

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

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Summary:

For many in contemporary worship contexts, a lack of rootedness and history seems to be a significant liability. One response is to include ancient practices of worship. The Stations of the Cross are a good example of ancient worship that can be easily included in contemporary contexts. The author admits that “in starting this paper there was no preconceived idea of where it might end. In fact the journey started quite hesitantly as it was very unclear if there might actually be a positive ending possible or if the journey might end without any productive result. However after investing a significant amount of time in reading and reflection, this outcome describing the Stations of the Cross for Today would appear to indicate it is possible for even a conservative protestant evangelical to reclaim a traditional church practice that might not have otherwise been accepted.”

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The reaction an individual has to the word tradition¹ is an interesting thermometer one can use to determine the openness a person has to the potential application of historical or ancient methods to our world today. Some react negatively or dismiss tradition in favor of looking for something new, while others react positively and see tradition as a rich treasure needing to be mined fully with the results being brought forward and applied to our contemporary context. Tradition has been called a word of power because it speaks from the “past deposit of enduring wisdom”² and interestingly enough represents one of the greatest growing tensions seen in the church today.

For those close to ministry it is not surprising this stress is especially manifest in discussions related to how the church worships. There is an ever increasing sense that a liturgical movement has begun that would like to see “ancient norms and fundamentals”³ rediscovered and applied through a contemporary expression. This paper seeks to explore one of these areas by investigating the basis and potential renewal of the tradition of the Stations of the Cross within the context of postmodern thought and contemporary protestant worship.

In beginning this exploration, it is important to define the scope and terminology used within this paper since these subjects are broad and the terms can have multiple expressions. In addition through the research completed for this paper, it became evident an important question to address would be how a tradition should be evaluated, translated and then applied to the world today. While this would also be an interesting area to probe more fully, it is outside the scope and mandate of this paper. However since a process is required, a simple one based on the following principles will be followed.

¹ Edward Farley, *Deep Symbols: Their Postmodern Effacement and Reclamation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 29.

² *Ibid.*, 30.

³ John R.K. Fenwick and Bryan D. Spinks, *Worship in Transition : The Liturgical Movement in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 195.

The first principle will be a high regard for the bible and its' teaching as the foundation for life. The bible is God's revelation to his creation and should therefore be the first reference for evaluation of responses or actions.

The second principle will be the desire to focus Christian meditation on scripture. This is not to suggest that other materials are unworthy of exploration but when seeking to hear and understand God's ways, meditation on the bible will be seen as an excellent pursuit worthy of time and effort. If an opportunity presents itself to choose between scripture and works of humankind, starting with scripture will be considered the preferred option.

The third and final principle is that devotional or spiritual disciplines should not be based on information where scripturally based material is mixed and equally recognized with fictional stories or items that have no biblical reference. Again this is not to suggest there is no value in other materials but mixing the two can lead to confusion as to what truly is in God's revelation to humankind and what is not.

It is recognized the application of these principles as the process for translation of this tradition is only one approach and given the limited time for investigation is presented quite humbly, requesting grace from readers that might be more knowledgeable in this area. In addition although the scope of this paper cannot allow space for description of the full derivation, explanation and support for the validity of using these principles as an appropriate process is proposed based on their evolution from significant personal reflection on this topic, ministry experience and the foundational evangelical protestant beliefs of the author of this paper.

In addition to defining this process, there are several other key items that need introduction. The first is the practice of the Stations of the Cross which is defined as a historical Christian tradition intended to help individuals reflect on Jesus' experience as he carried the

cross from Pilates house to Golgotha⁴. There is a rich heritage and wide variation in the number and context of this tradition but the scope of this paper will be limited for the most part to the fourteen stations that have been most widely known⁵ and practiced.

Our world has been through several significant shifts over the last few hundred years. During the years around 1500 AD the Enlightenment was born and with it came those who sought a new way to find truth.⁶ During this period thinking moved away from the notion truth was embedded in tradition, to the idea that truth was discovered through use of rational method.⁷ This gave rise to what has been known as the modernist society. However the last several decades have seen another transition into a new reality which is still being formed and is continuing to evolve.⁸ Here there is a significant openness to spiritual things but it is marked by the cornerstones of relative truth, decentered self, and a pluralist society.⁹ With this openness it should also be noted the context of postmodernity is one of “spiritual ignorance and experimentation.”¹⁰ It is outside the scope of this paper to explore this fully but it is important to recognize this shift has provided an environment where spirituality is once again acceptable and an area of interest for individuals.

The final item for definition is contemporary worship. Within this paper worship will encompass a broad scope as defined by “that process in which we make God first in our lives”¹¹ and the concepts captured within the following statement.

“To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with

⁴ Herbert Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: An Account of Their History and Devotional Purpose* (London: Burns and Oates, 1906), 2.

⁵ David Konstant, *Treasured Catholic Prayers and Devotions* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987), 63.

⁶ Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.,1998), 22.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸ Harry L. Poe, *Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon,2001), 26.

⁹ Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church*, 40.

¹⁰ Harry L. Poe, *Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*, 157.

¹¹ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and The Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Pub., 2001), 155.

the truth of God, to purge the imagination with the beauty of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.”¹²

Contemporary worship is then the application of what this would look like to our churches today both on a personal and corporate level.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

From the earliest days of the church people have journeyed to Jerusalem to retrace the steps Jesus walked as he made his way to Golgotha. Tradition indicates that this path, which became known as the Via Dolorosa (Way of Sorrow”) and the Via Crucis (“Way of the Cross”) ¹³ was a favorite for disciples and became well known with informational markers being erected.¹⁴ In fact this practice became so popular that other cities in Europe like Bologna, Italy created elaborate facsimiles to allow pilgrims to walk this journey more often.¹⁵ In 1342 AD the Franciscan Order was given responsibility for guardianship of what had become holy places in Jerusalem and in the 15th century William Wey was the first to write about the practice of stopping along the route to pray and meditate on Jesus journey to the crucifixion.¹⁶ Early literature has no set number of stations but while there are examples from seven to thirty seven, it appears that a fourteen station model became widely accepted and may actually have been created through this process of mimicking the route in the cities of Europe.¹⁷

By the late 17th century the Catholic church had connected indulgences to the practice of praying the Stations of the Cross which added to the number of people following this practice.¹⁸

In addition some of the artwork associated with it has become world renowned which is

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 156.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 157.

¹⁸ P. J. Buissink, *Frequent Journeys to Calvary : Various Exercises for the Way of the Cross* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce, 1950), 2.

representative of how broadly accepted this exercise was historically.¹⁹ It is impossible to separate the Stations of the Cross from the images associated with it for through the power of art one can express the inexpressible.²⁰ The practice of it has been known to have a rich tradition of encouragement to those who were hurting as powerfully reflected in the words of Thomas Kempis when he stated the following.

“If you cannot contemplate high and heavenly things, take refuge in the Passion of Christ, and love to dwell within his Sacred Wounds. For if you devoutly seek the wounds of Jesus and the previous marks of his Passion, you will find great strength in all troubles.”²¹

THE TRADITIONAL PRACTICE OF THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The stations are most often practiced during the church season of Lent and especially during Holy Week.²² Individuals or groups are guided through the stations using written prayers or other reference materials which serve as a prompting for prayer and meditation at each of the stations. The process is typically started with an introductory prayer that focuses the individual on recognition of what Christ has done and a desire to walk the road that he walked for us.²³ Many churches traditionally held services around the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday and recently some churches have even added a Fifteen station celebrating Christ’s resurrection which is the only station not observed during Lent.²⁴

In Matthew 16:24 Jesus tells his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow him. This is referenced in many of the introductions to the practice and it has been noted this journey is therefore not only intended to remind us of the historical Passion of Christ but

¹⁹ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, 156.

²⁰ Shannon Ledbetter and Michael Howard, “The Captive Figure: Ghislaine Howard’s Stations of the Cross.” *Anglican Theological Review* 82 (1998): 3.

²¹ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, 155.

²² *Ibid.*, 157.

²³ M. Raymond, *A New Way of the Cross*. (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce, 1952), 1.

²⁴ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry* Jones, 157.

also to realize there is something happening related to it in each one of us today.²⁵ Along with this there is an interesting concept of the death of Christ on the cross being a “scandalous beauty” that perhaps only an artist can fully appreciate.²⁶ Although this might seem extreme, it does capture what one feels for there is a depth of experience in this journey captured visually which is profound and significant enough to allow every seeking heart to draw some meaning.

Having completed the introductory preparation, the group or individual now steps through each of the following stations reflecting on what it meant to Christ and what it might mean to them today. Given the enormous number and variety of reflections available for each station, it would be impossible to cover them all. However the following is presented as an introduction and overview to each element. Those interested in more detailed devotional exercises are referenced to the bibliography and especially directed to take notice of the book “Soul Shaper” by Tony Jones.

The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

This is the beginning for all those who choose to walk the journey that Christ did.²⁷ He was the Holy Son of God who was condemned to death like a common criminal by sinful people. There is inherent in this a strong sense of betrayal and abandonment along with the suffering that is focused in on through the reflection materials associated with this station.²⁸

Scripture provides strong support for this station through the New Testament gospels with one reference being John 19:16.

The Second Station: Jesus Receives His Cross

The weight of the cross is now taken upon the shoulders of one who does not deserve it.

²⁵ Caryll Houselander, *The Way of the Cross* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1955), 11.

²⁶ Thomas E. Schmidt, *A Scandalous Beauty: The Artistry of God and the Way of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002), 8.

²⁷ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, 158.

²⁸ Ibid.

With it comes the humiliation and the sins of a world that is now mocking him and oblivious to what he has come to accomplish for them. It is easy to see how with every step the weight of this would increase.²⁹

Scriptural reference for this station is John 19:17.

The Third Station: Jesus Falls under the Weight of the Cross for the First time

The weight of the cross is too much even for him. He falls yet he knows he must go on. The soldiers help him up and force him to continue.³⁰

There is no scripture reference for this station.

The Fourth Station: Jesus meets His Mother

Think of a mother meeting her son on the way to his execution. So much has passed between them and there would be so many questions about what this really means.³¹

There is no scripture reference for this station since Christ is described as still walking.

The Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry the Cross

It is interesting to note that Jesus allowed a man to help carry his cross. This is but another example of his desire to see people be part of helping him to build the Kingdom.³²

There are several scriptural references for this station including Matt 27:32, Mark 15:21, and Luke 23:26.

The Sixth Station: The Face of Jesus is Wiped by Veronica

Consider now that as Jesus walks the blood is dripping down from his wounds. From the crowd comes a compassionate friend Veronica, who seeks to help by wiping his face.³³ Even in this desperate time there is a remnant of hope shown by the love of a friend.

²⁹ Caryll Houselander, *The Way of the Cross*, 28.

³⁰ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, 159.

³¹ Henri Nouwen, *Walk with Jesus: Stations of the Cross* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 28.

³² Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, 159.

³³ *Ibid.*, 160.

There is no scriptural reference for this station.

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls a Second Time

It is easy to understand how after all Jesus has been through it would be difficult to continue and that he could fall a second time. His suffering for others was so great.³⁴

There is no scriptural support of this station.

The Eighth Station: The Women of Jerusalem Mourn for Our Lord

Women were an integral part of Jesus life and ministry. It is not surprising to see them as part of the crowd or to recognize that he would speak to them.³⁵

The scriptural reference for this station is Luke 23:27.

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls for a Third Time

Jesus falls again. His weakness is shown as extreme and his strength is almost gone. There is a sense that death is near.³⁶

There is no scriptural reference for this station.

The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

The ultimate humiliation finally comes. This man who had so little is now stripped of all he had left and is naked before the crowd.³⁷

The scriptural references for this station are Matt 27:35 and Luke 10:34.

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Jesus arrives at the hill where he will die and spikes are driven through his flesh to attach him to the instrument that will for all time be a symbol of the redemption that could only come from him. The cross is then raised and the weight of his own body now begins to work against

³⁴ Romano Guardini, *The Way of the Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), 42.

³⁵ Henri Nouwen, *Walk with Jesus: Stations of the Cross*, 52.

³⁶ P. J. Buissink, *Frequent Journeys to Calvary : Various Exercises for the Way of the Cross*, 157.

³⁷ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, 161.

his life.³⁸

The scriptural references for this station are Matt 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:33 and John 19:18.

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies upon the Cross

Each breath is now a struggle and finally the fight is over as Jesus gives up his spirit. The price has been paid by the only one who could and humankind has been redeemed.³⁹

Scriptural references for this station include Matt 27:50, Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46 and John 19:30.

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Arms of His Mother

It would have been a long time since Jesus had been in his mother's arms but on this day his body could not resist and his mother would cry for the loss of a beloved son.⁴⁰

Scripture would seem to contradict this Station of the Cross by indicating it was Joseph and Nicodemus who took Jesus body down from the cross as described in John 19:38- 40. There is no mention of his mother being involved.

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

The journey is complete and the body is placed in a tomb on what was a dark day. However this will not be the end and while death seems so final, it will be but a transition to a new life that God has provided through his son.⁴¹

Scriptural support for this station include Matt 27:59, Mark 15:46, Luke 23:54 and John 19:42.

³⁸ Ibid., 161.

³⁹ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, 162.

⁴⁰ Caryll Houselander, *The Way of the Cross*, 132.

⁴¹ P. J. Buissink, *Frequent Journeys to Calvary : Various Exercises for the Way of the Cross*, 107.

IMPACT ON WORSHIP FOR TODAY

It is impossible to walk through the journey with Jesus on the way to the cross and not be impacted by what he endured and all that was accomplished through it. It truly does support our definition of worship in regard to quickening our conscience toward God and when used reflectively could certainly result in helping to draw people closer to God.

However the question needing to be addressed in the process of reclaiming this practice for protestant contemporary worship today is what should be done with the Stations of the Cross that have no scriptural support or those that appear to contradict scripture? Following the principles outlined earlier, it is this author's conclusion they should not be utilized. This would eliminate the third, fourth, sixth, seventh, ninth and thirteenth stations.

As noted earlier there are instances where a fifteenth station was added⁴² which includes reflection on Christ's resurrection. It does not have a standard designation but has been referenced by titles such as "Jesus rises from the Dead"⁴³ or "The Tomb is Empty".⁴⁴ There is strong scriptural support for this and given the importance of it to the Christian faith, it would seem appropriate to include this as an important stop in any version of the Stations of the Cross.

This example of an addition to the original practice gave rise to the idea of expanding the reduced set of the stations indicated above to a more complete set using events with a solid scriptural foundation. At first one might tend to dismiss this as too radical a proposition but it is interesting to note that further investigation has shown that others have come to a similar conclusion⁴⁵ although their revision was not limited to Christ's passion.

⁴² Henri Nouwen, *Walk with Jesus: Stations of the Cross*, 93.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Tony Jones, *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, 162.

⁴⁵ Joe Egan, *Brave Heart of Jesus: Mel Gibson's Postmodern Way of the Cross* (Blackrock, CO: Columbia Press, 2004), 152.

It should also be remembered that through history the number of stations has varied greatly which would indicate there has been some sense of freedom exercised even by the early followers of this practice. Therefore the idea of reclaiming the Stations of the Cross based on some values defined for today would seem possible.

What then could be included? In traveling through the gospel accounts of Jesus journey to the cross, there are numerous examples of scriptural items that were not part of the original Stations of the Cross that appear to be powerful pictures upon which to reflect. These are presented in the following sections as part of a reclaimed biblical version of this ancient practice and are labeled as Stations of the Cross for Today.

Again this is only presented as an overview, recognizing a significant amount of work would need to be completed in order to establish the foundation for a fully supported worship experience.

Station One for Today: Jesus is Condemned to Death

This station would focus on the scripture mentioned previously with particular emphasis on the response of individuals to Christ's fate. The reaction of Pilate as well as the crowd who stated "let his blood be on us and on our children!" (Matt 27:25) would be areas of scripture to reflect upon. How do we react when God asks us to start a journey for him? How do we make decisions and how are they influenced by others? What might God be asking of me right now?

Station Two for Today: The Suffering of Jesus

The journey for Jesus to the cross started with a level of cruelty and punishment that is difficult if not impossible to fully comprehend. This treatment as described in Matt 27:28-31 should drive us to tears realizing what our sin has caused but also to great love for a saviour that was willing to endure so much that we might be saved.

Station Three for Today: Jesus Receives His Cross

This station would continue with the tradition and scripture referenced above. The focus would be on Christ's willingness to take the weight of the sins of world onto his own shoulders. How do we react to the items that we are asked to take on? What does the cross that we have been given look like?

Station Four for Today: Women Watch from a Distance

Several times scripture references different women watching from a distance. (Matt 27:55-56) To consider the relationship each had with Christ and reflect on their feelings during that dark day in history builds an appreciation of how people react to Christ's passion. How do you and I see the actions of that day? Would we have been a spectator? What actions might have come as an expression of the level of relationship that I am experiencing with him right now?

Station Five for Today: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry the Cross

This station would remain as described previously with a focus on Christ's desire for us to be part of the journey with him and for him to achieve his work through us. This is a powerful picture that is such a vivid reflection of how he lived his life and how he desires to build his Kingdom. How are we responding to this relationship he has called us to?

Station Six for Today: Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

This station would focus on the importance of the fact that Jesus spoke to these women and the words he had to say to them as documented in Luke 23:27. In some ways it might appear harsh but in it there is recognition of the hurt he feels for what he knows will come. How do we respond to the hurt of others? Do we truly feel for them?

Station Seven for Today: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

As described in the traditional tenth station and scriptures noted above, Jesus now loses

all that he ever had possessed as a man. What humiliation have we experienced for him? Has there been a time in our Christian life when we were challenged and rather than standing up for what we believed, we held back fearing the humiliation of those around us?

Station Eight for Today: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

This new station is reflective of the traditional eleventh station and scriptural basis noted previously. It includes powerful imagery and demands our attention, for with its actions even the resurrected body of Christ would bear marks as indicators of what he did for us. There are no greater signs of his love than his scarred hands.

Station Nine for Today: Jesus Speaks to His Mother

An important discussion is recorded in John 19:25-28. Jesus speaks to his mother and given all the words that might be said, he focuses again on ensuring care for someone else. How would you have felt if you had been Mary? Can we learn from Jesus to walk through trials and be focused on others rather than ourselves?

Station Ten for Today: Reactions to Christ on the Cross

This new stations is based on the variety of reactions from people to Christ on the cross. These are described in Matt 27:38-44, Mark 15:29-36 and Luke 23:34-43. Each one has unique aspects which the Holy Spirit can use to prompt each of us in areas where we need to develop in our relationship with Christ.

Station Eleven for Today: Jesus Dies Upon the Cross

This foundation station is directly related to the traditional twelfth station and the scripture and meditations associated with it as described previously.

Station Twelve for Today: Responses to Christ's Death

Upon Christ's death on the cross there are a number of events that occur that should not

be overlooked. These are described in Matt 27:45-55, Mark 15:38-39 and Luke 23:47-48. If there was ever any doubt in one's mind about Jesus being God's son, these should now be erased. Given this knowledge, how should one now live?

Station 13 for Today: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

This station would reclaim the reflections and comments of the traditional fourteenth station as noted previously.

Station 14 for Today: The Tomb is Empty

This final station would be included as noted previously as the ultimate expression of the work completed through Jesus death and resurrection. We serve a risen saviour who continues to journey with us today. How should this impact our communication with those who still don't know him?

Summary of the Stations for Today

It is not without some fear and trepidation that the author of this paper puts forward this new list and definition of what has been a long standing and ancient tradition. However the principles stated previously are foundations of the author's faith and rather than rejecting what had been a rich tradition, this approach, though perhaps radical to some, allows this evangelical protestant and converted Roman Catholic follower to enter in with a new sense of adventure into a journey of discovery of God and by the way isn't that what we described as worship?

APPLICATION TO WORSHIP TODAY

As described in the initial elements of this paper, our postmodern culture provides a fertile environment for the implementation of traditional and experiential elements of the Christian faith.⁴⁶ There is a longing within the postmodern for deep personal relationship.⁴⁷ This

⁴⁶ Harry L. Poe, *Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*, 28.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

is richly fulfilled by New Testament spirituality which is, by its very nature, highly relational.⁴⁸

When coupled with the use of images to create an environment that is passionate and reflective, the postmodern can have a personal experience that is meaningful and memorable.

In considering whether a new practice of the Stations of the Cross would be embraced by the postmodern world, it is interesting to consider the reaction to the movie “The Passion of the Christ”. It has been proposed the material presented in the movie is based on the practice of the Stations of the Cross and traditional Catholic iconography rather than on scripture⁴⁹ and while the violent nature of the film has caused some to criticize it, others would suggest it is a mirror to our present age and part of the reason for its popularity.⁵⁰ However all would agree the imagery of the film was a powerful message that captured people’s attention as noted by the comment from Billy Graham when he said “The Passion of the Christ is a lifetime of sermons in one movie.”⁵¹

It would therefore appear that after fully developing the content and reflections for the new Stations of the Cross described above, there could be an opportunity to reclaim this tradition in a meaningful way for our contemporary postmodern environment. A special Good Friday service comprised of visual images, reading of scripture and then personal reflection through thought provoking questions for each station could powerfully bring forward this message. It would end with station thirteen and be careful not to include station fourteen as this would be celebrated on Easter Sunday.

For a personal worship application this process could be completed by an individual as a devotional or retreat activity. Given the desire of the postmodern for relationship this might best

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Joe Egan, *Brave Heart of Jesus: Mel Gibson’s Postmodern Way of the Cross*, 54.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 103.

⁵¹ Ibid., 51.

be accomplished within a small group setting.

CONCLUSION

In starting this paper there was no preconceived idea of where it might end. In fact the journey started quite hesitantly as it was very unclear if there might actually be a positive ending possible or if the journey might end without any productive result.

However after investing a significant amount of time in reading and reflection, this outcome describing the Stations of the Cross for Today would appear to indicate it is possible for even a conservative protestant evangelical to reclaim a traditional church practice that might not have otherwise been accepted. It is hoped this journey may have opened up a new perspective for the reader, as it did for the author, and promote further exploration and development of not only this tradition but perhaps others as well.

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Reference Note: Total number of pages read from reference books noted above is 644.