies that people are wrong about matters of theological truth and soteriological significance. If Evangelicalism's exclusivity claims are the answer to this salvation dilemma, then building mutual relationships with others becomes a trivial and neglectful priority. This highlights the important issue of the place of reconciliation in the evangelical imagination. Is reconciliation a ministry of evangelism and conversion, reconciling individuals to God? Or is it also a ministry of reconciliation amongst a divergent and fractured humanity? The evangelical might argue that the latter is only accomplished through the former (we are reconciled to one another *in Christ*).[21] The value of modalities of mission are weighed by their prospects for 'effectiveness' in converting the religious other. Conversionism is the priority.

Exerting oneself for the sake of the gospel (activism) and converting others (conversionism) is largely believed to be achieved through preaching: '[p]reaching the gospel [is] the chief method of winning converts.'[22] This emphasis is understandable when we consider Paul's weighting on the *proclaimed* kerygma as the power of God to transform (1 Cor 1:18-2:5). Additionally, Paul's homiletic formula for the salvation of the nations in Romans 10:14-17 leaves no doubt that responding in faith to Christ comes from *hearing* the message. Hearing and responding in faith will only occur if someone preaches the message. Therefore, preaching is considered God's elective mode of establishing faith and the preacher as a key agent in bringing about conversion. Preaching as a form of one-way communication indicates that the principal way in which we conceive of participating in the conversion of others is through a *monological* activity. Coupled with the association of the pulpit and the task of preaching as characteristically authoritative, we can begin to see how engaging in dialogue reduces the perceived potency of activism, where guesthood cannot or should not embody the same degree of authority. Additionally, preaching is an activity that typically takes place in a church or a space 'that the host defines as their own and has control over'. Conventional forms of evangelism often invite non-Christians to services or events on evangelical home turf.[23] The Evangelical conception of the modality of activism may lend itself wholly to hosthood and to monologue because this is regarded as the 'elected' and most effective way of achieving the priority of conversionism. The hierarchical nature of this is self-evident. Dialogue is considered a wasteful disservice to the gospel because it is not perceived to achieve anything.

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[21] Cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-21

[22] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p.5

[23] For example, the Alpha Course. All four principles of George Ritzer's notion of McDonaldization relate closely to dominant hosthood, especially 'control' and 'efficiency'. Pete Ward critiques the ways in which Alpha can be considered McDonaldized religion. I would add it is a form of evangelism that heavily relies on 'hosthood'. See: Pete Ward, 'Alpha – The McDonaldization of Religion?' *Anvil* Volume 15 No. 4 (1998), 279-286

In summary, Evangelicals are potentially rejecting dialogue because they sense guesthood to be an improper mode-of-being for mission, establishing a view that interfaith dialogue is not a legitimate or worthwhile context for missiological encounter because it undermines the special status of the evangelical community's relationship to, and responsibility to proclaim, 'the Truth'. We have described this in terms of '**vulnerability**', exposing oneself to the power and control of the other who could be a threat; '**compromise**', perceiving the symbolic acts of hospitality (mutuality and reciprocity) to represent an undermining of exclusivity; and '**ineffectiveness**', considering preaching the gospel (enacted as monologue and hosthood) to be God's elected mode for transforming lives, which upholds the priority of conversionism whilst diminishing the value and importance of reconciliation across faith divides without the requirement to convert.

Chapter II: Hospitality as being host *and* guest

In this chapter, I suggest that theological literature on hospitality has overlooked the category and significance of 'guesthood' in mission. There are two prominent titles that have been popularly received for their work on hospitality: Christine D. Pohl's *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (1999) and Hans Boersma's *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross* (2006).[24]

Pohl's guiding premise is that hospitality, having become transactional and commercialised in the 21st century, has largely lost its moral dimension. She seeks to recover hospitality for ministerial and missional purposes because it is a 'spiritual obligation [and] a dynamic expression of vibrant Christianity'.[25] Pohl focuses her attention on how the Church can address issues of alleviating poverty and lack of welfare amongst those in genuine need. She recognises that hospitality is not just about what hosts *provide* in physical provision but also about what hosts *receive* from their guests in spiritual blessing. Considering this, she further recognises that offering hospitality to strangers is a significant dimension of what it means to welcome Christ as our guest (i.e., we *host* Christ through the stranger).[26]

My contention with Pohl is her assumption that what the Christian tradition of hospitality has to offer mission is solely a notion of hosthood. In considering the missiological implications of hospitality, she never once entertains the idea that *being a guest* might be a means to engage in mission. Pohl has taken the dynamic of hospitality and largely established it as a synonym for hosting: 'hospitality *to* strangers', 'being a community *of* hospitality', '*welcoming* strangers'. Not surprisingly therefore, Pohl exclusively focuses her attention on the characteristics of hosting well and is largely concerned by issues that arise from the host perspective (e.g., guests taking advantage of hospitality and whether welcoming strangers is too risky).[27] Subtly, Pohl suggests an underlying objective of the host role is to empower disempowered guests to eventually take up the role of hosts themselves.[28] In balance, Pohl's work on hospitality is important, Christians need to be better hosts to those in need (e.g., in the ongoing global refugee crises) but her work is a treatise on hosthood, *not the holistic dynamics of hospitality* that also includes guesthood. Wells observes that the Western mindset 'works for' others by providing what they do not have because we are driven by an ideological conviction that the human predicament is about limitation.[29] Pohl's understanding of the relevance of hospitality to mission is largely driven by this ideology, assuming that Christians are the 'haves' who *provide* through their comparatively abundant resources what the 'have nots' need to *receive* (this notion, outside of Pohl's work, transfers onto 'sharing the gospel' too). The assumption of being a host is akin, in many ways, to the problems that Wells identifies in 'working for' models of engagement.[30] Pohl recognises that Christ comes to us as a stranger and a guest but fails to consider how this might be archetypal for our own mode-of-being in mission (which I explore in Chapter IV).

Boersma, likewise, offers one side of the dynamic of hospitality. His work is 'a discussion of how human hospitality is underwritten by God's hospitality in Jesus Christ' in which he focuses his attention on atonement theology as God's hospitality. God gives himself in Christ to welcome us into eternal fellowship.[31] In this model, Boersma rightly identifies Christ-as-host. The cross is an act of welcome. Boersma sees this typology as grounds for us to 'partner' (cf. polarities below) with Christ in hosthood. Primarily, he considers the Church to be Christ's

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[24] Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006); Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999)

[25] Pohl, *Making Room,* p.4

[26] Ibid., p.8

[27] Ibid., p.8

[28] Ibid., p.11

[29] Wells, *Nazareth Manifesto,* pp.35-49.

[30] 'Working for' dehumanises people by treating them, or their needs, as a problem to be fixed. See: Wells, *Nazareth Manifesto,* pp.20-27; 100-109

[31] Boersma, *Hospitality*, pp.15-16; 27

presence in the world, whose task is to continue the 'welcome' of Christ through administering the sacraments (e.g., the eucharist) and preaching the gospel (cf. 'ineffectiveness' and the role of preaching).[32] It is important to note that this view of mission is underwritten by an assumption of the significance of the Church's agency in mission.

I challenge Boersma's emphasis on Christ-as-host by suggesting that, ultimately, the *raison d'etre* for Christ being on the cross is because *he has subjected himself as a guest to the world-as-host*. This is a deep subversion of the hospitality dynamic. The Lord of Hosts, through kenotic self-giving, relinquishes his title, privilege and power and becomes a guest with no status. In juxtaposition to Boersma, I suggest an alternative image of the crucifixion which sees it not as Christ's welcome to the world but the climax of Christ's hospitable encounter with the world as host. The cross is the *world's act of welcome to Christ*.

Holding together these two images of the cross is perplexing because Christ's *powerlessness* defines *both his hosthood and his guesthood*. These subversions of power confuse 'which way is up' in the hospitality dynamic because both images are legitimate and yet they blur the binary of the host and guest roles. Is Christ host, welcoming the world? Or is he its guest, subject to its dominant cruelty? Both images are important and there is no need to do away with either one. However, this does highlight a limitation of a rigid conception of hospitality, which, admittedly, I am using as a conceptual tool throughout this dissertation. Should we be guests in mission, or hosts? Arguably, both. Either way, if our mode-of-being in mission is following Christ's example, we will not be amassing the privileges of conventional forms of power, particularly within the hierarchal dynamic of hospitality. Hosthood has largely been assumed in the literature, often without question or comment, and further light needs to be shed on its neglected counterpart: guesthood. Guesthood refers to two differing orientations. Firstly, in Chapter III, our exploration of the Good Samaritan recognises the typology of Christ-as-host, but our primary focus is the missiological implications of our being *guests of the religious other and guests of God*, which, as we will elucidate, are one in the same. Secondly, Chapter IV explores *Christ's guesthood* in the incarnation and suggests that this is a pattern for mimesis in mission.

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[32] Ibid., pp.206-208

Chapter III – The Good Samaritan

In this chapter we develop Wells's exegesis of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) by exploring its intersections with hospitality and guesthood.[33] My purpose is to critique the validity of the three issues identified in Chapter I ('vulnerability', 'compromise', and 'ineffectiveness') in order to substantiate guesthood as a necessary and legitimate mode-of-being in mission.

Mystery

Before commencing commentary on the Good Samaritan, it is necessary for me to provide categories for 'mystery' because, whilst it receives focused treatment in Chapter V, it is an essential component for communicating my argument at this juncture.

I claim that an additional rationale for evangelicals favouring hosthood as a mode-of-being in mission is because it provides stability, clarity, and definitiveness. However, this is achieved through theological misemphasis and 'demystification' that proves detrimental for mission. Mystery concerns itself with the irresolvable (and perhaps paradoxical) tensions that exist between the modalities of hosthood and guesthood. We can describe these tensions through polarities.[34] The key to legitimising and recognising the value of guesthood is contingent upon properly managing polarities, learning to deal with and tolerate the tensions that arise in doing so. Managing polarities effectively recognises the value of two poles that are qualitatively contradictory. What is required is not a static response that solely emphasises one pole (which, as above, offers the advantage of stability, clarity, and definitiveness) but a response that is dynamic, moving between the two poles with their respective emphases and managing the tensions of the contradiction. There are two primary polarities that I suggest are relevant to hosthood and guesthood. The first is concerned with our *agency* in mission (Participant OR Partner). The second is concerned with reconciliation and the *goal* of mission (Relationship OR Results), which we address in Chapter V.

The Participant OR Partner polarity relates to whether we primarily view our agency in God's mission as his 'Partner', working *with him* or *for him* to achieve the goals of mission, OR whether we conceive of our role as a 'Participant' in God's mission, who uses our engagement in mission as much for transforming us as for transforming others. This gets complicated because this polarity splinters into further polarities that are unavoidably relevant.

To emphasise 'Partner' is to believe that God is 'Knowable' (Unknowable OR Knowable) and with this knowledge we 'Provide' (Reception OR Provision) the gospel and are empowered to do so with authority, certainty, and confidence. The gospel is something that *we* bring that transforms others. Furthermore, in 'Partner', our agency is significant. This emphasises that others' reception of God's grace is a matter of their personal 'Free Will' (Election OR Free Will). 'Partner' says that exertion (cf. activism) can affect the outcome of mission by influencing others' wills to 'accept Christ', and that we have a meaningful, perhaps essential, role to play in mission. Emphasis on 'Partner' produces hosthood as a mode-of-being in mission.

To emphasise 'Participant' is to believe that God is 'Unknowable' (Unknowable OR Knowable) and that we humbly 'Receive' (Reception OR Provision) from God whatever grace and understanding he wishes to bestow, being aware of the limitations of our comprehension. Receiving the gospel requires that we recognise God's 'Elective' grace (Election OR Free Will). 'Election' determines that all that is given by God is a gift and that we cannot force God's hand one way or the other (including converting someone). God is the sovereign distributor of grace, not us. Therefore, mission is characterised by anticipation of what God will do, not what we will do. Emphasis on 'Participant' produces guesthood as a mode-of-being in mission.

We must see these polarities not as either/or statements but instead learn to straddle the inherent tensions of a both/and perspective that sees the value of both (Participant AND

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[33] For Wells's exegesis of the Good Samaritan see: *Nazareth Manifesto*, pp.86-99

[34] The concept and method of polarities all credited to: Barry Johnson, *Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems* (Massachusetts: HRD Press, 2014); Barry Johnson; Roy Oswald, *Managing Polarities in Congregations* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014)

Partner; Relationship AND Results). Doing so will enable us to see how hosthood *and* guesthood have a place as legitimate modes-of-being in mission. It is my observation that evangelicals generally emphasise 'Partner' and the right-hand-side of the splinter polarities therein. The hard task is beginning to see the value of the 'other side' and to redress problematic misemphasis. We will use these polarities to help analyse why guesthood is rejected as we explore Wells's exegesis of the Good Samaritan.

The Good Samaritan

The parable relates to a theology of mission of guesthood on three main counts:

1) Reading ourselves as the Samaritan substantiates the *assumption* that mission is exclusively fulfilled through hosthood.
2) It informs the who, what, how, and why of engaging with the stranger, particularly the religious-other-as-stranger. I claim we need to learn the importance of engaging with the stranger through being their guest.
3) It illuminates our incapacity to understand our being guests of God. We, like members of other faiths, only receive grace from God as those who are spiritually broken and needy.

Wells's exegesis can be summarised as follows. The parable is a 'gospel in miniature' offering an image of the incarnation that describes the relationship between God and his people, Israel (cf. John 1:11). The parable is *not* about our being 'good Samaritans'. Jesus represents himself as the Samaritan. The man who is beaten and robbed is Israel. Jesus is being provocative, stating that Israel, despite being in Jerusalem with temple practice and a learned religious elite, is still in exile. Jesus the Samaritan has come to save Israel from 'the exilic ditch'. This reading is justified on several grounds. Firstly, if the parable were a mandate for compassion for the needy, we would expect the despised Samaritan to be the one in the ditch requiring unprejudiced help, not the one offering help. Secondly, it is unlikely that Jesus would assume his listeners were people of means. Most of the people hearing the parable would not, practically, be able to 'go and do likewise', extending the lavish generosity that the Samaritan provides the man in the ditch. This is the message of the Widow's Mite (Luke 21:1-4), which is sensitive to this issue. Thirdly, if Christ is the Samaritan, then identifying with the Samaritan assumes we carry out the same ministry of salvation as Jesus, which we do not. Finally, the Samaritan's going 'into the city' illustrates what Jesus is about to do by entering Jerusalem himself, at the ultimate cost, which similarly might befall a Samaritan who entered Jerusalem. The priest and Levite of the parable, and the lawyer[35] posing the question to Jesus, represent Israel's religious elite, yet do not have the answer for Israel's salvation. So self-assured of their salvation, they do not recognise the destitute state of the beaten, robbed, and naked man in the ditch as the likeness of themselves. The Samaritan does for the man in the ditch what the priest and the Levite, ironically, refuse to do for themselves. Wells's concludes:

> 'The fundamental gospel is that human beings failed to save themselves and are incapable of saving others, but that Jesus saves them anyway.'[36]

The lawyer's question - "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" - reflects the ill-judgement of his perceived status. He assumes his spiritual vitality in the face of questions about salvation. Jesus tells the parable against him (and the reader today who brings a similar assumption) by asserting that they are, in fact, in the ditch.

Wells's 're-interpretation' of the parable is not unique, and the key features of his exegesis are reflected in broader scholarship.[37]

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[35] The lawyer is an expert of Jewish law and thus closely associated with the representation of the priest and Levite in the parable, see Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1997), p.427

[36] Wells, *Nazareth Manifesto*, pp.92-93

[37] Green, *Luke*, p.431; cf. Luke Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), pp. 173-175 for the 'popular' reading of mimicking the Samaritan's behaviour.

Assuming Hosthood

The popular telling of the parable reads the Samaritan as an exemplar of social justice whose compassion for the downtrodden is to be imitated: "Today I was a good Samaritan to a homeless person." In this reading, the priest and the Levite's lack of compassion represents the antithesis of what we must be. Whilst this reading may seem relatively harmless and of positive benefit to a social justice agenda, Wells asserts it misses the point entirely.

Why, if the parable's meaning is so radically different to what most of us know and hear, does the mis-telling of being a 'good Samaritan' continue to be rehearsed?[38] As Wells suggests, how we read the parable reveals our assumptions about social engagement and about our status before God.[39] For Wells, the assumption that we are, or must be, the Samaritan, highlights our Western disposition towards a 'working for' model of engagement. We identify with the one who helps, not the one who needs help. 'Partner' holds that salvation is something we 'Provide' to others through communicating the gospel; in the language of hospitality, 'Partner' says: "We are hosts *because we have something to provide*, not guests because we have no need to receive." This conviction undergirds the rationale for rejection of guesthood in 'ineffectiveness' and 'compromise': being a guest and receiving from the religious other is of no consequence.

However, the crosshairs of the parable are aimed precisely at this over-confidence, which is the same problematic assumption held by the priest, Levite, and lawyer. It is an assumption of hosthood, a claim to 'Know', posses, and therefore 'Provide' God.

But aren't we, in the post-ascension, Spirit-given era, more enlightened than the priest, Levite and Lawyer? Do we not '*accept*' Jesus and have cause for our confidence in knowing Christ, with our abundant theological resources and master's degrees in theology and ministry?! The lawyer, no doubt, would easily match this repertoire with his own self-justifying accolades. It is easy for us to exclude ourselves from the parable's warning, and in doing so to befall the same fate as the lawyer, who, with God standing before him, cannot recognise him. God is a stranger. God being strange to us anticipates that God, to some degree, must be 'Unknowable'. *Do we anticipate this?*

'Partner' says that God *is* 'Knowable'. Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8), he has been seen, heard, and touched, he is understood, which is why he can be meaningfully proclaimed (1 John 1:1). However, the danger of mis-emphasis on 'Knowable' presumes that God is familiar and predictable to the extent that God's stranger-ness, or his capacity for surprise, is not anticipated. Yet the surprise of the incarnation completely destabilised over-confidence of knowing God.[40] Are we, in the evangelical tradition, susceptible to measuring orthodoxy by a 'God-in-a-box' theology, in which we presume him to be defined, quantified, and predictable? The parable challenges our definitiveness. However, to suggest that God is 'Unknowable' is to discredit the value of God choosing to *reveal himself*. To dismiss the value of our knowledge of God makes our faith a poor prize for Christ, who through the incarnation has made the unseen God seen and known to us (John 1:18). There is a tension here.

The 'Unknowable OR Knowable' polarity highlights that hosthood is prone to a proud complacency that communicates the known God to others yet dismisses him when he appears as a stranger. Preaching as monologue and hosthood (cf. 'ineffectiveness') overlooks the significance that God has not revealed himself to us through a booming and authoritative monologue from the heavens, but through deep dialogue with the human experience in the incarnation. Christ's mode-of-being in mission is dialogical, and he enters the conversation as a stranger.

To sufficiently tackle the assumption of hosthood in the parable we must return to Pohl's notion that Christ is welcomed as a stranger by *hosting* him. Is it not possible to digest the

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[38] For example: 'Relevant Magazine Website', https://www.relevantmagazine.com/current/parable-good-samaritan-era-refugees/ (13 September 2021)

[39] Wells, *Nazareth Manifesto,* p.11

[40] The incarnation being a 'surprise' for Israel is the thesis defended by Graham Cole in *The God who Become Human* (Illinois: IVP, 2013)

parable's warning as a mandate for welcoming and receiving the stranger by being a more open host? I believe this is untenable for three main reasons. Firstly, the parable suggests we receive Christ not from the position of a host, but from within the ditch, as Christ's guests. It would seem flippant to rid ourselves of the very disposition by which we receive salvation from Christ. Secondly, the immediate context of Luke's gospel conceives of mission as sending, not receiving. The 12 and the 72 are sent out, vulnerably exposing themselves by becoming benefactors of the hospitality of strangers: "Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals [...] remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide" (Luke 10:4-7). Finally, in the broader context of the gospels, the Trinity's mission is a 'sequence' of sending, which results in Jesus sending the disciples alongside and accompanied by the sent Paraclete.[41] Sending is leaving, going out into the world as guests and relinquishing the security, comfort, and control of remaining as host on home turf.

Exclusively abiding in hosthood is indefensible in the face of the parable's warning. Openness to the presence and influence of Christ the stranger requires proactivity toward a 'go-to' and not solely a 'come-to' mentality. If we were to 'go-to' the table of SR, how might we anticipate being received by Christ there?

The assertion that *we are the man in the ditch* slices with an ironic and convicting edge against the misreading of ourselves as the Samaritan, further challenging any assumption of hosthood in mission. Christ is asking us to recognise our spiritual destitution and to *receive* from him. Christ is host. We are his guests. The parable's message emphasises the theological and missiological realities of 'Participant'. God is 'Unknown', he is a stranger to us. We do not possess him, ready to 'Provide' to others. We are 'Participants' in the ditch of exile, therefore our disposition should be framed not by what we offer others, but by eager anticipation to 'Receive' from Christ the stranger as he *welcomes us*. We must be willing to see ourselves not as hosts, but as guests.

In the next section we explore the implications of what it means to engage with Christ as stranger in the context of interfaith engagement, questioning how Christ-the-stranger transposes onto our understanding of the religious-other-as-stranger.

Engaging the religious-other-as-stranger as Christ-the-stranger

The illustration of Christ as a Samaritan explicates that God is strange to us in the same way that the religious other is strange to us. What does this mean for interfaith encounter?

Historically, Samaritans, to the Jews, are the heretical 'sibling' of Israel, piggy backing off the mainstream Jewish tradition with illegitimate claims to the God of Israel.[42] How might the allegory of the Samaritan transpose onto modern day attitudes of evangelicals towards Muslims and Jews? Both share a common heritage in Abraham and reverence for the Hebrew scriptural tradition, but both reject the messianism of Christ and the gospel. Are Muslims and Jews the contemporary equivalent to the evangelical's Samaritan? To allow the parable to thrust its warning full force in our direction is to reflect on whether God may appear to us 'like' a Jew or a Muslim. This begins to imply, in tension with 'compromise', that the religious other may bring the message of God, or indeed, is a messenger of God. These sentiments stray uncomfortably close to the relativistic and inclusivist ideology we are attempting to avoid.

To explore this, we need to understand what is implied, practically and theologically, by Christ's affiliation to the stranger, and therefore his affiliation with those who are strange to us. Does Christ 'incarnate' into the stranger in our daily lives? The parable clearly does not warrant this reading. However, dismissing the parable's warning on the grounds that Christ cannot literally be the stranger is insufficient. The warning, unless we're to fall into the 'lawyer category', must be indefinite, universal, and subjunctive. All strangers, at all times, must hypothetically be treated as if they could be Christ. We see these sentiments elsewhere in the gospels: the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 23:31-46); welcoming children as welcoming Christ (Mark 9:37); and the reality of this is actualised in Christ's post-resurrection

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[41] Garry Burge, *The Anointed Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp.201-204

[42] Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, p.404-405

appearance to the disciples on the road to Damascus as an unrecognisable stranger (Luke 24:13-35).

But why treat strangers as if they could be Christ when they are not, for example when engaging with a Muslim who denies the death and resurrection of Christ? This feels like a logical absurdity. What is its purpose? Treating the stranger as if they could be Christ establishes a disposition not only for ensuring we do not reject God, but simultaneously compels us to seek out and restore relationships with those who are strange and despised to us. Christ saves us from the 'exilic ditch', which is reconciliation with God, but *only through* our own modality that is prepared to radically engage the stranger. The parable forces us to critically reflect on our own 'head-in-the-air-piety'[43] insofar as it can be measured by our rejection, dismissal, and apathy toward the religious other. If we judge ourselves poorly in this regard, we should beware whether we are truly reconciled to God. This points to a mysterious reality that, according to the parable, reconciliation with God and reconciliation with the stranger are concurrently intertwined aspects of mission. Wells, despite his attestation that the 'gospel is reconciliation' never identifies his understanding of reconciliation in this way in his argument for 'being with'. However, this notion of reconciliation is a key challenge to evangelical conceptions of the priorities of mission. If God's mission of reconciliation is simultaneously theological and anthropological then this presents a powerful challenge to the credibility of the issues of 'vulnerability', 'compromise', and 'ineffectiveness'. Specifically, it suggests that the priority of conversionism, and activism to that end, is not the full picture of God's mission to and amongst humankind. To be a 'Partner' with God in his mission is to recognise the holistic dynamic of reconciliation, and to collaborate with him to those ends. Simultaneously, we must also recognise that we are recipients of God's mission of reconciliation: he is at work in the world and *acting upon us*, both in terms of reconciling us to him through Christ, but also through the stranger, who is Christ the stranger, reconciling us to one another.

God is at work in these encounters, and we 'Partner' with him, toward the holistic purposes of his mission of reconciliation. But there is a sucker punch that swings the pendulum the other way. In the context of the parable, Christ, who is the religious-other-as-stranger, is the one who is at work in these encounters, not us. It is incumbent upon us to realise that the unbelieving stranger may be the very instrument by which God chooses to *transform us*. If we are too self-assured of our piety to be willing to receive from the religious other, it is as if, sitting in the ditch, we say to Christ, "No thanks, I'm fine."

In order for this to be tenable to the evangelical imagination, I must emphasise that these sentiments are not a veiled expression of an inclusivist and relativistic ideology. The religious other is *not* a potential gift to us because of their orthodoxy or the veracity of their religious particularities. Rather, the religious other is a potential agent for transforming us because they are a human being, made in the image of God, capable of receiving God's grace, and of being to us whatever God may elect them to be for his purposes. To be ready to receive from the religious other in this regard is to be ready to receive from God. To avoid falling into the 'lawyer category' of the parable we must, unlike the lawyer, anticipate that, at times, Christ will be distasteful to our pseudo-religious pious sensibilities. The tangibility of these claims acknowledges the value of the religious other's orthopraxy (*not* orthodoxy); learning from the religious others' practice can lead to a more abundant and rich expression of Christian discipleship.[44] For example, I have come across many Christians who, through encounters in SR, have been humbled by the fervency and devotion with which Muslims pray, causing them to reflect upon the quality of their own prayer lives. The fact that Jesus is 'Samaritan-like' demands that we be open to the possibility that individuals from other religious traditions possess what we might be lacking in our own.

What does all of this mean for the assumption of 'vulnerability', that the religious other is a threat? Or the assumption of 'compromise', that the religious other's 'provision' is valueless?

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[43] Wells, *Nazareth Manifesto*, p.91

[44] Paul Griffiths offers a similar conception to this as 'seeking Egyptian gold', see: Wells, *Incarnational Mission*, pp.92-93

I suggest that the parable's warning elucidates that the *real* way in which we are made vulnerable, and compromise our faith, is by the *exclusion* resulting from the assumption of monological hosthood. Our real predicament is that we remain dangerously impressionable to the tendency to seek the comfort and security of hosthood, to only look *within* our community for the source of God's work in our lives, which obstructs God's plans for us to receive him as a stranger, and from him *in* the stranger. Being a guest in interfaith encounter promises not to be a threat to Christian faith, but *the necessary disposition* by which saving faith is obtained and refined.

SR asks evangelicals for humility to *listen and learn* from the religious other, and to recognise that it is entirely plausible, in God's providence, that they should *receive from them as guests*. SR offers to be a catalyst for evangelical formation, enabling the disposition to receive from God as a 'Participant' at a table full of strangers.

Guests of God

In this final section of Chapter III, I explore the limits of the notion that the 'exilic ditch' is the place of interfaith encounter by suggesting that it is the place of co-'Participation' with the religious other in sin and spiritual destitution. Considering this, I offer a reflection on grace, that asserts that the mutuality and reciprocity inherent in the symbols of hospitality and dialogue are an appropriate image of what it means for all of us to be 'guests of God'. The 'exilic ditch' is the ultimate leveller that confronts our desire to seek spiritual superiority through exclusively abiding in hosthood. Guesthood recognises that all we have is 'Received' from God and is therefore a rich expression of Christian humility within mission.

The temptation of hosthood is to characterise the ditch as the abode of other faiths: "The ditch is for people who don't know and accept Christ". But this dangerously presumes upon the *security* of our salvation. To presume the ditch is solely the abode of other faiths is to fall again into the 'lawyer category' with his unwarranted confidence that cannot recognise the *reality* of his own spiritual destitution. This point is very similar to the reflection offered above on the implications of the Knowable OR Unknowable polarity. However, here, I am exploring the idea that the substance of our 'Knowledge' of God does not 'lift' us out of the ditch. Our relationship with God is one of ongoing 'Reception' from the place of exile.

This taps into a further tension that is eschatological: the now-and-not-yet of our sanctification. Is the gospel something that we 'Receive', that transforms and 'elevates' us out of the ditch, that we then possess in order to go about the business of 'Providing' to others, elevating them out of the ditch too? Or is the gospel something we *continually* 'Receive', where Christ's work has never come to completion, until the Final Day, and until that point should mark us out as those anticipating to 'Receive' rather than as those who 'Provide'? To affirm the former is to emphasise 'Partner', and the latter 'Participant'. If we transpose the emphasis of 'Partner' onto the image of the parable then it would be to stand alongside (or dare we say it, in place of) Christ - outside of the ditch, elevated above it, and looking down at those within it. This image is obviously hierarchical and the links to hosthood are clear: "I possess and provide the remedy to your situation – you receive from me." But what does this say about the perception of our own sinfulness? Are we, considering the now-and-not-yet of our sanctification, warranted in holding this spiritually privileged provision? Believing grace 'elevates' us to spiritual superiority is precisely the misguided notion that Paul rebukes the 'super apostles' on at Corinth (1 Cor. 4:7). If we, in light of our sinfulness, and our *receiving grace*, consider ourselves to be spiritually superior, then we have not understood sin or grace. We must return to Anselm's exhortation and consider again 'the greatness of the weight of sin'.[45] The parable calls us to reckon with the reality that we remain 'ditch dwellers'. This has important implications for diminishing a sense of spiritual superiority 'over' the religious other, particularly if we are exhibiting this sense of superiority through the hierarchical dynamics of hospitality. Exclusively assuming the modality of hosthood highlights a superiority complex that is manifested in mission. The words of Samuel Freedman summarise the appropriate dynamic of mission as guests of God succinctly: 'Christianity is one beggar

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[45] See Fleming Rutledge on 'the gravity of sin' and Anselm's words in: *The Crucifixion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), pp.167-203

telling another beggar where he found bread.'[46] 'Participant' recognises that mission is marked by a humble disposition of receiving and encouraging the other to receive too. It points to the reality that we are all guests of God, and all likewise receive grace only from him.

So what does it look like to instead transpose the image of 'Participant' onto the 'exilic ditch'? The 'exilic ditch' represents the universal spiritual destitution that we share with the religious other. We are all in the same position, and we receive from Christ as his guests. The 'exilic ditch' is not solely the abode of other faiths. We 'Participate' in the ditch in our continued sinfulness and on every occasion that the pride of our self-perceived piety rejects the hand of Christ-the-stranger reaching in. 'Compromise' rejects guesthood because it sees the mutual and reciprocal dynamic of hospitable dialogue to be a symbolic expression of relativism and inclusivity. This is exceedingly ironic because the image of the ditch as the place of co-'Participation' with the religious other suggests that what we have 'in common' with other faiths is *our lack of faith* and *our desperate spiritual plight*. The meaning of the symbols of mutuality and reciprocity are reframed through the parable's light. Mutuality and reciprocity, as expressions of our equality with the religious other in relation to sin and grace, are appropriate manifestations of the status we share with other faiths: we are all guests of God, waiting to receive from him. This points to a significant theological dynamic of SR: regardless of who is the host or the guest at any given moment, *God is always present as host of all*. Choosing to 'Participate' in 'the ditch' of interfaith engagement on mutual and reciprocal terms is a means to practice the humility that recognises that *we came from the ditch*, *are still in it*, *and the means to get out exists outside of ourselves, in Christ*. The various emphases of 'Participant' that we have explored have produced a conception of mission in interfaith engagement as being *in the ditch* and, to all those around us, to point *up* to the One who can get us all out. The confidence held by the Christian, then, is not rooted in our own spiritual superiority but in our certainty that Christ is the answer to our shared 'ditch dilemma' (cf. Gal 6:14; 1 Cor. 4:7).

Considering this, our conception of the priority of conversionism needs to be reorientated. Conversionism rendered through hosthood says: "The religious other's life needs to be changed". But being guests of God demands conversionism to be self-reflexive: "*Our* lives need to be changed". Guesthood and co-'Participation' in the ditch of exile anticipates the ways in which God will use mission to transform us, not just others.

The evangelical rebuttal at this juncture may affirm the value of our knowledge of and relationship with Christ, and therefore our need to fervently (cf. activism) share the gospel with those who do not know and accept Christ. We *should* use hosthood as a modality to provide others with the transformative power of the gospel because 'with great power comes great responsibility'.[47] Ultimately, this issue points to whether we consider our agency in mission to be significant or not. On the table are questions such as: "Does God rely on us in mission?"; "Does what I do in mission matter?"; "Can my words and actions affect the other for God's purposes?". These questions are suitably contained within the Election OR Free Will polarity. If the religious other has not come to faith, simply because they haven't decided to do so, then this is the task of mission, to *affect* their will. The tensions of this polarity 'clicked' for me when I attended a university event, hosted by the Atheist, Humanist and Socialist Society, about whether the Christian Union's evangelical activity on campus should be permitted. Together, we discussed a Christian understanding of grace. One of the members of the society said, *with all the sincerity he possessed*: "I want to believe, but I just cannot figure out how I can". In that moment I realised that his coming to faith was not dependent on my 'eloquent words of wisdom' but rested in 'the power God', which, seemingly, I was unable to affect. This individual's sincerity was deeply troubling to me. Grace was what was needed, but in this individual's life, it had yet not appeared. 'Election' states that God, in his sovereign providence, is the ultimate giver of the gift of grace. The challenge to 'Partner' and to hosthood is whether

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[46] See Samuel Freedman in: Rutledge, *The Crucifixion*, p.22. I have heard people attribute this saying to Don A. Carson.

[47] See Luke 12:48. This saying is inconclusively attributed to multiple sources including Voltaire and Churchill, but has undoubtedly been popularised, humorously, by Stan Lee's fictional character Uncle Ben in the Spiderman comics.

we really can or should take the gospel and lord-it-over other faiths (and those not of faith) as if our grasping of it, and others' non-grasping of it, is merely a matter of will, and that exertion of our influence is the determinate factor in others' acceptance of Christ. But how does this stack up with the reality that God is calling all people, everywhere, to repent (Acts 17:30)? This was Paul's message, and it should be ours too. Sharing the call to repent urgently impresses itself upon us, calling us to 'Partner' with God as he 'draws all people to himself' (John 12:32). It suggests that what we do and say amongst those who do not know and accept Christ *matters*; and therefore, it is not unreasonable to deduce that God has given us real responsibility and influence in mission.

However, 'Partner' and hosthood within the evangelical community have received undue emphasis in the context of interfaith dialogue for too long. Sometimes, what is required in acknowledging that we are guests of God and 'Participants' in mission is to throw our hands in the air and to devote ourselves in prayer to the giver of grace, who 'Elects' as he chooses. Participating in SR, through the humility of guesthood, is a form of prayer, perhaps even lament, that says to God: "It's your move."

Despite this, we must exercise our ability to effectively manage the polarity of Partner OR Participant, manifested in the dynamic of hospitality by assuming the roles of both *host and guest*. To only be a guest and 'Participate' in mission is to neglect the call of Christ to 'Partner' with him; this creates apathy and complacency. To only be a host and 'Partner' with God in mission fails to anticipate the ways in which we will receive from him within mission; this creates pride and self-sufficiency. This is a mystery, and we must balance these tensions. SR is no stranger to these tensions, implementing the exchanging of the host and guest roles to reverently 'hold the mystery'. Being the host of the religious other in SR, as we share from the Christian tradition, we have the opportunity to 'Provide', partnering with God in the communication of his Word to the religious other. Here we can be bold, confident, and assured of Christian truth. Being a guest of the religious other, as we are momentarily gifted an insight into their tradition, we have the opportunity to receive, to look out for what is strange, and to ask, "Is God here?". It is an opportunity to ponder how we are participating in the work of God and to look for the signs of what God is doing in the lives of others as well as in our own. If we manage the polarity of Partner AND Participant, and their respective splinter polarities (Unknowable AND Knowable; Reception AND Provision; Election AND Free Will) then we will begin to see the value and legitimacy of hosthood AND guesthood in missiological encounters with those of other faiths. SR's interchange of these roles provides an opportunistic context in which to act out a holistic missiology that balances the paradoxical tensions I have identified.

Summary

In this section I have explored a complex intersection of themes and ideas in order to undermine the legitimacy of the issues of 'vulnerability', 'compromise', and 'ineffectiveness' as they relate to evangelical rejection of guesthood when engaging in interfaith dialogue. I have suggested that hosthood can be described as an emphasis on 'Partner' in a Partner OR Participant polarity and that what is required to enable evangelicals to legitimise and value guesthood is to legitimise and value the various emphases of 'Participant', reframing the polarity as Partner AND Participant. I have suggested that guesthood relates both to being a guest of the religious other, which is to be received by Christ, who is a stranger, and also that we share the modality of guesthood with the religious other as those who are spiritually destitute and equally in need of receiving grace from God in the 'exilic ditch' of the parable. I have suggested that both these forms of guesthood can be appropriately manifested in the practical dynamics of SR. I believe that this chapter has upheld the priorities of evangelicalism, whilst observing the following:

1) Mutuality and reciprocity in dialogue need not undermine Evangelicalism's exclusive truth claims (biblicism and crucicentrism). Rather, mutuality and reciprocity are a symbol of the non-hierarchical and lateral relationship we share with the religious other in relation to sin and grace.
2) Conversionism must be self-reflexive and anticipate the ways in which mission will change and transform us. In other words, it is about receiving from the stranger, and from God, as a guest.

3) Activism needs to be tempered by the emphases of 'Participant' (especially 'Election' in an Election AND Free Will polarity). Mission is not solely about exertion and the power of our influence. There is an economy of God's grace at work that is mysterious, uncontrollable, and beyond our own agency, except in what we devote to prayer.

This chapter has demonstrated that guesthood can be a valuable and legitimate modality in mission for evangelicals and that SR is an opportunity to engage with the religious other as an authentic and rich expression of Evangelicalism. However, I recognise that a conception of reconciliation as holistic (intertwining theological-to-anthropological and anthropological-to-anthropological as part of the same action and outcome) needs further analysis. Assuming evangelicals will accept this conception of reconciliation cannot be taken for granted and there may be a rebuttal that the gospel achieves *both* by prioritising theological-to-anthropological reconciliation as a means to achieve anthropological-to-anthropological reconciliation. In other words, to prioritise the latter, in the evangelical imagination, is to put the cart before the horse. If SR is not a viable context in which to uphold the priority of conversionism, then it may never prove to be a compelling practice for evangelicals.

Section IV – The Incarnation

In the previous chapter, I examined what it means for Christ to be host as the Samaritan who provides salvation to those in the 'exilic ditch', who are his guests. In this chapter, I suggest that the incarnation is a model of guesthood and that this produces two relevant ideas for evangelical participation as guests within SR:

1) Christ's guesthood further challenges our assumption of hosthood and shows a pattern for mission in which Christ himself is a guest of the world and receives the world's hospitality. I suggest that this is a rationale for mimesis where Western evangelicals can imitate and follow Christ by 'giving up' privilege and power and subjecting themselves to guesthood, as Christ did. This is as an integral quality of discipleship and mission.

2) In guesthood, Christ retains authenticity and distinctiveness, even when it creates abrasion and undermines his host, the world. This refines our understanding of what it means to be a guest and suggests guesthood is not confined to a mode of civility and politeness. This is an important concept for considering the abrasion that might arise as evangelical faith is authentically expressed in the context of SR.

I explore both these ideas concurrently given their broad intersections.

One of the most important contributions to recognising the significance of the notion of 'being a guest' in mission has come from Berdine van den Toren-Lekkerkerker and Benno van den Toren in their article 'From Missionary Incarnate to Incarnational Guest'.[48] They criticise models of incarnational mission because inculturation (a significant tenet of conceptions of incarnational mission) assumes that we have the capacity to learn, understand and embody the cultural perspective of another group, and to appropriate the gospel to said culture. Inculturation features in literature on incarnational mission because it takes the incarnation as an exemplary form of inculturation: Christ, who is God, becomes a man, and lives a human life as a Jew in 1st century Palestine. I suggest that, however well-meaning and seemingly sacrificial, the model of inculturation is problematic because it cannot elude itself of the assumption that *one must be a host* in mission, leading to several negative implications:

> [Inculturation] is deficient because it is unrealistic, potentially paternalistic, inappropriate in the light of globalization and post-modern understandings of culture, and because it doesn't sufficiently respect the particularity of the incarnation of Christ.[49]

According to van den Toren-Lekkerkerker and van den Toren, incarnational mission is unrealistic because in the context of cross-cultural (and I would add, interreligious) missions it is not possible for us to completely share the lives of the people we work with, nor do we often want to do this, and it is often inauthentic and dishonest to our own socio-religious and cultural particularities. The criticism of paternalism is also important because it illuminates for us, again, the assumption of hosthood in mission where the missionary's prerogative is to have so authentically adopted another cultural identity that it then becomes possible to *host* natives of that culture with integrity. This, ironically, disempowers cultural natives from authentically appropriating the gospel themselves, because they are still 'receiving' from the missionary as host. To do mission this way is a 'covert colonial' type of hosthood. The 'incarnational missionary' adopts the host culture and then 'baits and switches' as a means of appropriating the gospel: "I am like you. Now I am not. Now be like me." Within the mixing pot of complex religious diversity in the West, 'domestic' mission like this will not work because there is not a fixed point of socio-religious cultural expression that the missionary can 'incarnate' into. The alternative, if one insists on retaining hosthood, is to welcome the religious other, often with an open-handed and explicit evangelical agenda. This also won't work because committed members of other faiths do not typically wish to expose themselves

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[48] Berdine van den Toren-Lekkerkerker and Benno van den Toren, 'From Missionary Incarnate to Incarnational Guest: A Critical Reflection on Incarnation as a Model for Missionary Presence', *Transformation* 32, (April 2015) 81-96

[49] Ibid., 81

to the threat of conversion (in the same way that evangelicals do not want to do). SR offers an answer for this, and an opportunity, because it welcomes the complex and distinctive particularities that we all bring to the table of dialogue and there is no pre-tense of being something other than oneself. Additionally, there is no overt hierarchical threat to dissuade participation from any party. From the evangelical perspective, this has major advantages because, through the process of exploring Christian scriptures with the religious other, it allows the gospel (and its challenge) to be presented in an upfront, candid, and sincere way. *The religious other gets to see, hear, and understand what actual Christians believe and do by observing them in their authentic particularity in the dialogue of SR.* Christian faith is presented in its unapologetic distinctiveness. Surely this is attractive to Evangelicalism?!

But this requires guesthood, which leads me to focus on the qualities of the incarnation as it relates to guesthood and to Toren-Lekkerkerker and Toren's claim that models of incarnational mission do not sufficiently respect the particularity of Christ. They suggest that models of incarnational mission diminish *the* incarnation because we are not capable of the extraordinary act of 'incarnating' that occurred in the Christ event, nor for the same purposes. They claim that we cannot, nor should we, 'be Christ' to others in this same saving and redeeming way.[50] The way to balance the potential value that models of incarnational mission presents is to view the incarnation as a metaphor for mission, recognising that we do not literally do any of the things that Christ did in the incarnation. Uniquely, they propose that the way to translate the incarnation as a metaphor into mission is to view cross-cultural mission as being a guest.[51] They suggest being a guest is characterised by two essential qualities: mutual respect, and the dependence of the guest on the host culture.

However, I feel that van den Toren-Lekkerkerker and van den Toren could strike the literalism-metaphor balance of the incarnation as a model for mission slightly differently by impressing two qualities of Christ's guesthood further.

Firstly, for Western evangelicals who typically hold a position of power and privilege, it is one thing to *occasionally* be a guest and become dependent, but does Christ's guesthood in the incarnation ask for us to abandon the conventional exercising of power in mission altogether? The incarnation is a parody of power. What does one poor Jewish man's death on a cross two thousand years ago have to do with the salvation of the world? The kenotic self-giving of Christ in the incarnation is an intentional trajectory toward powerlessness for the sake of mission. God subverts the economy of power because it is through the utter powerlessness of guesthood, which climaxes at the crucifixion, the world's hospitality to Christ, that Christ overthrows the powers of sin and death. Is *this* unique and particular to Christ's incarnation? Or is this subversion of power ongoing in our participation in mission today? Wells suggests that the incarnation discloses God's character and identity and that, because of this, it has abiding, not just fleeting, significance. It is a past event that has permanent dynamics.[52] To suggest that our participation in mission does not step into the same stream of God's subversion of the economy of power is to imply that the mode of the incarnation was arbitrary. It seems absurd to suggest that God was *lacking intentionality* with the inherent qualities of the modality of Christ in the incarnation, and that they are missiologically insignificant or unapplicable for us. However, advocating for powerless guesthood on this basis needs to contend with the critique of exemplarism and the fact that Christ's modality makes sense in the context of his particular mission to atone for the sins of the world through a death on the cross, a mission we do not share.[53] I am not advocating powerless guesthood on this basis. We are not, after all, Christ on the cross, nor are we atoning for anyone's sin. We do not participate in the soteriological, unique, and unrepeatable act of the incarnation.[54] However, dismissing powerless guesthood as the principal modality of mission on this basis neglects the

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[50] Ibid., 87

[51] Ibid., 88-89

[52] Wells, *Nazareth Manifesto*, pp.7-9

[53] The dangers of this critique are exampled in the misreading of the parable of the Good Samaritan. *We are not the Samaritan, Jesus is*.

[54] David Garrard, 'Questionable Assumptions in the Theory and Practice of Mission', *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 26:2 (2015) 103

fundamental nature of discipleship. Discipleship demands our self-denial, a willingness and intentionality to subject ourselves to the power of others, even at the cost of our own life (Luke 9:23; 17:33). We take up our cross and follow Christ not because the cross we carry atones for anyone's sin, but because it points the other to God's subverting of the economy of power in and through *the* cross. To suggest that we are disciples of Christ, who carry our cross daily, yet draw the line at the potential 'threat' to our comfort and security in becoming a guest of the religious other in dialogue is wholly inconsistent. The way of the cross reasons, "Yes, the religious other might be a threat, let us go to them anyway". This pertinently undermines the significance of the driving concerns of 'vulnerability'. To exclusively abide in hosthood, and refuse guesthood, denies the religious other witness of the way of the cross. Additionally, it demonstrates a lack of faith and trust that God is able, through the seeming powerlessness of *our* guesthood, to bring about life-changing transformation. Exclusively abiding in the power and privilege of hosthood, ironically, curtails the priority of 'being effective' that governs the rejection of guesthood in 'ineffectiveness'. The 'wisdom of men' says that hosthood is more 'effective', but 'the power of God' is pleased to use the foolishness of guesthood (1 Cor. 2:4-5).[55]

Second, Christ's modality in guesthood is unabashedly assertive and abrasive. Who he is, and the message he brings, is not constrained by visions of civility and respect that we might expect from the 'ideal guest'. Toren-Lekkerkerker and Toren perhaps give too much predominance to the value of 'mutual respect' in guesthood. Ultimately, Christ uses the modality of guesthood not to receive from the world (although, undoubtedly, receiving the cross is central to his mission) but to provoke, incite and destabilise. This points again to the limitation of the binary of host and guest within the lens of hospitality, because within the role of guest, Christ is constantly *subverting* the status of his host by 'providing' them with the message of the gospel. This is a resource for evangelicals to think about their own assumption of guesthood, to emphasise the 'disagree and create tension' dynamic of the disagreeing well formula where the 'be civil and respectful' component is overemphasised. However, arguably, this is also a significant antithesis both to my conception of guesthood and to the 'rules' of disagreeing well in SR. It stands as an invitation to be like Christ in this regard and to dismantle the careful formula of civility-respect and tension-disagreement that makes SR work. In other words, it may be perceived as an invitation for evangelicals to use guesthood in a subversive and undermining capacity. If evangelicals did this, it is highly unlikely that SR, at least with the same group of participants, would ever be repeated. However, there is one key piece of the formula to Christ's guesthood that renders this reading illegitimate. Christ subverts his host only when he is powerless as a guest, when there is real risk of reprisal from his host taking offence. In the incarnation, there is reprisal, and ultimately Christ is subject to crucifixion because he is a dissenting and subversive guest, who will not play along with the rules of his host. Can we, as Evangelicals in the West, really claim we are subject to this same level of vulnerability and threat in the context of SR? We must recognise our inherent hierarchical advantage. The evangelical may ask why this is a problem. 'With greater power comes great responsibility'; why not use guesthood in this subversive way for the advantage of mission? This monopolises on power with no real threat of reprisal. To do this is a perversion of God's subversive economy of power. It is power working through power, not power working through powerlessness. If we are to offend and challenge with the gospel, we must become genuinely *powerless*. Until we have attained such status, the qualities of our interactions with the religious-other-as-host must be adjusted accordingly (I suggest humility, gentleness, patience). Considering this, Western evangelicals can take practical steps toward powerlessness by seeking out positions of genuine vulnerability. Becoming a guest of the religious other in SR may be the *first step* that could be taken. When we give up our power voluntarily, as Christ did in the incarnation, the power of God's powerlessness is at work in us, as it was in Christ. Who knows what God may do with SR?

In summary, Christ's guesthood in the incarnation provides an important model for mission that illuminates how powerless guesthood is the way of the cross, which is integral to the quality and character of discipleship. Becoming a guest in SR is to step into, to a degree, a form

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[55] This is a reappropriation of Paul's original meaning. However, there are intersections between the point Paul is making about the perceived power of 'eloquent words' and hosthood.

of powerlessness, or at least to 'give up' the power of hosthood. Christ's subversive guesthood can also encourage evangelicals to 'disagree and create tension' in the guest role, but this must be tempered by an assessment of the hierarchical advantage we hold, which should accordingly adjust our emphasis on the 'be civil and respectful' component of the disagreeing well formula. Becoming a dominant host or a subversive guest for the sake of the gospel is inappropriate if we are exercising hierarchical advantage, with no fear of reprisal. This highlights an important question about the nature of evangelism and power: to what degree should the 'offence' of the gospel, and its undermining capabilities, only be exercised when we are exposed to genuine threat? This is a key issue in considering the place of evangelism in the evangelical West, and worthy of more attention than I can offer in this dissertation.

Section V - Epilogue: Mystery

In this chapter I observe key issues, highlight limitations, and suggest areas for further research and development. Primarily, I focus on the concept of reconciliation and suggest that how evangelicals think about reconciliation is of utmost importance for establishing participation in SR as a guest. Ultimately, I conclude that reconciliation is a mystery that we both 'Participate' in and 'Partner' with God towards. Becoming a guest may require us to momentarily suspend our emphasis on the priority of conversionism in order to value the priority of relationships. I use a further polarity (Relationship AND Results) to help define the goal of mission and to describe the various tensions that exist in a conception of reconciliation that is understood as intertwining the outputs of theological-to-anthropological and anthropological-to-anthropological reconciliation.

Key questions, issues, and limitations:

1) The aim of my theological reflection has been to redress and challenge reasons for evangelical non-participation in SR on the grounds of an unwillingness to become a guest, diagnosing the key issues to be 'vulnerability', 'compromise', and 'ineffectiveness'. Field work that substantiates the evangelical perspective I have represented would be of value in order to ensure my response is relevant to the evangelical dilemma.

2) Similarly, the response I have offered would also need to prove compelling to an evangelical audience. Have I legitimised and necessitated guesthood insomuch as to compel an *evangelical* to explore SR? Disseminating this work amongst evangelical readers and editing its format for communication to a lay audience would provide invaluable feedback for understanding the weaknesses of my argument, and how to improve them.

3) I have described SR as a valuable and unique missiological opportunity because it provides evangelicals with an audience of committed members of other faiths that they otherwise would not engage with. I have assumed that evangelicals are not finding other creative ways of doing this that might not require guesthood, and where hierarchical advantage is still retained. My core assumption is that hierarchical advantage needs to be equalised in order to provide a suitably appealing context for members of differing faiths to meet without the threat of an overt proselytising agenda. However, if my argument that guesthood is necessary proves compelling to evangelical audiences, then this concern is largely obsolete.

Relationships AND Results

The evangelical conception of reconciliation is key to understanding whether SR could be deemed a compelling, legitimate, and valuable missiological activity. So far, I have suggested that reconciliation with God is necessitated upon our willing disposition to be reconciled to the religious other because God appears to us as the religious other ('Samaritan-like'). Being a guest-of-the-religious other is indicative of our openness to God the stranger, and therefore our capacity for our own reconciliation with God. I have argued that this establishes a modality in mission that should seek reconciliation with God always alongside a commitment to being reconciled with others. I have described this concept of reconciliation as intertwining the action and output of theological-to-anthropological with anthropological-to-anthropological reconciliation. SR provides an opportunity for evangelicals to build and form relationships with the religious other which otherwise might prove unlikely; SR is a context for anthropological-to-anthropological reconciliation. However, does SR also provide an opportunity for the intertwined counterpart: theological-to-anthropological reconciliation? In other words, is SR a legitimate context for evangelism? If it is not, are evangelicals able to be truly authentic? We can return to the issue we raised in 'ineffectiveness': is solely focusing on building relationship with others a trivial and neglectful priority when salvation hangs in the balance? Reconciliation may be holistic and intertwined, but theological-to-anthropological reconciliation is the spearhead that enables anthropological-to-anthropological reconciliation: we are reconciled to one another *in and through* Christ. Mission without a clear context that enables a modality for the priority of conversionism is illegitimate. However, as we have already observed, if evangelicals insist on holding onto an overt evangelical agenda as a necessary and sustained characteristic of mission, then they are unlikely to end up engaging, at all, with the most committed members of other faiths. This begins to highlight the tensions

between two poles, and the dangers of the emphatic evangelical position I have just described. These tensions can be illustrated by a 'Relationships AND Results' polarity map (which, when poorly managed, is approached with a Relationships OR Results agenda):

'Results' produces a modality in mission of monological hosthood. If dialogue or guesthood is implemented, it is only a means to an end of upholding the priority of conversionism. 'Results' refers to theological-to-anthropological reconciliation and 'Relationships' refers to anthropological-to-anthropological reconciliation. The goal of polarity management is to recognise that emphasis on only one position will inevitably create an inadequate and

<div align="center">

Reconciliation

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L+	R+
• Committed members of other faiths can access the gospel and the witness of Christians. • Christians are seen to have integrity, genuine love, and perseverance with those of other faiths. • Relationships are valued as an end in themselves.	• The gospel is faithfully, clearly, and authoritatively proclaimed. • The challenge of repentance is not shied away from, even if it creates tension in relationships. • People come to faith and the Church grows.

Relationships	**Results**
• The gospel 'loses its challenge'. Maintaining positive relationships is prioritised over the potential offence that the gospel causes. • Christian distinctiveness and the message of the gospel become secondary within mission. • The Church does not grow.	• Committed members of other faiths are excluded from hearing the gospel and the witness of Christians. • Committed members of other faiths are 'dehumanised'. Christians' relationships with others are only a means to an end of conversion. • Those who won't convert are alienated.

L-	R-

unfaithful response within mission.

If we focus only on 'Results' then, yes, we will see the positive benefits listed in 'R+'. However, we will suffer (proportionately with our misemphasis) the negative outcomes listed in 'R-'. A holistic, balanced, and faithful approach to interfaith engagement must recognise the negative impacts of 'R-' as a result of misemphasis on 'Results' and learn to see the value of 'Relationships' in 'L+'. The difference between a poorly managed and a well-managed polarity is whether we are *static* and emphasise only one position, or whether we are dynamic, moving between the two positions, where we begin to optimise the positives of both positions ('L+' and 'R+') whilst minimising the negative implications of both positions ('L-' and 'R-'). The challenge with dynamic movement is that it creates tension and contradiction. It welcomes 'mystery'. There are irresolvable and paradoxical tensions between the two positions, yet they are both crucial for mission. This leads me to posit that one way to resolve the 'reconciliation' issue I have described is for evangelicals to develop a higher tolerance for mystery in their conceptions of mission and, as I have argued above, conceptions of understanding God (Unknowable AND Knowable). Entering SR as a guest is latent with the tensions of the dynamic of hospitality. It is also latent with the tension of the Relationships AND Results polarity. To be a guest *and* a host in SR is to be a 'Participant' to the emphasis of 'Relationship AND Results' - God is reconciling the world to himself through Christ Jesus. To be a guest *and* a host in SR is also to be a 'Partner' with God, and with the religious other, to the positive effects of both the 'Relationship' and 'Results' poles. To really grapple with these tensions is to have understood the nuanced depths of 'disagreeing well'. SR is a place to listen, to learn, be curious, civil and respectful, to build relationships with the religious other. It is *also* a place to challenge and be challenged, to disagree, to welcome tension, and to explore the depths of our distinctiveness. All of this is to say that reconciliation, as an intertwined process of two

priorities, cannot be spearheaded by theological-to-anthropological reconciliation (as illustrated by the polarity map). The two *must* occur simultaneously in the tensions of a mystery.

One possible source of relief to the tensions inherent in the mystery of reconciliation could be summarised in the dual meaning of the word 'suspense'. SR is an inherently *suspenseful* activity because one senses the tension between the dual priorities of reconciliation: 'I am here to build understanding, create relationships, and disavow prejudice, yet I care for the religious other's salvation.' And, on this basis, SR can be thought of as an activity where the priority of proselytism is momentarily *suspended*, at least in an explicit and overt manner, for an act of anthropological-to-anthropological reconciliation to take place. However, part of entering the mystery of SR is to accept that God is at work in the holistic reconciliatory capacities of these encounters, beyond what we can conceive or control (theological-to-anthropological reconciliation). To do this is to revoke the control of hosthood. It is to become a guest: a guest of the religious other, a guest of God.

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Cranmer Hall MA in Theology and Ministry

Supervision Record Form

Name of Student: REDACTED

Title of dissertation: 'Incarnational Guesthood': A Missiology for Evangelicals Engaging in the Practice of Scriptural Reasoning (changed as of 02/09/21 (see below) to *A Theology of Mission for Scriptural Reasoning, Guesthood: The Good Samaritan, The Incarnation, and Mystery).*

Date of meeting: 02/02/2021   Time from: 10AM   to: 11AM

Points raised and discussed:
- Three sections outlined helpful for an overview of project. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that writing maximises and prioritises the flow of argument rather than rigidly working through the categories of the project.
- Need to re-emphasise the argument of Wells of with as an 'end in itself' and to establish sound analysis and critique of this as the Foundation for the project (Andrew Grinnell's doctoral thesis is a good piece of source material for this, though located in a social inequality setting rather than interfaith). The argument for 'with as an end in itself' must be formed in such a way as to be compelling and engage with the nuances of the evangelical audience.
- Following this, 'with as an end in itself', rooted in the incarnation, needs to recognise and reflect upon the difference between *being* Christ and being a witness to Christ, what are the differences and how does each inform our missiological 'mode of being'?
- Barth's logic of divine priority will provide a helpful lens through which to analyse particularity in interfaith engagement. Especially re inculturation/contextualisation.
- The project will be complemented if you broaden your reading of 'with as an end in itself' outside of the language audience of Wells, e.g., look at Lochhead's dialogical imperative ('with' as dialogical encounter).
- The argument will need to direct the reader to what SR achieves for *us* rather than focusing on missiological outcomes rendered to the 'other'. i.e., how does SR sanctify and form us as disciples of Christ?

Proposed action by student:
- Move to note-taking and draft chapter writing in time for the next supervision.
- Would you be okay if I proposed that I had minimum 6,000 words of draft material prepared for our next supervision? I have started writing since our last supervision and find that the process of writing and arranging the material is quite iterative. I think I might struggle to suggest I'll have a defined chapter on X section in the present, though undoubtedly that will materialise in a structured form as I work on it over the next few weeks/months.

Action by supervisor:

Agenda for next supervision:
- Re-examine proposed structure and flow of argument. Check intersection of themes are not 'wasted'.
- Review draft chapters on material related to Greggs and Sarisky.

Date and time of next supervision:.27 April 10AM

Supervisor's signature: **Student's signature:**

Both student and supervisor should retain a copy of the completed form as a formal record of the meeting and of the discussion that took place.

Date of meeting: 04/05/2021   Time from: 10:45   to:

Points raised and discussed:

- Comments on the document.
- Referencing (you are aware of this).
- Finding another way of conveying SW's 'with'. ('with' / *with* / 'being with') (nb. footnote on this).
- Proofread / Check use of dashes (and semi-colons).
- Few thoughts on where next.

Proposed action by student:

REDACTED to submit next section (theological reflection - 5/6K words) to WJF on 26th July (and WJF to review and send back with comments).
REDACTED to submit whole draft to WJF on evening of 11th Aug
REDACTED to submit on 11th September

Action by supervisor:

Agenda for next supervision:
Reading over the whole thesis ready for final changes

Date and time of next supervision:. 2nd Sept 1530

Supervisor's signature: **Student's signature:**

Date of meeting: 02/09/2021   Time 15:30 to 16:40

Points raised and discussed:

- Comments on the draft (up to final section)
- Key areas:
    o Structure: needs to be clearer, and building an argument & referring back. Could feel like three separate sections (chapters?!) at this stage, rather than one integrated dissertation
    o Wordcount - there is some repetition that could be cut (e.g. the section on evangelicalism and liberalism. (nb. The conclusion to this section gave a clearer picture of what you were trying to do: go back and make this 'true'). Eucharist section?
    o First rather than second person
    o An overall problem-solution to the thesis. Could you name this and make it very clear (especially in the terms you used at the start?
    o Responses and counter responses to this thesis. What would an evangelical say, and how would you respond? i.e. is this persuasive?
    o Changing the title, in light of the above. Now to read: *A Theology of Mission for Scriptural Reasoning, Guesthood: The Good Samaritan, The Incarnation, and Mystery*

Proposed action by student:

REDACTED to work on final copy to submit. Will send what he can to WJF to possibly look over (if time).

Action by supervisor:

Look over any sections (and intro and conclusion) that are relevant

Date and time of next supervision: N/A (submission)

Supervisor's signature: **Student's   signature:**
REDACTED