

What was the ministry problem or opportunity your project addressed?

Since the rise of scientific methods and our growing dependency on rationalism and empirical proofs, Christian spirituality has gravitated toward the intellectual. Over time, I became particularly troubled by the developing dichotomy between reason and emotion. In the words of pop psychology, we have been taught in the church to trust the logical left side of the brain and to be skeptical of the more emotive right side of the brain. From a Pentecostal perspective, I believe we favor the emotion in our corporate gatherings through exuberant worship and prayer at the altar. We send people home, however, equipped almost exclusively with spiritual disciplines that engage only the intellect, such as plans to read through the Bible in a year and prayer checklists. I was, then, faced with the question, how can my church pursue a spirituality that does not abandon the intellectual

aspect of our beings but that incorporates the emotional and physical aspects as well?

The premise of my project was that the human imagination serves as the God-given bridge between the intellect and the emotion, between the head and the heart. I believe God seeks to redeem and awaken the imagination that through it His people may pursue a holistic spirituality, incorporating every aspect of what it means to be created in the image of God. I also believe that some shifts we have seen in culture over the past several decades present the church with an opportunity to break free from a merely clinical form of Christianity, pursue a fuller expression of our faith, and be equipped to significantly impact a postmodern world.

How did you address these concerns?

I recruited people from the congregation, particularly those right-brained individuals who did not necessarily fit the traditional left-brained mold, to take part in a four-week discipleship process.

The process began with a seminar in which we spent the bulk of our time exploring three practices. The first two practices were *lectio divina* and Ignatian contemplation, both of which are ancient methods of praying with Scripture that puts the Holy Spirit in the driver's seat. Then, we explored some ways in which artistic expression (e.g. painting, music, creative writing) can itself serve as a spiritual practice or method of prayer.

At the end of the seminar, I gave each participant a prayer journal that contained passages of Scripture and prayer prompts for the next four weeks. I simply asked that they put the methods we had explored into practice and journal their experiences.

What were the results?

At the end of the four weeks, all the participants expressed ways in which these methods of prayer enriched their journey with God. There are a couple of individuals who, one year later, have surprised me with their deepening spirituality and changed

perspective since going through the process. Additionally, the congregation as a whole has benefited from the process as we sought to adapt some of these methods to fit a corporate setting.

As individuals and as the body of Christ, we have become more aware of God's presence among us and have heard Him speak more clearly and consistently than before.