

Perspectives of Training, Coaching, Formation and Access for Church Planting in Australia

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Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics committee (where required).

(signed)_____

(date)_____/_____/_____

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Abstract

The researcher for this study has a long standing interest and involvement in Church planting in Australia. This includes being a Church planting leader, training Church planters as well as being a Church planting coach. His involvement raised questions about the most appropriate methods to prepare and support a Church planter that, in turn, has led to this thesis.

The aim of this inquiry was to investigate Church planters' experiences of training, coaching, formation and access to support. Their perceptions of their preparation and their in-the-field experiences were sought and, in particular, what they believed to be the most appropriate form of preparation, assistance and support for a Church planting leader facing the challenges and demands of this unique ministry.

The research took a naturalistic methodological approach, founded on an interpretive theoretical stance so that the multiple realities that emanated from among Church planters, in relation to their view of their role in diverse contexts, was able to fully emerge and be examined in a holistic way. While the participants all shared a Christian view of the world, their experiences, memories, strengths and weaknesses, are all legitimate elements of a larger story about Church planting in Australia that needs to be told.

Specifically, a mixed method approach was chosen. Firstly a telescopic view of the issues around Church planting was developed out of the results of a questionnaire which targeted the perspectives of Church planters on training, coaching, formation and access. The pertinent issues that were identified in the questionnaire were then clarified and elaborated upon, by taking a microscopic view through the use of semi-structured interviews as part of a series of case studies.

Analysis of the data collected through this thesis indicates Church planters believe that training should take place before they enter the field and they believe that this training assisted them to develop vital skills. Coaching was found to enhance training by encouraging Church planters to understand how to make strategic use of learning developed in training and how a relationship with a coach may cultivate ongoing

formation. Church planters also indicated that instruction on formation was a useful part of their training. For some Church planters the support provided by their sending Churches or Denominations came in the form of access to training and coaching. All these elements (training, coaching, formation and access) were seen as crucial to the ongoing engagement of the Church planters with the communities they were leading.

There were also three emergent issues. Firstly, it was found that some Church planters began their work without the support of a collaborative relationship with a sending Church or Denomination. Secondly, Church planters viewed the role of the spouse as a critical influence in the foundation and maintenance of the new faith community being led by their Church planter spouse. Thirdly, a vision of Scripture and ministry was found to have a greater influence on the approach that most Church planters adopted to establish their new work than that which had been indicated through a review of the relevant literature.

The theoretical and practical implications of this study include: that a collaborative approach from all those involved in Church planting is needed. Such relationships will seek to identify the most appropriate training and coaching options to maximize the effect of the skills and formation in the Church planters that are being sent out to this work; and, that Church planting leaders require the same level of careful preparation and support as that being offered to those who lead Churches that are already established.

The findings of this thesis indicate that further research is necessary into the role assessment might play in identifying effective leaders for Church planting; as well as into the supportive role spouse in the life of the Church planter. Further, more needs to be known about how to best support the efforts of Church planters who are working outside of supportive collaborative relationships with a sending Church or Denomination.

Chapter One

The Research Context

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Church planters with respect to training, coaching, formation and access to support. Specifically, the study focussed on Church planters based in QLD and NSW, Australia. The findings of this study have the potential to contribute to a strategic dialogue that may eventually lead to greater effectiveness in Church planting across Australia.

Church planting is a term employed by Evangelical Denominations such as the Baptist, Churches of Christ, Salvation Army, and Wesleyan Methodist Churches. It is also used by Pentecostal Denominations such as the Assemblies of God, Christian Outreach Centres and Christian City Churches. It describes the process of developing new faith communities as a means of bringing the message about Jesus Christ to people everywhere. The consensus among these Denominations is summarised by Stetzer, who maintains that “Church planting is essential” (2003, p. 5) and that the goal of Church planting “is to reach people” (2003, p. 1). There were three main factors that prompted this research.

1.0.1 The experience of the researcher

Between 1981-1986 and 1994-1997, I had been a Church planter. No specific training had been employed in my development during the first experience I had of Church planting leadership. However, in my second period of Church planting work, I received useful training and coaching. The experiences of working as a Church planting leader gave me an ongoing interest in the work of Church planting and in Church planters.

In addition, in mid 2006, I was asked on behalf of *The Training Centre* (pseudonym) to provide training and support for Church planters already in their ministry context, who could not withdraw easily from that work for the purpose of accessing training. *The Training Centre* itself had been developed late in the 1990s specifically for the

training of Church planters. To do this, I developed a short, non-accredited course, which became known as *The Journey*. This course afforded me the opportunity to see firsthand what Church planters experienced in their work and to note, at least anecdotally, that some had attended training and almost none of them had coaches. Critically, only a few had received training and coaching options for Church planters systematically or with any intentional structure or planning. What arose from these experiences were questions about the best type and mode of training, coaching and formation for Church planters and the most effective way to deliver it to contemporary Church planters.

1.1 Research on Church planting in Australia

Bellamy and Castle (2003) published some initial research findings about Church planting in Australia as part of the *National Church Life Survey* (NCLS). The definition for Church planting that they applied to their research was that a Church plant is a “mission carried out by forming faith communities” (2003, p. 7). This research covered the period from 1996-2001 acknowledging that there was a need to clarify the meaning of the term even more, because of the different ways that various Australian Denominations use the term. The research found that the Churches that had taken part in that research had established 190 new Churches in Australia in the time period.

This research by the NCLS found that Pentecostal Denominations, which had formed 12% of those associated with NCLS, were responsible for 45% of the new Churches (Bellamy & Castle, 2003). The research also found that 16% of those who attend new Churches are new to Church, compared with the rate for established churches at 10%. Bellamy & Castle believed that “Churches that participated in Church planting appear to have some of the highest proportions of newcomers to Church life of any form of mission” (2003, p. 12). This confirmed the earlier NCLS findings (Kaldor, Bellamy, Powell, Castle & Hughes, 1999).

Despite this growth there appears to be little research on this field of work in Australia that documents the experiences of Church planters in this country. In particular, the supportive processes for Church planters that assist them both in preparing for their work and in the time they are on the field establishing a new faith community. Church planting consultant with *Church Resource Ministries*, Steve

Addison, noted there was no research that he was aware of that dealt with training solely in an Australian context (Personal communication, November 6, 2009). This view was echoed by Stephen Hinks, then Principal of *Australian College of Ministries* (the training arm of the Churches of Christ in Australia) and the lead trainer in Church planting for the Seventh Day Adventists in Victoria and Western Australia, Peter Roenfeldt. These leaders both observed that they were not aware of any research into the training and coaching of Church planters in Australia. (Personal communication, November 6, 2009). Therefore, the researcher perceived that there was in this matter of the training, coaching, formation and access to support of Church planters, an opportunity to investigate a new field of research in Australia.

1.1.1 The need to identify and address the issues in Church planting

There are signs of a growing interest in Church planting and in the strategies and challenges involved in this task over the past two decades. In articulating the debate about the thinking behind Church planting, Robinson and Christine (1992) have observed that a congregation's focus on the fixed locations of their parish and Church buildings leads to their being "outflanked by a mobile population" (pp.39-40) to the point where they become "marginalized" from the population and culture around them, and therefore unable to reach them. This mobility is not just geographic, but cultural, and requires a Church to understand its context, and in this task, newer Churches remain "more effective than older ones" (Robinson & Christine, 1992, p. 45). Wagner (1990) also saw that Church planting is a major ongoing issue for the Church. His view was that Church planting was the "single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven" (p. 11).

This thesis will examine the perceptions of Church planting leaders about their work and the most effective ways to prepare and support them. In particular, their views about training, coaching, formation and the best form of access to these resources, will be canvassed.

1.2 Research problem

The opportunities at *The Training Centre* afforded to the researcher, the chance to observe the growing enthusiasm among Australian Churches and Denominations for Church planting. While there are strong institutions, courses and support around Australia that prepare men and women for ministry generally in Australian Churches,

there appears to be less clarity and planning about the way to prepare and support Church planters through training, coaching and formation and how to provide access to this support. The research problem therefore, is to identify the most effective way to prepare and support Church planting leaders; and the most beneficial method of delivering this preparation and support in a manner that takes into account the needs and individuality of the Church planter.

1.3 The research questions

As this study began, its aim was to enquire of Church planters currently in the field about their experiences in their work. Through the process of examining the literature, four critical issues emerged. These critical issues were training, coaching, formation and access to supportive relationships like coaches; materials and resources; and appropriate training courses. The literature review in Chapter 2 included insights from the broader business field, the general Church ministry field, and the Church planting-specific ministry field and this process of investigation led to the framing of three research questions to guide the investigation:

1. What type and mode of the delivery of training and formation prepares Australian Church planters before they commence?

This question sought to explore the type of training and formation discovered in the literature relating to workplace and general ministry contexts and how this training and formation is delivered to Church planters within the Australian scene. It allowed the researcher to identify trends in the training currently offered that have been valuable to Church planters in other situations, and to discover the nature of that training. Examples such as “Integral training” (Brynjolfson & Lewis, 2006), explained the way that an appropriate curriculum may synthesise the aspects of personal formation and skill development together for an increase in the effectiveness of a Church planter. A cross-cultural example from the Hindustan Bible Institute (Gupta & Lingenfelter, 2006) was included because of the way the curriculum and the training delivery were designed to be flexible enough to produce a specific outcome – in this case, the preparation of more Church planters.

2. What type and mode of the delivery of training, coaching and formation assists Australian Church planters once they have begun?

This question investigated the manner in which training, coaching and formation may be delivered to a Church planter once they are on the field. Extensive studies including Crane (1999), Wang & Wentling (2001), Constable (2005) and Griffith (2005), explored the effect of coaching on training in the business field. The evidence emerging from the literature is that training without coaching is a waste of the resources used to make the training available (Crane, 1999). This study, therefore, will enquire about the effects of training, coaching and formation observed in the literature, in the experiences of Australian Church planters in accessing them.

3. What supports are most appropriate for Australian Church planters?

This research question emerged from Stetzer's studies (2003; 2006) as well as two studies he co-authored with Bird (2009; 2010) and one with Connor (2007). In addition, studies by Smith (2007) and Appleton (2008) were instrumental. These studies all showed that the supporting Churches and Denominations who were part of the research context intentionally assisted their Church planters to access training, coaching and formation as part of their supportive commitment to them. This research question therefore, arising from the literature, sought to understand whether such intentionality was evident in the experiences of Church planters in Australia with those who send them to this work. Additionally, the study investigated what Church planters who had no collaborative relationship with a sending Church or Denomination in place and therefore had to source his or her own support.

1.4 The design of the research

The nature of the problem confronting this study was to identify the most effective way to gather the insights of Church planters about their own experiences of preparation and support. To do this, Church planters were invited to share their experiences about their work. Each Church planter constructed a unique reality about Church planting based on his or her own experiences and memories. Thus, the design of the study is based on a constructivist epistemology (Crotty, 1998; Neuman, 2006) because the Church planters in this study have constructed knowledge of meaningful reality about their work, in the process of interacting with their social context. A study such as this will encounter multiple realities (Merriman, 2006 & Maxwell, 2006) and this requires a design that allows all these perceptions to emerge and be seen as

equally legitimate. Therefore an interpretivist theoretical stance was adopted because it would allow for an openness and receptivity to the data as a whole.

The methodology was a mixed method study incorporating case studies and borrowing from grounded theory. In this mixed method design a questionnaire and several case studies were employed as the two data collection instruments. The questionnaire was used as a type of telescope to gather quantitative data that would provide an overview of the main critical issues. The perceptions of the participants in the questionnaire about training, coaching, formation and access, was then used to inform the questions to be used in the interview stage of the research to gather the qualitative data. These interviews formed a series of case studies that acted as a kind of microscope, to clarify and elaborate on the issues raised by the Church planters in the questionnaire. The analysis of the data from the questionnaire involved numerical scores extracted from Likert scales and the calculation of mean scores to be employed in figures and tables. This was done to make judgements about the level of agreement among the participants on the four critical issues, namely training, coaching, formation and access to support. For the interviews a thematic analysis was employed. These four themes that were used to organise the data emerged in part from the literature, in part from the research questions and also in part from the data arising from the interviews.

1.5 Significance of the research

The significance of this research comes from the fact that it is addressing an important field of Christian work that has been, to date, largely unexplored within an Australian context. What research does exist on Church planting has come in the main from the US, Europe and UK. Illustrative of this research, Stetzer (2003) revealed the first statistical evidence of the positive impact of what he called the “Church Planting Process” on Church planting in the US. This is a process that incorporated, among other things, mentoring and coaching as well as the assessment of the Church planter before commencement of ministry and the training offered to that Church planter. This research is significant therefore, because it is addressing the issues relating to Church planting that are often canvassed internationally, but which have not been addressed to date with an Australian perspective in mind.

Most training for ministry in Australia is a general preparation for pastoral ministry that applies to the leadership of already established Churches. This study sheds light on the training, coaching, formation and access needed specifically for Church planters and provides some insights about the most effective type and mode of the delivery of this training, coaching and formation. In this way the study findings fills a gap in the present knowledge relating to the preparation and support of Church planters in Australia.

1.6 Thesis overview

This first chapter has outlined this study and the methods used to examine the training, coaching and formation of Church planters in Australia as well as the appropriate access to supportive relationships like coaches; materials and resources; and appropriate training courses. In the chapters that follow a more detailed perspective is presented.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature, including Scripture, and relevant writings within the fields of ministry and business so that a more comprehensive understanding might be developed on the four emerging critical issues. Namely, training, coaching (including mentoring), formation and accessing the training and coaching that would promote formation.

In the chapter that follows the literature review, Chapter 3, the methodology of this research is explained. The chapter includes a description of its naturalistic design; interpretivist theoretical stance; and constructionist epistemology. These were argued to be the most appropriate way to deal with the multiple realities that would emerge from among the Church planters as they responded to the items in the questionnaire and the questions in the interviews. This chapter explains that this study is a mixed method study that borrows from grounded theory.

An analysis of the questionnaire data is set out in Chapter 4 and this analysis acts as a “telescope” to identify a range of aspects that are present in the Church planting context. This questionnaire included 20 items that employed a Likert scale in most cases. However, included in the questionnaire are also two items that were multiple choice items and one item that was an alternative response. The questionnaire included items regarding experience levels, training, coaching, formation and access to Church planting.

Chapter 5 introduces the stories of five participants in the case studies that are the result of the “microscopic” view provided by the interviews. These aimed to clarify and elaborate upon issues identified through the responses of the participants to the questionnaire.

Chapter 6 brings the results from both the questionnaire (Chapter 4) and the interviews (Chapter 5) together, to provide another layer of analysis based on the perspectives of Church planters about training, coaching, formation and access. This analysis employs a comparison of the two forms of data side by side and adds tables that confirm the actual scores of participants.

Finally, Chapter 7, discusses the main findings of the study, reviews the contribution these make to the theory of Church planting and describes the practical implications of these findings. It concludes by identifying three areas for further research ministry.

A glossary of the key terms used in this thesis appears in Appendix 5.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, literature about training, coaching, formation and access will be examined. The purpose of the review is to understand what is currently known about these four critical issues from relevant literature in both the business and Christian ministry fields.

The business field was chosen because of the development of training and coaching in this field over the last 20 years. This review seeks to distill any relevant principles that may be applicable to the Church planting work from that field. The review of literature from the Christian ministry field was employed because within its writings are studies pertaining to Church planting. In addition the critical issue relating to access to support for Church planters was a matter that is confined to this field of literature.

This chapter includes the following:

- (i) a review of Scripture relating to Church planting of which *The Acts of the Apostles* will be central;
- (ii) a review of literature from the field of business relating the changes over the last 20 years to the way workers are trained and coached effectively;
- (iii) an overview of current practices in Church planting and the preparation of Church planting leaders particularly covering how sending Churches and Denominations access training and coaching for their Church planters. This overview will include references to national and international contexts; and,
- (iii) an examination of different approaches to training, the effect of coaching on the training leaders receive, and the role that the formation of the Church planter plays.

2.1 Reflections on Church planting from the New Testament

A study of Church planting requires an examination of the Scriptural evidence concerning the establishment of new churches that is found in the Bible within the book known as the *Acts of the Apostles*. The Church in Jerusalem was founded during the Pentecost celebration in the year that Jesus was crucified and this event is recorded in Acts 2 where one of the earliest leaders of the Church, Peter, presented the Christian message and those who believed the message about Jesus were brought together. In the months and years that followed, more and more believers met in both the temple courts and in their own homes (Acts 2:46) and their initial formal leaders were known as “Apostles” (Acts 2:42). This structure was augmented some time later with a second level of leadership described in Acts 6:1-4 as those “ordained to serve”.

The group of people who gathered together in Jerusalem, were the antecedents of what is known as the “Church” and were initially at least a “sectarian movement that had begun *within* Judaism” (Perrin & Dulling, 1982, p. 56). The author of Acts, Luke, presents Paul (the key leader identified throughout Acts) as someone who did not compromise his Judaism throughout his life (Ehrman, 2004). But as the years proceeded, there were new Churches appearing in the story of the New Testament and Luke, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, presents Paul as the one who embodied God’s plan “to move Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome and to the ends of the earth” (Brown, 1984, p. 20).

Paul’s letters (e.g. *Galatians*) show that a generation after the death of Jesus, there were still Christians in Jerusalem (Perrin & Dulling, 1982) who maintained strong religious ties to Judaism. But the picture of Christianity generally in Acts is of “a less conservative Jewish movement with strong connections to its Jewish roots” (Ehrman, 2004, p. 152). Acts also describes how that changed, for while Luke was concerned to explain the Jewish roots of Christianity, his other focus was on the Gentile Mission (Ehrman, 2004). The Scriptural accounts of this mission begin in Acts 8. The narrative describes that as the believers fled from Jerusalem because of persecution, they took their faith in Jesus wherever they went, proactively sharing it with all they met (Acts 8:4). Most of these people remained anonymous but others are clearly identified. For example, Philip who went to Samaria is identified (Acts 8:5) as establishing a new

Church in that city. Additionally, there was the identification of Saul of Tarsus (known later as Paul) who would be the key leader in what would become known as a Gentile mission (Acts 9:15).

Even though Paul himself was raised in the Jewish tradition and faith (Galatians 1:14), it is his work that led “not only to the geographical spread of the Church across ethnic barriers” (Ehrman, 2004, p. 137), but also to a “re-presentation of the whole idea of salvation and what constituted Christian thought itself” (Perrin & Dulling, 1982, p. 85). Sent out from Antioch by the Church leaders (Acts 13:1-5), Paul and other leaders like Barnabas, Timothy, Titus and Silas, traveled throughout Asia Minor, Greece and beyond, announcing the good news that God’s Kingdom had come, and establishing groups of believers in every town they visited. The establishment of these new Churches spread across the Roman Empire and eventually to Rome itself. These new Churches (or Church plants) were the main strategy of the life and ministry of these early leaders. This is the witness that is identified in the Scriptures as the purpose of God (Acts 1:8). At the start of the *Acts of the Apostles*, the Church is a sect within Judaism. By the end of Acts, the Church had settled in many parts of the Roman Empire and was on the way to becoming “an institution in its own right” (Perrin & Dulling, 1992, p. 91), developing its own forms, creeds and distinctive literature.

The Scriptures remind us of what the Church was like in its youth – vulnerable, passionate, faithful and explosive (Garrison, 2004) and it shows the strategy of starting new churches as significant in the Scriptural record. In broad terms it was a movement of Church members (Acts 4:13) breaking new ground (Romans 15:19-24), crossing cultural barriers (Acts 10:1-31) and meeting together in homes (Acts 5:42; 8:3; 12:12; Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2). The Scriptures also illustrate that this work of starting new churches, or Church planting, was part of an acceptance of a sense of the divine imperative to do so (Ac. 13: 2) and of the need for the right leaders. For example, the establishment or planting of the Church at Philippi in Macedonia (Acts. 16), was achieved through the re-directing of the leaders from their plan to visit other areas in Asia (Ac. 16: 6) to go to Macedonia instead. This “re-directing” to Macedonia had occurred through a vision (Acts 16:9-10). Paul and his co-workers left for Macedonia and began their ministry there on the Jewish Sabbath by the river and a key person (Lydia) was converted (Acts 16:14-15).

They were jailed for their efforts (Acts 16:16-24) but this apparent setback led to the conversion of the jailer and his whole household (Ac.16: 25-32). When Paul and his co-workers left the city not long after, a group of believers had been left behind in that city as the basis for the ongoing life of the new Church in that place.

There are other examples in the Scriptural account, of the continuing willingness of the Church planters, to cross ethnic, cultural and language barriers to establish new churches as well as a commitment to the support of churches that had already been established. This historical account is important as it provides a way of verifying and describing the origins of the work known as Church planting, thereby placing it as one of the oldest and arguably most important Church mission strategies still being employed by many parts of the Church today.

2.2 Current examples of Church planting in Australia

This section highlights the relevance of the reflections on Church planting in the Scriptures with the situation relating to Church planting currently in Australia. Though there is limited academic literature on Church planting applicable only to the context of this country, each denomination appears to be endeavouring to continue the process of establishing new churches. This work is an echo of that which began in the first century AD and which is described in the *Book of Acts* in the Scriptures.

One contemporary example of Church planting strategy in Australia is the work of Bishop Al Stewart, an Anglican bishop from Sydney, together with several other Sydney Church leaders, who have set up a Church planting organization called “The Geneva Push” (established 2009). The goal of this organisation is to plant new Churches in Australia reaching out beyond their own Denomination. Stewart explained that his aim was to “set up a national network that will include individuals, Churches, existing networks and Denominations” (Stewart, 2009). Stewart’s rationale, outlined in 2009, for establishing such a network is, in part, due to the fact that the NCLS (National Church Life Survey) 1991-2001 showed that Protestant churches declined by 6% in the study period. He concluded as a result, “we desperately need more Churches across the nation to reverse this trend” (Stewart, 2009). Church planting remains therefore a significant part of the Church’s ministry, as it was for the Church in the first century.

The Christian newspaper media in Australia releases an on-line report called “*Eternity*”, published by Australian Christian Pty Ltd. This newspaper, appearing monthly is designed to comment on current trends in Christian life and ministry. In November 2009, the newspaper also published an anecdotal review of Church planting in Australia that described the activities of Denominations in Australia at that time. These anecdotal examples are gathered from Denominational reports about progress being made and are, at present, among the only indicators of what Church planting is being done in this country. The report noted that a variety of methods and networks for Church planting were developing. Table 2.1 below, sets out the locations and Denominations of new Churches established in Australia between 2000 and 2009.

Table 2.1 *New Churches in Australia reported by “Eternity”, October 16, 2009*

| 2000-2009: | <i>New Churches planted:</i> |
|---|---|
| Presbyterian | NSW (16); Qld (12); Victoria (2) |
| Adventists | 45 planted across Australia |
| Baptists | NSW (10); WA (4); SA (5); Victoria (3) |
| Churches of Christ | NSW (10); WA (2); SA (2); Vic/Tas (17) |
| Christian City Church | Has a goal of 1000 new churches by 2020 |
| Anglicans | Sydney (200) |
| Australian Christian Church (formerly Assembly of God) | Over 500 churches since 2000 |

This information points to the fact that over the last 10 years the number of new Churches that have been established across Australia is growing and the impetus and support for Church planting has been derived from across the spectrum of the Evangelical and Protestant Churches. According to this informal survey of Denominations, there does not appear to be one preferred model or strategy of Church planting. This confirms the research of the NCLS. The 2003 report published by this research foundation titled “The effectiveness of Church planting: some initial findings”, announced that Pentecostal Denominations such as the Christian City Church and the Australian Christian Church, mentioned above, account for 45% of all

new Church plants in the study period 1996-2001. It also noted the prominence of the Baptists and Presbyterians also with 12% and 10% respectively of all new Churches started in the period of the study. These initial findings confirm that the strategy known as Church planting that began in the first century is ongoing in Australia and that Churches from a variety of faith traditions are engaged in it.

2.3 Preparing leaders

So far, this review has established that Church planting began as a strategy to gather those who had come to the Christian faith wherever they were living, and that the work of Church planting is continuing to be acknowledged as a key strategy for the Church. The next section of the review will address the literature that relates to the preparation of leaders from a number of international contexts. The discussion begins with a review of different ways of learning outlined in a number of recent studies; following will be an examination of the meaning of the terms “training”, “coaching” and “formation” from the literature; and, a case study of a training organization in India.

2.3.1 Different ways of learning

This section describes three forms of learning or “learning conditions” (Kyndt, Dochy & Nijs, 2009, p. 369) known as formal, non-formal and informal. Each of these styles of learning, or learning conditions, has the potential to add to the effectiveness of the learning experience, but this diversity does not necessarily indicate a lacking in any of them. This section defines each of these learning styles and includes these studies in this literature review, because of the speculation that the classroom setting of formal learning may not be the only way to train a Church planter. Other forms may be able to provide useful training experiences alongside of what may be achieved in the classroom.

Eraut (2000) characterised *formal learning* as that learning which occurs when the learner is exposed to a prescribed course, a teacher or trainer and results in an award or qualification. He acknowledged that there are many modes for this kind of learning and the outcomes are “not confined to propositional learning” (Eraut, 2000, p. 115). Propositional learning in this context is learning which is confined to whether something is right or wrong.

In defining *non-formal learning*, Eraut (2000) proposed that it may, like formal

learning, be planned, but it may also be learning that takes place during processes like decision-making or problem solving and does not necessarily involve “a pre-determined plan” (Eraut, 2000, p. 116). Eshach (2007) concurred but defined non-formal learning as having a motivation that is “wholly intrinsic to the learner” and “occurs in a planned but highly adaptable manner in institutions, organizations, and situations beyond the spheres of formal or informal education” (Eshach, 2007, p. 173). Similarly, Connor (2008) described this learning condition as a kind of learning that, while occurring beyond the organized educational activities, is still intended to “serve identifiable learning objectives” (p. 13).

Eshach (2007) made the distinction between formal and non-formal with a third condition known as *informal* learning. His view is that informal learning occurs spontaneously and is centred on situations in life. Therefore, this kind of learning describes the process where the learner may find values, skills and knowledge “acquired from daily experience” (Connor, 2008, p. 13).

There is always present “an intention to learn” (Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004, p. 71) in formal and non-formal learning as the learner seeks to gain skills and knowledge. The difference with informal learning is that while it may carry that same intention, it can also occur randomly through an experience. It is speculated that these three learning conditions (formal, non-formal and informal) may all be employed in the preparation of leaders for Church planting. It is speculated that the possible effects these ways of learning may have, would be best seen in a total approach to the preparation and development of the Church planting leader for their work. Having defined these three learning conditions, the next section provides an understanding of how three issues identified in the research questions training, coaching and formation are understood within formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

2.3.2 Defining training, coaching and formation

Two of the research questions guiding this study ask about the types and modes of delivery for training, coaching and formation as either preparation or ongoing support. This section defines training, coaching and formation as important elements in the preparation of leaders.

Firstly, training is a term used to describe a learning experience designed to develop new skills in the learner (Allan, 2002; Mercer, 2005). But Allan describes elements of

an overall plan for preparing leaders observing that “what happens before and after training is at least as important as what happens during a training event” (Allan, 2002, p. 13). Another voice of reform to training observed that classroom based or formal learning conditions for those in the workforce are only partially effective (Hirst, 2008) because the value of the training actually depends on the applicability of it to the regular tasks undertaken by those who receive the training (Hirst, 2008; Hirst, Mann, Bain, Priola-Merlo & Richver, 2004).

Therefore, providing other types of learning experiences in the training design can add to the effectiveness of formal learning conditions that are more typical of those used in classroom settings. For example, a non-formal or a spontaneous informal learning experience as described above (Connor, 2008; Ferber, 2007), may add to the effectiveness of the training to the point where such learning experiences may become part of a lifelong learning process (Harrison, 2003).

Secondly, coaching is the word used to describe a relationship that is designed to assist someone to apply new skills to their area of work or influence. This kind of relationship can be a significant factor that may enhance the foundational learning experience that the training provided (Kohli & Jaworski, 1994; McDougal & Beatty, 1997; Wang & Wentling, 2001).

Griffiths (2005) explained that while consulting, training, tutoring and teaching are all disciplines that focus on curriculum and content, it is the coach who seeks to facilitate the development of goals and action steps for the learner themselves. Several researchers (e.g. Hurd, 2002; Loranger, 2001; Whitworth, Kimsey-House & Sandahl, 1998) support this belief that coaching enhances and deepens the learning process. In addition, research by Skiffington & Zeus (2003), and Olivero, Bane & Kopelman (1997) found that productivity was raised when those who had been trained were also coached.

One approach to professional learning closely related to coaching is mentoring. In this thesis, mentoring will be treated as part of the section on coaching because, like coaching, mentoring is based on a key relationship and because the two terms are often used interchangeably (Hargreaves, 2010; Hudson, Usakb & Savran-Gencerc (2009). Some studies see mentoring as relating to a person’s career (Duncan & Stock, 2010; Malphurs & Mancini, 2004; Dingman, 2004; Cloke & Goldsmith 2001) while

others see it only as a personal development relationship (Gibbs, 2005; Smith, 2007). For the purpose of this study however, coaching will be used as the term to cover two separate functions. That is, that coaching is a relationship that enhances the learning and also encourages the formation of the learner. Thirdly, “formation” is the term used to describe what happens in the character of the leader usually over a long period of time. In the case of Christian authors this formation is viewed as a result of the activity of God in the person (Banks, 1999). In support of this, Wilhoit (2008) described the process as both God’s activity and man’s activity. It is not, however, a solely Christian term. For example, Rinaldi (2006) described this in her study on the formation of children as something people construct in themselves while in community. This is a principle pertinent for adults as well. Banks described formation not in terms of skills or knowledge but in spiritual and moral terms and places it as occurring in community. In the case of Church planters, Thompson (1995) identified that there were 21 competencies required for the development of Church planters. Of these, eight related to formation: spirituality, integrity, spiritual disciplines, family, character, resiliency, sensitivity and self-image (Thompson, 1995, p.110).

2.3.3 A cross-cultural case study

Having established an understanding of some of the terminology employed in this study and in particular examined the way that some of the critical issues are to be understood, the review in this section looks at the challenge of training Church planters by employing the right delivery of that training. The case study described here concerns the Hindustan Bible Institute of Northern India. It is incorporated in this review because of the way it illustrates what is required for training organizations to prepare leaders for Church planting. In particular it describes how different training delivery methods might be applied (e.g. short intensives) for the preparation of Church planting leaders. This study shows how a training organisation might deliver training, coaching and formation as preparation and also flexibly once the leaders involved in Church planting have begun their work.

The Hindustan Bible Institute (HBI) was founded in 1952 by Dr Paul Gupta with the purpose of providing every Indian an opportunity to hear the Gospel, respond and be reconciled to God. He sought to equip Indian men and women so that one Indian could lead another Indian to Christ. After significant progress in terms of a growth of enrolments in its early years, Dr Gupta, influenced by the challenges laid out at the

Lausanne Conference of 1974, began to intentionally work “for the indigenization of the leadership in mission and the Church” (Gupta & Lingenfelter, 2006, p. 4).

Later, Gupta’s son observed that the curriculum for HBI was developed around his father’s experience as a student of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles from 1948-1952. For example, a decision for Christ must be “independent, autonomous and individualistic” (Gupta & Lingenfelter, 2006, p. 5). Essentially, he discovered that this was a foreign method of training and HBI graduates therefore lacked effectiveness in fulfilling the great commission in their own national context. Nevertheless, HBI graduates were deemed to be effective training leaders and Churches still sought them out and, in fact, many Churches and Denominations actually sent their leaders to HBI for training. But this “success” brought with it pressure to provide a wider training curriculum to deal effectively with the diversity of those attending the institute. This pressure meant that the emphasis shifted to providing degree courses and of affiliation with Bible colleges and seminaries that changed the vision and values of HBI.

Gupta observed that “if institutionalization is improperly implemented the organization will lose sight of its vision and values and begin implementing programs that have little or no impact on the purpose and vision of the organization” (Gupta & Lingenfelter, 2006, p. 18). The authors further noted that formal education gradually cripples and derails a school founded to produce Church planters and concluded “that formal education is ill-suited and cannot effectively equip evangelists, Church planters and apostolic leaders for ministry...students who spend most of their time in formal theological education become teachers and scholars, which is precisely what the educational program is designed to produce” (Gupta & Lingenfelter, p. 23).

In response to this, in 1985 HBI began to change its approach. It maintained its formal education program but began to develop other training and equipping approaches. Specifically, HBI developed a non-formal training known as the Missionary Training Institute, which was based around the DAWN (“Discipling a whole nation”) strategy that had emanated from The Lausanne Conference (a world conference of Christians known as “Evangelicals” concerned to bring the Christian message to the world, first held in Lausanne in 1974). There were several principles in this new strategy among which was to find students who had a passion for evangelism and Church planting and establishing a Missionary Training Institute to provide training for them in-situ. Once every three months they came to HBI for a ten day intensive (eight over a two year

cycle). This had a significant emphasis on practical skills and each student would apply the training by training others. Each time they came back to HBI they would report on the progress they had made in passing on what they had learned. Additionally, the financing of this training was also re-thought with a decision to provide free education to those seeking training, in addition to the HBI institute scholarships.

One of the primary goals of the institute was to equip each trainee to start a Church in their own village and then identify five other villages that were receptive and evangelize in each one with the object of planting. However, research found that as the number of trained Church planters grew from 17 to 117, “the average number of Churches planted dropped from 2.4 per planter to 1.5 per planter” (Gupta & Lingenfelter, 2006, p. 33). Gupta noted, “we learned that planting churches required skills different from doing evangelism and without those skills we had only a proclamation ministry” (Gupta & Lingenfelter, 2006, p. 34). In response, a second level of training known as “on-site training” (OST), was developed as a field-based training initiative which required students to complete two more years of learning through observation and participation. A key feature of OST was the use of mentorship with each trainee assigned to a mentor. Throughout the training the mentor would repeatedly emphasize the process and the key dynamics of how to plant a Church. When this non-formal training began in 1985-86, there were two trainees and 12 churches planted. That process continued and in 2003, there were 502 trainees and 2,346 Churches planted with a membership of 108,379 in those Churches (Gupta & Lingenfelter, 2006, p. 39).

This institution’s experience demonstrates how an education facility using formal learning methods moved to a non-formal style of training and found that, in changing their delivery method, there was a measurable expansion of the potential recruits available for training; a practical engagement that accompanies this type of training; and, a quicker sifting out of those who are not suited for, or committed to, the ministry of Church planting. It showed that non-formal and even informal learning may have powerful results for adult learners and that evaluation and correction with reference to goals increases positive learning outcomes (Gupta & Lingenfelter, 2006).

2.3.4 Training delivery and learning in the business field

The experience of training delivery outlined above shows how being prepared to vary the way training is delivered assists in producing Church planting leaders. Additionally, it revealed that tailoring training delivery approaches to the cultural context and the specific needs of the learners was also a significant factor in the preparation and support of leaders for Church planting. Studies in the business field have shown that those providing training have also been seeking to address the needs of the learner in similar ways and also seek to do it to meet the outcomes desired by those providing the training. In this section, literature from the business field is canvassed to highlight the key insights made in that field about training and coaching. The use of this literature from the business field is valuable because the processes of training and coaching are highly evolved in the business world. It is therefore, worth examining the findings of the studies in the field and distilling what principles are transferable.

For example, there are studies in the business field that examine how flexible training delivery of different learning methodologies can assist in the process of developing leaders. Connor, (2008) presented alternatives to the formal learning programs that most companies in the business field employ in her study on the use of Facebook in the context of learning at University. Ferber (2007) described this informal learning as in part, the exploration of what is being learned as being in the hands of the individual. Her analysis pertains to the training done under the Australian Quality Training Framework. Connor further recommended that the definition of learning should be expanded to “include conversations with peers and your children, from books, articles, informal networks, internet searching, television and what you learn through trial and error” (Connor, 2008, p. 13). Another study (Harrison, 2003) noted that this informal learning may occur as part of a lifelong process and is not confined to the workplace.

The 2008 research by Connor lends support to the earlier results of a study by Rylatt (2001). Rylatt specifically noted that competency-based learning was beneficial to both the individual and their workplace. This study found that competency based learning makes its contribution by stimulating “lifelong learning habits and in

clarifying post-training options” for the learner (Rylatt, 2001, p. 275). Additionally, Rylatt’s research promoted the use of learning contracts in order to make the process of learning engaging for the learner. The terminology developed in subsequent studies (e.g. Esach 2007) would describe this competency-based training as non-formal. However the principle is consistent, that flexible training delivery based on different learning experiences, assists in the preparation and support of people as they enter their chosen field.

Studies over the last 30 years have clarified somewhat the effectiveness of what is called the “transfer” of training (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Georgensen, 1982). Their studies sought to establish how effective the training being offered at that time was by the time the person who received the training had returned to their workplace. Their studies suggested that only around 10% of knowledge gained in training actually translates to the work environment. This result raises questions about the relevance and effectiveness of training to the workplace. Hirst (2008) and Allan (2002), both suggest that a significant part of the problem was actually training delivery and described classroom based education methods as only partially effective. In research published in 2008, Hirst found that the value of learning becomes evident over time because “the value of training is affected by the return of the worker to the work environment and how applicable the worker finds the training as it applies to the tasks they do on a regular basis” (Hirst, 2008, p. 20).

This is what might be known as experience-based learning as described by Andresen, Boud and Cohen (1995). Learning of this kind has the distinguishing feature of “the experience of the learner occupying central place in all considerations of teaching and learning” (Andresen et al., 1995, p. 215). It is dependent on the learner’s own appropriation of something that is significant or meaningful to them as they interacted with the training at a personal level. It is a kind of training that focuses on the welfare of the learner and therefore might be understood as non-formal training. Of course, all those involved in the delivery of such training, such as the teachers and trainers, play a significant role in the personal experience of the learner.

As in the example from India, research into the effectiveness of training and coaching in business, is showing that modifications in training delivery can assist in the transfer of learning. This flexibility also has the potential capacity to ensure that the needs of the learner are addressed as fully as possible, while the outcomes desired by those

offering the training are also realized. In the next section, the literature review addresses some of the training models being used presently in international contexts to prepare leaders for Church planting.

2.4 The training of Church planters

The questions guiding this study asked about training as preparation, coaching as an enhancement of training, formation as developmental through training and experience and access to support. This support in its various forms may take place in the preparation phase or in the post-commencement period. So, having discussed the preparation of leaders and workers generally, with examples from a business context, this next section expands on the issue of preparation, by examining training as preparation as it is being adopted specifically for Church planters. Significantly, this section describes training for Church planters in the US, Europe and UK that are presently characterized by the use of a wide variety of training deliveries that confirm the literature cited in this study on effective training delivery. The reasoning behind this is that flexible training delivery is seen as helpful in avoiding inadequately prepared leadership. This inadequate preparation is seen internationally as a significant cause of the failure of Church plants (Smith, 2007). Therefore the training of those leaders involved in the task of Church planting is seen as a critical factor in successful and enduring new Churches. In response, training models are being developed that are tailored specifically across a wide variety of contexts and leadership styles. The key focus in these training experiences is the spiritual and theological formation as well as the “ongoing, personalized mentoring that is received” by the apprentice leader (Smith, 2007, p. 5). The sections below describe several of the types and modes of training that are used internationally.

2.4.1 Training currently being offered in the US

The table below summarizes the training described by Smith (2007) in his report on leadership development for Church planting in the US. This report concerns training and the methods being employed in the US to deliver it. The table (2.2) illustrates the variety of training methods, training focus and training periods available. This small cross-section illustrates that different training models are responding to the needs of the Church planters around them.

Table 2.2 Training delivery in the US (Smith 2007)

| Name of training | Mode of training delivery | Focus of the training | Possible strengths | Possible weaknesses |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <i>Turbo training</i> (employed by “Glocalnet” Church planting network in the US) | Periodic intensives | Essential questions about planting | Group exercises allowing Church planters to identify with other Church planters | Difficulty in maintaining support between training intensives |
| <i>Boot camp training</i> | Intensive before commencement of new Church | Practical application | A self-guided process of discovering suitable for activist leaders | Support process is unclear |
| <i>Residency training period</i> (Employed by Hill Country Bible Church USA) | Curriculum across several semesters | Seven characteristics – e.g. leadership and vision | Training offered alongside relationship building | Considerable financial cost reduces its availability |

The focus of the training summarized above is similar in all three models. Each of them seek to focus on what they deem are necessary elements for training a Church planter. The “essentials” for example, employed by the Turbo training, include vision, evangelism and discipleship and this is almost identical to the emphases deemed desirable by the Boot Camp. On the other hand the residency approach includes much more. The “seven characteristics of a model (or healthy) church”, include reliance on God’s Word, an anticipation of God’s empowering presence, a passion for reaching the lost, and a style of leadership that engages with people in the community at a very personal level. Therefore, the planning of training in the US revolves around providing something that gets the Church planter into his or her work as quickly as possible; offers periodic support for the Church planter while they are conducting their ministry without removing from their work for very long; and, a residency prior to them beginning their work. These examples verify that access to a variety of types and modes of training that aim to prepare and develop a Church planter is a key strategy for the support of Church planters in the US context.

2.4.2 Training approaches in Europe and UK

The US example is now compared and contrasted with some examples of training being offered to Church planters in Europe and UK. There are some overlapping emphases with the training offered in the US but some distinctive aspects also exist. Once again a variety of training methodologies is present and illustrates how those offering training are responding to the needs of the Church planters who are working in the regions of Europe and UK.

Table 2.3 Training delivery in Europe and UK (Appleton 2008)

| Name of Training | Mode of training delivery | Focus of the Training | Possible Strengths | Possible weaknesses |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <i>Modular training</i> (employed by the Bulgarian Bible League and Romanian Missionary Association) | Five modules delivered in five month intervals | Curriculum to develop mission leaders decisions relating to key practical skills | As in the case of “Turbo” training the support level is significant | Failure to adequately address individual skill needs |
| <i>Huddles</i> – (employed in an Anglican parish, St Thomas Crooke Sheffield, UK) | Periodic training for both ministers and laity – known as the “two handed approach” | Curriculum based on specific skills & leadership development curriculum | Accountability and strategy in the multiplication of more training centres | The breadth of the curriculum |
| <i>Start New Churches</i> (The Church of Sweden & the Order of Mission (UK)) | Three levels of training over a 12 month period | Curriculum including leadership, vision, contextualization and giftedness | Comprehensive training and support | The length of the UK version could lead to a diminishing of enthusiasm. |

As set out in table 2.2, which provided examples of training being offered in the US, the three models of training in Europe are quite similar. But there is a stronger level of practicality and relationship support in the European models. The “huddle” model adds the development of the laity that is also a valuable asset in developing a workforce able to operate in the ministry of Church planting. In addition, the “huddles” sought “to train planters for other parts of the nation who can set up centres” (Appleton, 2008, p. 5) for the ongoing development of leaders for Church

planting across Europe. There was a residency option offered in the Swedish model known as “Start New Churches” that also operates in the UK.

Both the US as well as the Europe and UK contexts features the use of a clear curriculum that is relevant to Church planters and do so in a mix of residency (training as preparation) and periodic training (training as professional development). The length of these offerings vary greatly and there is a question over the longer forms of training being offered and whether they cause a sense of delay for the people wanting to be Church planting leaders. However, these approaches to training illustrate that Church planters require training as preparation and that flexibility in delivery and variety of curriculum contribute to that preparation.

2.4.3 “Integral” training model

Another example of how Church planters are being prepared is drawn from a Latin American context. This model of training was developed by Brynjolfson & Lewis (2006) and is used in the preparation of Church planters in cross-cultural situations. It promotes a holistic or whole person emphasis in combination with “outcomes based training” (Brynjolfson & Lewis, 2006, p. 7). It is therefore another example of training that combines a curriculum relevant to Church planting alongside of a significant emphasis of the formation of that leader. In this respect it is similar to the residency approach mentioned from the US and the “Huddles” mode of training used in Europe. The authors described training in three different forms of delivery. There is the classroom employing formal learning; the work or ministry in which non-formal learning occurs; and the community of learners where, through informal learning, character building and spiritual formation occurs (Brynjolfson & Lewis, 2006). Ten principles guide the training, including several pertinent to this study such as learning outcomes and formation. Certain other principles such as the place and development of calling and an integrated approach to learning that is appropriate for all aspects of the learner’s life are incorporated (Brynjolfson & Lewis, 2006). This method of training has similarities to the concepts of training employed in the examples from the US as well as the European and UK contexts. The variety and flexibility of this training and the purposeful inclusion of formation illustrate more about the preparation of Church planters.

2.4.4 Assessment and training

The reports prepared by Smith (2007) and Appleton (2008) presented the picture of a variety of training modes being employed in the preparation of Church planters. This literature confirms that in the US, Europe and UK, questions relating to the delivery of training for Church planters as preparation or as professional development are ensuring that the issues are being intentionally answered by those who send out Church planters. The Churches and Denominations in these regions are carefully planning the preparation and support of Church planters who work under their supervision. Before leaving the issues relating to the preparation of Church planters through training, one final issue emerging from the literature needs to be canvassed because of the way it speaks to the preparation phase for a Church planter. Hunt (2006) reviewed in his study, the variety of assessment policies employed by Churches and Denominations alongside the training they offer as part of the overall work to prepare a Church planter. In the literature on Church planting in the US, there is an increasing discussion on a process of interview and reflection employed to ensure that those preparing for Church planting are the most appropriate for the role. Hunt's study is part of that body of work. He found that Denominations that are becoming motivated about Church planting are also becoming more discerning about the people that they recruit into their training programs. His research identified several criteria for leadership to assist this process of assessment. He noted that familiarity developed through working with someone, and benchmarking (that is the application of clear objective standards) are key factors. An assessment process that also made enquiries into the past and present personal habits of the prospective Church planters was an additional important factor. This assessment process involves time spent being together informally with the prospective leader so as to develop a sense of God being in the process relating to the planting (Hunt, 2006).

In May 2003, Stetzer conducted a study for the North American Mission Board entitled "An analysis of the Church planting process and other selected factors on the attendance of SBC (Southern Baptist Convention) Church plants". This study covered a wider field of data (including financial viability of the new Churches, sponsoring of Church planters by Denominations, and attendance of the new Churches), than the one being employed for the current study, and it made several pertinent discoveries.

Stetzer wrote “if we want Church plants to succeed, we should provide them with CPP (Church Planting Process) tools” (2003, p. 4). The tools to which he referred are assessment, training and mentoring, and/or supervision.

Assessment models now used to identify a Church planter are based on an original list of 13 characteristics of a Church planter developed by Dr Charles Ridley (1988). In the mid -1980s Ridley was on the staff of Fuller Theological Seminary. He was employed by 13 Denominations from across the US and Canada to do a study of 100 Church planters working within the participating organisations. The thirteen characteristics he developed came out of this study and were published in “How to select Church planters: a self-study manual for recruiting, screening, interviewing and evaluating qualified Church planters (1988). One characteristic he identified, for example, was that the Church planter needed a supportive spouse. This example from Ridley’s study is directly relevant to the analysis in Chapter 6.

Of the 500 participants from across the US in the study, 48% of the participants, that is 204 of the Church planters in the study, indicated that they had completed the *Ridley Assessment* (the assessment process for Church planters developed by Dr Charles Ridley) compared to 287 who indicated they had not done this assessment. Stetzer’s research (2003) found that Church planters who had been assessed led Churches that are approximately 20% larger compared to the Churches of those who were not assessed prior to commencing their work. While the issue of Church planter assessment is not covered specifically in the present study it is related to the first item in the questionnaire that deals with the value of any preparation for planting for the Church planter.

Stetzer’s research also influenced the formulation and inclusion of the first two research questions and several of the items incorporated into the questionnaire in the current study. His research found that new Churches in years two, three and four of their existence, whose Church planters had completed a basic form of training, were “larger than those who have not completed basic training” (Stetzer, 2003, p. 3). Additionally, there was found to be a correlation between the training experiences of the planter and attendance at the new Church. This finding, along with that relating to the assessment of Church planters, points to the possible influence of assessment and training in increasing the effectiveness of the ministry of the Church planter and of the Church itself. By year four of the life of the Church, Stetzer found that the gap in

the measurements of effectiveness used in his study between new churches led by trained Church planters and those who were not trained, was 27% (Stetzer, 2003, p. 3).

In addition, the study published by Stetzer investigated mentoring and supervision that is a parallel line of enquiry in this research. Stetzer noted, “there is a noticeable attendance increase among Church planters meeting with mentors” (2003, p. 4). The study noted that 59% met regularly with a mentor or supervisor. The research concluded that “meeting with a supervisor may indicate a heavy involvement by the sponsoring entity – the planter would probably have a close relationship with the supervisor” (Stetzer, 2003, p. 4). This study by Stetzer shows that there is a connection between training and coaching. The preparation of a Church planter with training and formation is enhanced by ongoing supportive relationships that continue to increase the effectiveness of the Church planter.

2.4.5 Studies relating to access

In 2007, Dr E. Stetzer (with Phillip Connor) published research for the Center for Missional Research that was a part of the North American Mission Board’s initiatives relating to Church planting. It was titled “Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 2007”. Participants in this research were Church planters working on behalf of a wide variety of denominations in the US. The study incorporated the perceptions of 2,266 new churches and once this study also covered a wider field of enquiry than this present research. Its objective, as suggested by its title, was to understand what factors lead new Church plants to survive.

For example, Stetzer & Connor (2004) found that “almost 74% [of those researched] had a Church planting mentor or supervisor provided by the Denomination” and further to this, that “about 60% were involved in a Church planter peer network” (2007, p. 8). The study also noted “Church planter training was provided by Denominations for 79% of the Church planters surveyed.” (Stetzer & Conner, 2004, p. 8). In fact, the research showed that nearly 52% of those in the study participated in “basic training or a similar boot camp while about 9% had been involved in a Church planting internship prior to planting their Church” (Stetzer & Connor, 2007, p. 11). Additionally, of the Church planters surveyed, “the great majority of Church planters (61%) have a college degree while most have a seminary Masters degree (56%)”

(Stetzer & Conner, 2007, p. 8). This study found that training and formal education is a strong component in the US context in the preparation of those who will do Church planting. These findings led to the inclusion of several items in the questionnaire relating to access to training, notably items 11-14.

The study also investigated the proactive nature of the sending Churches and Denominations in the US and the way they relate to their planters. On average the funding per year for a Church planter to start a new work, began in year one at \$35,000 and reduced to \$20,000 in year four. About 68% of Church plants existed four years after having been started (Stetzer & Connor, 2007, p. 13) providing evidence of the effect of this kind of financial support.

Additionally, the researchers noted another two important factors. First, they found that if the Church planter's expectations of the new Church and the reality of the Church planting experience meet, then new Church survivability increases "by over 400%" (Stetzer & Connor 2008, p. 14). Of those who said the expectations were not met, only 61% of new Churches survived. It also found that if the Church planter met with planting peers monthly this would increase the odds of survivability by 135%. For example, "we found out that out of those Church planters who were part of a peer group, 83% of their churches survived, whereas only 67% of Church plants among those who did not have a peer group survived (Stetzer & Connor, 2007, p. 14).

Another study by co-authored by Stetzer & Bird (2009) built on those published in 2003 and 2007 in addition to data from four other primary Church planting entities. These included, among others, the small Vineyard Study conducted by the former director of Church planting Todd Hunter (1986). In this study, Hunter concluded, that those who recruit Church planters need to be able to identify leaders who will be effective in a Church planting context. Additionally, Hunter emphasized the need for training in order to optimise the effectiveness of Church planters in Church planting (Stetzer & Bird, 2009, p. 4).

The Leadership Network published this study. This network was formed in 1984 to work with leaders of innovative Churches to produce more effective Churches. The authors reviewed the contributions of un-named Church planting entities, Denominations, Church planting networks, Church planting Churches and also house Churches. The study results discussed below however, report only the findings

relating directly to the critical issues of this present study including training, coaching, formation and access. However there will be some comment on the assessment of potential Church planters.

Stetzer & Birds' research (2009) found that many regional Churches and Denominations are struggling with how to train Church planters more effectively and consistently (2009, p. 20). This struggle had not been mentioned in the two earlier studies (2003, 2007). In addition, this 2009 study found that 68% of the groups who took part in the research "have a formalized Church planter assessment system in place" (Stetzer & Bird, 2009, p. 21) and commented that most of these systems developed to conduct assessment arose from the *Ridley Behavioral Assessment* (Ridley, 1988).

The research also showed that there has been a major thrust "toward Church planter training systems in the last 10 years" in the US (Stetzer & Bird, 2009, p. 21) with 55% of Churches surveyed (n=200) agreeing that they had training systems in place. Interestingly, another 13% of those surveyed said they had internship processes in place. This data suggests that denominations and agencies in the US are actively involved in offering training options to Church planters. The authors argued that "training has become a vital part of the Denomination's aid to Church planting" (Stetzer & Bird, 2009, p. 25) and that over 75% of the networks in the study had "defined processes for assessment, training and assisting the Church planter with a new plant (Stetzer & Bird, 2009, p. 27). The authors also noted that the sending Churches and Denominations spend more time on the assessment of the Church planters than the training process (Stetzer & Bird, 2009, p. 31).

On the question of coaching, the research by Stetzer and Bird study only led the authors to conclude, "there is a trend among many networks to provide separate coaches and mentors to planters" commenting that "coaches deal with the practices and strategies of planting" (Stetzer & Bird, 2009, p. 28). This study did not specifically gather data on formation. However the inclusion of data about assessment provided a link to formation since Ridley's view was that the best predictor of future behaviour was past performance (Ridley, 1988).

2.4.6 Summary of training as preparation

The studies by Stetzer (2003), Stetzer & Bird (2007, 2009), Smith (2007) and Appleton (2008) reviewed training for Church planting employed in the US, Europe and UK, and they confirm that there are a variety of modes of delivery of training being employed intentionally to prepare those being appointed to be Church planters. They all describe a definite preference for training that is centered around and preoccupied with a specific set of skills relevant to a Church planter and that placed an emphasis on the character and integrity of the leader in training. The shorter forms of training such as the “boot camp” approach may also produce enthusiastic and passionate leaders with a focussed skill set. The longer forms of training such as that employed by the Church of Sweden, bring together skills and character as their focus. Both models are seeking to meet the immediate and pressing needs for leadership in Church planting. The study by Hunt (2006) showed that assessment for Church planters lengthens the preparation phase considerably and this may affect the model of training preferred. A workable model of training must therefore comprise a curriculum to achieve a certain set of skills alongside an emphasis on the formation of the character of the leader. These insights from international contexts provide a commentary on 2 of the critical issues identified in this review. Namely, that training is a vital part of the process of preparing a Church planter and that sending Churches and Denominations may appropriately provide access to such training for a Church planter. Having assessed the training as preparation in both the business and Church planting fields and then looked at the access to support from Churches and Denomination in international contexts, this literature review moves to an examination of studies relating to coaching and the effectiveness of coaching upon training. What has emerged to this point is that training as preparation and formation delivered as part of that preparation are vital components in making a Church planter ready for the challenges of their work. The sending Churches and Denominations play a key role in assisting the Church planter to access this training and formation.

2.5 Coaching that enhances training

This section introduces an overview of the literature on coaching and in particular the role of enhancing the training that has been completed. Because there is little literature

on any possible role for coaching specifically within the field of Church planting, this literature review looks mainly to the field of business and in particular to Wang & Wentling (2001) and Crane (1999), because coaching is already operational in the business field. This review will examine some studies within this field in an attempt to distill principles that may be relevant to Church planting.

Studies by Baldwin & Ford (1988) and Broad & Newstrom (1992) both found that less than 15% of what people learn in training transfers to the job in a way that enhances performance. In addition to this finding, a study by Wang & Wentling (2001) identified the coaching experience as an enhancement for the foundational learning experience that the training provides. These matters as well as a study by Crane (1999) are discussed in this section to illustrate the effect of coaching as a “post-training” strategy.

2.5.1 General characteristics of coaching

The study by Wang & Wentling (2001) found that training without coaching has been a questionable investment by business leaders seeking to improve the productivity of their workforce. They found that coaching is a post-training strategy that will enhance the transfer of knowledge and skills (Wang & Wentling, 2001). This outcome is achieved by bringing a coach alongside the learner with the aim of increasing the application of what has been learned to the workplace. For example, their study identified nine main coaching activities that were relevant to this aim including the formulation of action plans, providing constructive feedback, problem solving and monitoring progress towards goals (Wang & Wentling, 2001).

A study by Trevitt (2003), concluded that the “quality of the student learning experience” was maintained by “acquiring, interpreting and acting on student feedback in a timely way; developing and engaging in a group or “peer” review process; and, using external facilitation” (Trevitt, 2003, p. 563). This “external facilitation mentioned by Trevitt confirms the role of a coach as being a relationship that assists in creating a positive learning experience for the learner and this was later confirmed by Mercer (2005). McIlroy (2002) found that the value of coaching was to stimulate intrinsic motivation, which is “a blend of values, wants and needs” (McIlroy, 2002, pp. 103-104). Her view was that the right balance in life coaching is one means of fostering values-based motivation for life-long learners (McIlroy, 2002).

A study by Watkins and Marsick (1993) pre-dates much of the scholarship already cited. But their study is worthy of note because its' finding about what they called Simulation-Enhanced Learning integrated a blend of "assessment, coaching, focussed lecture presentations, case-study discussions, experiential activities and action learning" (Hill & Semler, 2001, p. 17). The researchers maintain, "when experience drives insight, motivation and learning drive accountability; competency-based training can then become the vehicle for development" (Hill & Semler, 2001, p. 18). This shows the longstanding role that coaching has played in the business field and the intentionality of its delivery. It describes coaching as adding to the value of the learning and in the development of the learner generally. The application of a coach alongside a Church planter may also prove effective in escalating the transfer of learning from the training phase to the ministry itself. Church planters like all those in Christian ministry, have need of key skills in areas like team leading, vision casting and developing leaders. And the presence of instruction about formation in the preparatory training may also be enhanced by a coaching role through that coach's commitment to the development of the learner as well as the development of the value of the learning.

2.5.2 A "Constructivist" model

Another example of a coaching model used for the development of leaders within the field of business that incorporates coaching intentionally following the training is that published by Kerka (1997). It described this model as a "constructivist" approach to the training of leaders by constructing "the learning environment that will make transfer more effective" (Kerka, 1997, p. 2). The "transfer" mentioned is the transfer of learning that occurs during training to the use of that training in the workplace. In the case of the Church planter this would mean the transfer of learning from their training and the point at which they begin to develop a new faith community. This model encourages the questioning of assumptions that leads to "coaching them in the construction process" which is being sought in the workplace (Kerka, 1997, p. 2). The construction described refers to the process whereby what has been learnt is applied in the workplace. In this approach, vocational learning is integrated with coaching so that the trainer provides guidance "that gradually decreases as learners become more proficient" (Kerka, 1997, p. 5). The training environment is constructed to help the learner construct or apply their training to their workplace and to also

manage the social context of the workplace so that other workers may be incorporated into the changes arising from the training. The study by Fournies (2000) also found that the coach might be involved in assisting the learner in the workplace (i.e. following the training), as they participate actively in the application of the knowledge needed for their workplace.

2.5.3 The P.R.A.C.T.I.S.E. model

The constructivist model described above is a model that allows the worker to participate fully in the process. A study by Allan (2002) suggested that while the design and delivery of training are important for achieving the outcomes desired by organizations, “what happens before and after training is at least as important as what happens during a training event” (p. 13). The study findings advocated placing a greater emphasis upon the link between training and workplace behaviour (Allan 2002; Mercer 2005) and in response to this, Allan developed the P.R.A.C.T.I.S.E. model which involves bringing together several key elements, roles and responsibilities: aids on the job; targets; incentives; communication and engagement (2002). This also included coaching. This incorporation of coaching, and in particular on-the-job coaching is in Allan’s view “of assistance in identifying workplace opportunities for the application of skills” (2002, p. 14). The study showed that much of the expense in training is wasted because of the missing link between the learning experience and the workplace (Allan, 2002). Coaching, it is argued, provides this link. The coach in this context can help to create firm linkages between the training being offered and the organization’s needs in a way that supports the learner to re-enter the workplace successfully (Allan, 2002).

2.5.4 The “Triple Loop”

Hargrove (2003) espouses the use of Triple Loop learning which is a method that begins with people feeling they NEED to be different and then leading them to THINK differently before they proceed to DOING differently (Hargrove, 2003). This method is illustrated below:

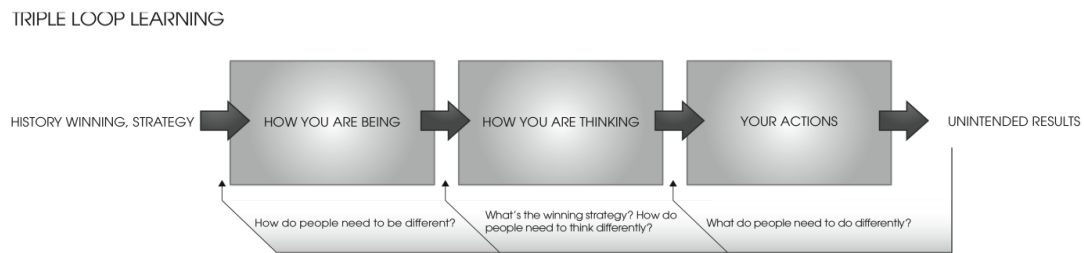


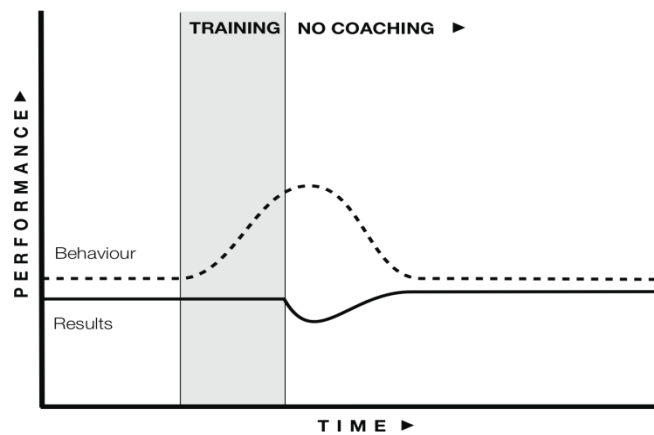
Figure 2.1 Triple Loop Learning (Hargrove, 2003, p. 15)

This approach is recommended because of its “powerful assist in reinventing who they are” (Hargrove, 2003, p. 15). Because modern coaching sees the value of creativity and the ability of the person being coached, learning approaches such as that espoused by Hargrove help people to see where they need to be different before taking them any further. This potential to encourage “re-invention” makes it a valuable learning approach for Church planters because of the way that feeling and thinking and doing affect the task of Church planting and the need for Church planters to re-invent periodically.

2.5.5 The effect of coaching on training

A study by Crane (1999) investigated the actual effect that coaching can have on training, and in the process, developed the two models shown in Figure 2.2. This is now confirmed by subsequent studies like Hargrove (2003). The first model developed by Crane shows that the impact of training without coaching is temporary and that behaviour following the training is only marginally affected. The second model shows that when coaching is introduced to the post-training experience, the behaviour of the person who has taken the training is significantly affected:

A. What Actually Happens with a New Skill (without Coaching)



B. What Should Happen with a New Skill (with Coaching)

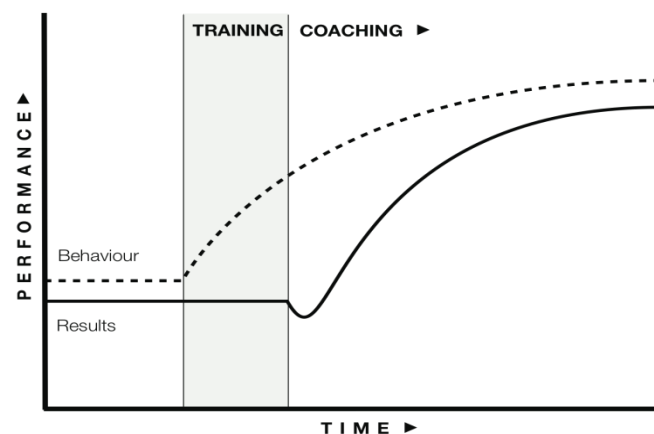


Figure 2.2 The Effect of Coaching on Training (Crane, 1999, p.7)

Both models show that what happens to “results” in the workplace are very different once coaching has been introduced to the post-training time. In the first and second models, the results in the workplace mirror behaviour. Crane (1999) showed that the effect of coaching is to change the behaviour of the learner as it relates to what they have learned and that the results follow that trend. This idea was developed further by Allan (2002) in a study that argued that what happened after training was as important as the training itself, and also Hargrove (2003) whose study developed ways for a coach to work with the learner at their own level of creativity.

Crane’s view is that by not providing coaching to people after providing them with training, “we set them up to fail” (1999, p. 22). He argued that coaching was

mandatory as the post-training strategy if the development of the learner was the goal of the training. In response to this he suggested the coaching framework illustrated in Figure 2.3 below:

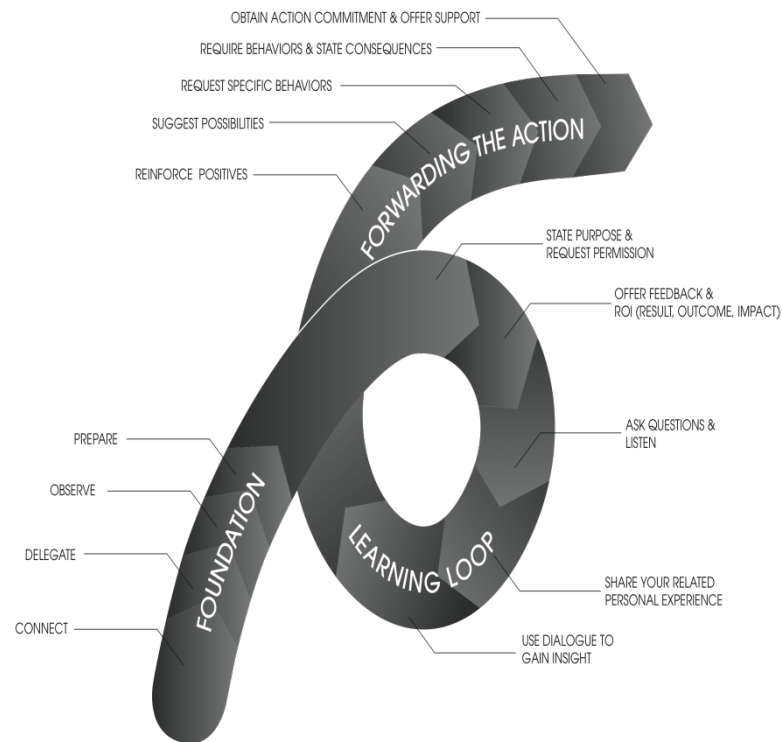


Figure 2.3 The Learning Loop (Crane, 1999, p. 22)

Crane's work makes a strong argument for coaching to follow training and the subsequent studies (Allan, 2002; Hargrove, 2003) included in this part of the literature review have shown that a learning approach that incorporates coaching produces results that confirm Crane's finding. A study by Griffiths (2005) questioned why key learning institutions like schools, colleges and universities are not embracing coaching as a way to enhance learning among their students based on the way learning is positively affected by coaching. Griffiths found that the role of a coach should be seen as distinct from the role of a teacher whose work relates to curriculum (Zeus & Skiffington, 2002). Griffiths found a link between coaching and the learner's goals that arise from their training and that "it is the responsibility of coaches to facilitate the development of goals and the designing of actions which lead to the achievement of these goals" (2005, p. 2). The argument is that coaching seeks to actively

encourage self-monitoring, self-analysis and self-evaluation of learning in order to maximize that learning. The value-adding provided by coaching to the learning experience are also identified in research done by Garmston (1993), Costa (1992, 2000) and Costa & Garmston (1994).

Griffiths (2005) also found that learning is inherent within the coaching process. Studies by Hurd (2002), Whitworth, Kimsey-House & Sandahl (1998) and Loranger (2001) have also found that coaching enhances and deepens the learning process itself. In a study by Skiffington and Zeus (2003), the authors conclude that coaching creates “learning that endures” (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003, p. 81). This confirms the role that coaching plays in the transfer of learning from the training context to the workplace that was described earlier in this review. As a coach assists the learner to identify what they need to learn from their training and how it can be applied, they are encouraging a lifelong learning experience. This kind of experience is described as transformational learning as in the case of Hargrove (2003) who developed the “Triple Loop Learning model”. Coaching studies from the business field illustrate the ways in which coaching enhances the training received and continues the development of the learner. It shows that coaching has developed to being a value-adding investment to training. The access of this kind of coaching to a Church planter may also be effective in similar ways.

2.5.6 Coaching Church planters

Umidi (2005) and Stoltzfus (2005) both advocate a model of coaching that is relevant to the field of Church planting, but while the literature relating to the business field emphasises learner behaviour and the transfer of skills and knowledge transfer, the emphasis in these studies relating to the ministry field is the connection to formation. Umidi & Stoltzfus describe it as transformational coaching that is similar terminology to the business models discussed by Griffiths (2005) and Mezirow (2000). But this method of coaching assumes that “a God-given capacity to do the work of Church planting” resides in the thinking and motivation of the leader involved (Umidi, 2005, p. 95). It further assumes that coaches themselves are continuing to embrace their own ongoing journey of personal transformation so that the coaching relationship becomes a relationship that leverages both “significant relationships and pivotal experiences as the key ingredients of that transformation” (Stoltzfus, 2005, p. 33).

In this transformational style of coaching there is “an emphasis on the responsibility of the individual” (Umidi, 2005, p. 67) to observe and practically carry out their own decisions. This is reminiscent of a study by Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl (1998) that found that those being coached are the ones to set the agenda for this relationship.

2.5.7 Summary of models employed in the coaching of Church planters

This section reviewed a number of studies relating to the purpose and role of coaching and explained the way that mentoring overlaps this understanding. The literature that was reviewed found that the purpose of coaching is to make the training received more valuable and particularly more effective in the field of work in which the trained person is working. This is done by assisting in the identification of goals arising from their learning and employing various means to reach these goals. The effect of coaching as a post-training strategy was suggested by the Crane (1999) study. While the models of coaching may vary, coaching is to be seen as a relationship that assists the learner to reach his or her own goals. Principles such as these are relevant in the context of Church planting. The literature also pointed to the beginning of some similarities between coaching and mentoring, however the focus of this study will be on coaching because of the emphasis in the literature about the way coaching affects training through increasing the transfer of what has been learnt to the context where the learning can be put into practice. Emerging from this literature therefore, is evidence that confirms coaching that enhances training and indicates the ongoing development of the learner is also within the brief of the coach. In principle, access to a coach would potentially build on the effectiveness of the training and formation that a Church planter might have undertaken.

2.6 Formation

The review of the literature to this point, from both business and Christian ministry perspectives, has noted that the literature verifies that training needs to be flexible enough in curriculum and delivery to address the needs of the learners. It has also shown that a coaching relationship is needed following this training to ensure that the learning is effectively transferred to the place of work or ministry. This section addresses another aspect that is identified in the research questions, that is the personal formation of the Church planting leader. It has been anticipated in the

research of Umidi (2005) and Stoltzfus (2005) in the section on coaching. What follows is a review of formation as it is described in a number of different contexts including the Bible, in which a person may experience formation as it relates to training experiences for Christian ministry.

2.6.1 Formation in a Biblical context

Banks (1999) provided a summary of the process of formation recorded in the Scriptures. He suggested that the home was initially seen as the place where “religious nurture, transmission of the tradition and participation in worship and vocational preparation first took place” (Banks, 1999, p. 83). He cited several passages from Deuteronomy (4:9; 6:7, 20-25) as evidence of these earliest formation activities relating to the commandments of God and outlined different levels and different circles of human society within which formation for ministry took place. Alongside the fundamental role played by the family and later by the school and the largely non-formal preparation performed on the young people of the village by the elders, there were more specialized circles of influence exercised by the priests, prophets and the wise. For all their differences, Banks argues that these approaches often exhibited some common elements. For example, the main purpose of associating with a key figure was to collaborate in the active service of God. The young men developed as they associated with these key figures, sometimes accompanying them and in some cases living with or near them. This involved a permanent or temporary break with their inductee’s normal relationships and surroundings and, in this context, learning occurred in diverse settings through participant observation, informal discussion, action-reflection and direct instruction. In some cases successors emerged when the central figures were no longer present, whereas in others, this was a by-product of the association (Banks, 1999).

The coming of Jesus brought many more examples of the need for and the practice of formation in the lives of those who would carry the New Covenant mission. The Gospels record that the call comes from Jesus to potential disciples (e.g. Mk.1:16-18, 20) to become part of a community with Jesus (Banks, 1999). In this community they share a call to engage in His mission, for Jesus does not call people to be His servants but to join Him in working for the reign of God on earth. Obedience to the call entails forsaking old ties, not because Jesus demands everyone to travel with Him, but because primary allegiance to Him has a potentially divisive effect on the families of

new disciples (Banks, 1999). However, there were exceptions to this experience of formation. Some disciples remained in their normal contexts (e.g. Joseph of Arimathea) and others, like the women in Galilee, accompanied Him only while He was in their region (Mark 15:40). There were also the 72 who, according to Luke 10:1-20, undertook a task within the totality of the mission for a limited period.

The apostle Paul also chose not to place himself “over” but “alongside” those who were with him in his mission, and in doing so he followed the example of his master, Jesus. Banks (1999) noted that although Paul was the dominant person in the group, the pivotal figure was Christ (1 Cor. 3:5-15) or the Spirit (Acts 14:6-7) and it was the whole group or relevant members who made the basic decisions about the group’s activities (cf. Acts 16: 6-10; 2 Cor. 8:16-17). These activities included evangelism, Church planting, congregational nurture and networking, as described in 2 Tim. 4:1-5 (Banks, 1999, p. 116).

2.6.2 Formation in a mission context

Banks (1999) also highlighted the specific role that a mission context has in the forming of people for their ministry. He identified five lines of continuity in the formation of someone in ministry along with those described in the Scriptures and noted the role that a coach may play in the process of formation. For example, there were different levels of association of the mentor or coach with the learner. But associating with this key figure may include living, learning, eating and praying with them; that is, sharing in the key figure’s total life. The purpose of these groups was not primarily to increase knowledge of their basic traditions, progress in moral or spiritual formation or develop skills associated with ministry or leadership. Rather it was active service or mission in furthering the reign of God, as initially defined by a key figure and progressively clarified by the whole group. This process typically began in their homes and local communities but was enhanced through engaging in service alongside the key figure (Banks, 1999).

Banks’ (1999) approach, which incorporated the classroom but opened the student up to the mission field itself, allows for a much greater degree of formation. The student learns as they are formed, and as they do the work of the mission. The effectiveness of this approach is verified by cross-cultural Church planters from Asia such as Loong whose review led him to question “whether formal academic missiological study in a

seminary is by itself adequate for missionary service” (Taylor (ed), 1991, p. 52). He argued, in a similar way to Banks (1999), that “training through community living, corresponds to the concept of building the Body of Christ” (Taylor (ed), 1991, p. 48). This type of formation was also achieved in the Biblical record that illustrates that the connection of the learner to a shared mission was the key factor in the process of formation.

Roberts (2006), a Church leader from the United States, also described his attempts to re-connect the formation of the person with the mission of Jesus. Roberts argued, “we cannot separate the spirituality, moral character and integrity of the one delivering the message from the message - mission is primarily about discipleship” (2006, p. 117). In a later publication Roberts argued that the motivation of those delivering the message must be that “we serve because Christ has changed us. He has made us different” (Roberts, 2007, p. 139). He argued that the formation of a person couldn’t be disconnected from the worldwide mission. Instead, he sees a connection between formation and mission and provides a practical implementation of the model Banks has proposed. It is not that the mission of Jesus forms individuals, but that the mission of Jesus provides the contexts for formation to be expressed and continually refined.

Cole (1999) also made an argument for small groups or communities of people like those on mission mentioned by Banks (1999) in the formation of people. In this, he is following a pattern established in Scripture and argued by Banks (1999). Cole’s methodology is to bring people into “prolonged contact with God and God’s Word in the context of community with others who are also pursuing the Lord” (Cole, 1999, p. 9). Nothing however, is mentioned by Cole of Banks’ insistence on formation occurring in the context of mission. Rather, Cole asserts that “if your own life can’t be transformed first, you have no right to expect to transform another’s” (Cole, 1999, p. 121) which suggests a divergence from Banks’ position.

2.6.3 Formation in the seminary

The first research question asked about formation in training prior to the commencement of ministry. The United Theological Seminary in Trotwood, Ohio, reviewed its curriculum in 2002 to include a course on spiritual formation as a degree requirement for ordination. This example from the literature is included because of the way that the study described the link between a formal training course and formation

as an element of that training. Keely (2003), described this new course, noting that as one of the outcomes of the course, students are required to have examined their own understandings of vocation and pastoral identity. In addition to this, they will have undertaken a variety of personal spiritual practices, participated in a “spiritual friends” group and explored aspects of nurturing the spiritual life of a congregation (Keely, 2003, p. 202).

One goal of such preparation is that the ordinand might be able to effectively minister to others but the thrust of the training is really towards preparing leadership for maintenance of established churches rather than the establishment of new ones. The emphasis in the course on community and character illustrates that modern seminaries are taking formation seriously as a way to address the ongoing needs of people who lead the Church in the work of witnessing in changing cultures.

World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) offers a variety of training models for formation in seminary training. For example, there is a model employed for the workers within a Korean context that is focussed on formation for ministry beyond seminaries where it has historically been offered to a variety of training institutes offering what can be defined as formal or non-formal learning. Lee (1991) wrote “the basic differences between a seminary type of training and training institutes are these: the latter is more than a classroom experience. It touches on the whole person and yet utilises the strength of a classroom approach as well” (Lee, 1991, p. 71). From out of a Nigerian context, Fuller (1991) observed that the models of training there also “includes personal spiritual development” as its main focus (Fuller, 1991, p. 87). Itioka (1991) reported changes to the training of workers for a Brazilian context and demonstrated that the first issue is “being”, that is dealing with the “character of the missionary using as the model, the person of Jesus Christ” (Itioka, 1991, p. 113). Itioka concluded that WEF are “not so much looking for a perfect missionary as looking for someone who is aware of his or her own strengths and weaknesses and knows how to cope with them” (Itioka, 1991, p. 114). Itioka’s report also noted the importance of prayer in this model of training.

Winkelmes (2004), in support of Cole’s view (1999), argued that the classroom (in this case seminary classroom) is the context for formation. Her paper researched the way formation might be taught in the formal setting of a seminary and offers ideas

that can help seminary teachers consider how to create classroom environments that support formation, however there does not seem to be validation by any reference to scripture and it could be argued that the classroom is a narrow context in which to sustain formation.

2.6.4 Formation and on-line learning

The formality of the classroom setting is contrasted with that of the setting in which the on-line learner is familiar. Esselman (2004) and Graham (2002) have studied this area and acknowledge some misgivings about the technology and a preference for the classroom. Esselman (2004), argued that since the wisdom communities drew on the experiences and questions of all its members, students, as well as instructors, formation may still be possible in online communities provided that the formation of the community is around the life stories, questions and an eagerness to engage in critical reflection on the traditions from which they come (Esselman, 2004). In this way “the model of learning cohort as a wisdom community offers a way of envisioning how web-based instruction can be designed to nurture that transformation of mind and heart expected of those preparing for ministry” (Esselman, 2004, p. 169).

These insights suggest that online training can contribute to formation as much as training in person can, however the issue here may be the way the learning is constructed. Graham (2002) highlighted three approaches to be considered when developing learning outcomes on the web. First, she described the traditional (teacher) approach where the content and delivery is decided *for* the learner. Second, there is the constructivist approach (which has strong links to coaching) where professional educators and practitioners make decisions, from the perspective of the relevant field of work. The decisions are based on the needs of the field and the learning that flows from this discovery. Finally, what Graham calls “just in time” or informal learning where *the student decides* what he/she desires to learn. Graham said that those learning in this manner and in a competency based design, will still “have to learn second-order skills: how to learn, strategies for approaching a problem, how to assess their performance and that of others and so on” (2002, p. 223).

2.6.5 Formation in non-formal settings

Thompson (1995) made extensive comments on the subject of ministry formation. He asked the question, “is ministerial formation primarily focussed on developing

theological understanding or is it also functionalist in orientation?” (p. 33). He was especially supportive of the use of non-formal learning because he believed it produces change and has transformation as its goal (Thompson, 1995, p. 37). In particular, Thompson argued for competency-based learning as the type of learning that acts “as a curricular model for the transformation process” (1995, p. 42; Smith, 1999). In relation to Church planting particularly, Thompson suggested “the competency profile (for Church planting) becomes the driving force in the training system” (1995, p. 47). He cited Ingalls (1981) “competence involves the simultaneous interplay of knowledge, skill or ability, understanding, positive attitudes and constructive values” (Thompson, 1995, p. 48). Further, this competence-based training is the model available to theological educators desiring to incorporate formal, non-formal and informal learning models successfully (Thompson, 1995).

Thompson’s research focussed in particular upon the competencies needed by Church planters. These included perseverance (61%), visionary/vision-casting (60%), preaching (59%), Godly and righteous living (58%), prayer (56%) and, evangelism (54%) (1995, p. 91). Of these six characteristics, three relate directly to formation issues. His conclusions along with his recommendations were that “equally creative courses need to be developed to focus particularly on the qualities of prayer, Godliness, spiritual development, integrity and spiritual disciplines in the life of the Church planter” (Thompson, 1995, p. 129).

2.6.6 The need for the formation of Church planting leadership

Futurists like Barrett and Johnson (2001) who have examined the work of the international Church have projected a goal relating to the establishment of new Churches to 2025. The aim is to have at least one fellowship or Church or congregation in each of the world’s 12,600 ethno-linguistic peoples (Barrett & Johnson, 2001). This research indicated that, after Christian baptism, the second major indicator of ongoing Christian progress is the planting of new Churches, new congregations or new fellowships into which the newly baptized persons may be organized (Barrett & Johnson, 2001). Rutz (2005) estimated the growth in those who describe themselves as “Christian” globally at 175,000 per day (Rutz, 2005, p. 11), implying that there will be a need for ongoing new leadership to be trained, supported and resourced throughout the world (Logan, 2006).

In order for Church leaders to be prepared for the task of developing new Churches to meet this exponential growth, there will also be a great variety in the types of leaders required (Logan, 2006, p. 99). Specifically, the literature argued that the type of training that will be needed is one that has moved towards a character and competency based process (Logan, 2006). This type of training involves the spiritual formation of the leader as well as preparing them in the performance of specific skills required in the field of Church planting. Gibbs saw that “there is an increasing recognition of the need for spiritual formation alongside theological education” (2005, p. 231) as a means to develop the kind of leaders who will be most effective in the task of starting new Churches. Local Churches are seen as the best contexts in which to achieve formation with education and ministry (Gibbs, 2005, p. 192) where the training itself is clarified by processes to “identify those qualities and capacities needed for spiritual maturity and effective ministry” (Ferris, 1995, p. 7). Ideally the process of training and coaching enables the process of formation where there is a bringing together of “instruction and intentional, guided reflection on the character qualities modeled” (Ferris, 1995, p. 13). While character and competency-based training emphasize skill development, there is an unmistakable connection within it, to formation. Ferris concluded, “whereas some training leads to dependency, the effect of training for growth is empowerment” (Ferris, 1995, p. 14). The formation of leaders by means of developing character and spirituality alongside skills and knowledge is seen as a means of countering what Logan saw as “the number one reason” why churches fail: specifically, getting the wrong kind of leader involved (Logan, 2006, p. 48).

2.6.7 Summary of the contexts for developing formation

This section of the literature review seeks to summarize the importance of formation as one of the four critical issues for this study that are relevant for the work of Church planting. It acknowledges that there is in existence a variety of contexts where formation may be fostered so that the individual needs of the learner may be accounted for in the process of learning. The literature confirms also, that formation is developmental for the Church planter as it is for anyone involved in Christian ministry and it enriches the person and provides a scope in the development of character that sustains and motivates leaders.

Banks' study in particular, provided a view of the Biblical teaching on formation but all the literature points to a variety of methodologies and contexts that may be employed to provide spiritual growth or formation alongside academic learning. And Logan (2006) argued powerfully for the inclusion of formation in a variety of training delivery methods. The literature notes that attention to formation produces leaders that are ready for the work of Church planting. It argues that careful decisions about the training undertaken and the type of delivery of that training in which a person is formed are important decisions to be made. Thompson (1995) and Gibbs (2005) place formation and training together as crucial for the Church planter; and the sending organisation known as "World Evangelical Fellowship " (WEF) present several cases relating to how potential workers are assisted to access their training (Taylor, ed. 1991). It is ventured that the results of such intentionality would be effective in respect of Church planters.

2.7 Critical issues arising in the literature

Throughout this literature review, four critical issues have been identified as being related to the development of Church planters. Firstly, that flexibility in the models and delivery of training as preparation is effective in helping the Church planter to acquire important skills and receive encouragement in formation. The studies authored by Ferber (2007) and Connor (2008) for example, argued that training can be more effective if alternate delivery methods are employed; and Hirst (2008) argued in their research of training, that, if training meets the criteria of relevance and flexibility, it develops useful skills that a worker will be able to use when they return to their workplace. Also, Gupta & Lingenfelter (2006) outlined an example from an Indian context, of this relevance and flexibility in the training of Church planters as they prepare for their work. Secondly, that coaching enhances training. Crane's research (1999) verified that coaching would enhance training by affecting the behaviour of the worker after they had returned to work. Wang & Wentling (2001) did a study about the way coaching increased the transfer of learning in the workers in a way that would increase the effectiveness of the worker once he/she was back at their workplace. And Stoltzfus (2005) found in his research that coaching assists leaders in ongoing formation. In addition to these studies, Griffiths (2005) described the way that coaching might enhance what the learner had learnt by helping them to reach the goals they set for themselves during their training. These goals would be settled on by

what they would like to achieve when they returned from that training. Thirdly, formation is developmental that is, it can increase incrementally in the life of a leader when it is encouraged by training, and supported by coaching. The ongoing nature of formation in the life of the Church planter is assisted by training that provides the instructional aspect, as in Brynjolfsen & Lewis (2006) and Keely (2003) and by coaching which provides the ongoing support for the Church planter once they are re-engaged in their work (Umidi, 2005; Stoltzfus, 2005; and Banks, 1999). Fourthly, that the literature also pointed to the conclusion that the most effective means for a Church planter to access training and coaching that promoted ongoing skills acquisition and formation, was through a supportive sending organisation. In this respect, Steltzer (2003), Smith (2007) and Appleton (2008) among other, presented the experiences of sending Churches and Denominations in the US, Europe and U.K. and their efforts to provide support for their Church planting leaders. In the US the training is mainly formal in mode and delivered in a classroom context (Stetzer & Connor 2007) but in Europe and UK the training is non-formal, periodic and practical and is delivered to teams rather than only the Church planting leader (Appleton 2008).

The purpose of this study is to seek a way to enquire of contemporary Church planters about their own experiences of training, coaching, formation and access, so that a greater understanding of the preparation and support of Church planters may be reached for an Australian context. The critical issues identified in this literature review namely training, coaching, formation and access to support, have been used to develop the following research questions. These questions will be applied in a manner that will direct the data collection strategies and approaches to analyses that takes place through this thesis.

1. What type and mode of the delivery training and formation prepares Australian Church planters before they commence?
2. What type and mode of the delivery of training, coaching and formation assists Australian Church planters once they have begun?
3. What supports are most appropriate for Australian Church planters?

Chapter Three

Research Design

3.0 Introduction

This study examined the perceptions of Church planters about four critical issues, namely, training, coaching, formation and access and the role these issues play in establishing new faith communities. These issues emerged from the literature review and led to the forming of three research questions. These are the listed below:

1. What type and mode of the delivery of training and formation prepares Australian Church planters before they commence?
2. What type and mode of the delivery of training, coaching and formation assists Australian Church planters once they have begun?
3. What supports are most appropriate for Australian Church planters?

In this chapter, the design of the research that was employed to investigate matter relating to these research questions will be outlined.

3.1 Overview

To achieve an understanding of those preparation and post-preparation support processes that Church planters see as effective, the multiple perspectives participants bring to the study must be considered. Since these perspectives emerge from differing personal histories and from unique social milieus formed by diverse experiences of Church planting, a naturalistic research design was chosen (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because naturalistic enquiry is “largely emergent” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 248), this design allowed the researcher to adapt to the data as it emerged through the various processes of this design.

There were two reasons for this choice. The first was that the primary data sources for this study are people who are informed participants in the area of Church ministry known as Church planting, and their expertise expressed in their perceptions, may inform the questions relating to this research. The second reason for this choice was

that the participants in the study known as Church planters are working in a social context for which there are multiple realities and each of these realities may be described as legitimate. Therefore, the holistic approach of the naturalistic inquirer is most appropriate, as it takes into account all the information and factors possible from each situation under study. In the social context of the Church planting leader, there will be numerous challenges and opportunities to be addressed, and the role training, coaching and formation may have in developing a Church planter through new skills and appropriate strategies, will be valuable perspectives for inquirers about Church planting in Australia.

This chapter begins by outlining and describing the epistemological and theoretical stances adopted in this thesis in order to explore the research questions, within the holistic and naturalistic approach demanded by the intent of this study. A research design consistent with this approach will then be discussed including the methods of participant selection and data gathering tools. The means of data analysis will then be described. The chapter concludes with a framework for the presentation of results and findings.

3.1.1 A constructivist epistemology

Multiple realities are recognized in this study, in the perceptions of Church planters as they relate to their work because “social life is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning” (Neuman, 2006, p. 89). These perceptions are realities for the participants at a particular point in time and they represent the outcome of the process of constructing meaning about their work through their experiences as Church planters. This meaning is also found in the values and beliefs held by them prior to their work as Church planters and what has developed in their values and beliefs since becoming Church planters, up to the time of their involvement in this research. Those with a constructivist theoretical perspective see that “the interactions and beliefs of people create reality” and life “exists as people experience and give it meaning” (Neuman, 2006, p. 89). Crotty defined constructionism as a perspective about learning, knowledge and meaningful reality being “contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p.42). While each Church planter will have his or her own approach to his or her role, no one interpretation or approach to the task is definitive and the study must

acknowledge multiple realities (Maxwell, 2006; Merriman, 1998). A constructivist epistemology is a way of knowing that acknowledges that there can be many equally legitimate constructions of one external reality. Such a view is able to identify what is real to the participant, as they describe what they have experienced and learned, in the process of doing what they do in the social context in which they do it.

3.1.2 Theoretical stance

An interpretive theoretical stance has been chosen for this research, because it is a method for gaining insights by investigating the matter as a whole. It also allows for multiple realities permitting this research, as it seeks to understand the views and actions of a variety of Church planters to better understand the context of new faith communities. Such a theoretical perspective includes the interpretations of the social context of the research participants, based on what is derived from their culture or experience. It is characterised by openness and receptivity, where the researcher not just listened, but also became a part of the conversation, in order to understand the participants' actions within the social context around them (Crotty, 1998). Such a stance therefore will look at the reality each participant creates as an expression of Church planting.

Interpretive researchers take into account, and even rely on, the reasons that the participants have for what they do. The interaction between the participants and the people they lead and the communities, in which they live, may be used to discover what levels of meaning the Church planter has developed in the process of their interaction with their surroundings. Therefore the data gathered by an interpretive researcher is usually "rich in detailed description" because it describes the everyday experiences of the participants (Neuman, 2006, p. 91). The experiences of Church planters are quite diverse. Each of them work in very different communities that represent unique social contexts and each of the Church planting leaders, while being shaped by the Christian view of the world, are nevertheless, by virtue of their diverse histories, memories and systems of belief, very different. The interpretive approach to this research will recognize this diversity among the participants and in the data they give. It will ensure that these informed participants, equipped by virtue of their experiences, have an opportunity to share their perceptions fully, and also be flexible enough to process new questions as they arise.

3.2 Context of the study

Church planters are sent to establish new faith communities in new areas. Sometimes this will be in areas where there is no Church present at all. On other occasions, the Church planter will be sent to an area where there are no Churches with a similar theology and practice of ministry to their own already present. These new faith communities consist of people who live locally and who come to share the faith of the Church planting leader and their team. As a group, this new faith community requires leadership that has, within its scope, a unique set of skills and strategies for meeting the demands of establishing a new faith community, as well as a leader who can engage others in a wide range of activities, events and ideas. Therefore, the context of this study is the interaction between the Church planter, the team that supports them and the people in the community into which they are sent. Participants' perceptions may include recollections of rich, varied and unpredictable relationships; key events that gather and define the community; or the development of a deep understanding of the people they seek to serve. Specifically, the context is defined by the many varied perceptions that unfold as the participants relate their view of the world through their role and experiences as Church planters.

3.3 Participants

The participants in this study would potentially have two levels of involvement. All those who had returned the consent forms would be involved at the level of the questionnaire. However, a second level of involvement, the interviews, would only involve five of the participants. In this section, the process by which the participants became a part of the study will be explained.

3.3.1 Selection of participants

The participants in this study were part of a purposeful selection made by the researcher (Cresswell, 2005) from a group of individuals the author was aware were directly involved as leaders in the establishment of new churches in Australia. These participants were invited to be involved as volunteers in the study because of their diverse range of experiences as Church planters. This practical contact with their world includes experience as Church planting leaders over a number of years and even in multiple churches. For example, there are three bands of experience in years – 0-1 years, 1-5 years and 5+ years. Their collective histories include some with Church

planting ministry within a rural context and others in a suburban context. Participants also have different personal journeys with training and coaching as well a background of leading Church planting teams. Volunteers included Church planters from both genders. The researcher contacted 20 potential participants known to him and invited them by letter to be involved in this study.

The second level of participant involvement was a series of interviews with the purpose of gathering a much deeper level of understanding of the perceptions of the participants about their experiences of training, coaching and formation. Five participants who had completed the questionnaire were asked to be involved and all volunteered to be interviewed. These invitations were made after the results of the questionnaire had been received and the five participants, who were invited to be involved, were selected for invitation because of the diversity of their experiences in Church planting contexts. The researcher believed that such experience would assist in shedding light on the current perceptions of Church planters about the delivery of training, coaching, formation access to support for Church planting in Australia. The 15 Church planting leaders who completed the questionnaire provided the quantitative data and the five leaders who were selected, invited and who volunteered to be interviewed, assisted with the gathering of the qualitative data

A brief background description now follows of each of the five participants who volunteered for the interview process (names are pseudonyms), in the form of a table (3.1).

Table 3.1 A summary of the backgrounds of the participants in the interview process

| Name of participant | Experience | Context | Comment |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Aquila | Over 20 years | Rural | Aquila and his wife Priscilla share this Church planting work and have not had any training experiences or coaching relationship. They have experience of multiple Church planting work in their region; |
| Matthew | Over 10 years | Suburban – major city | Matthew and his wife Sarah share this work. Matthew has general ministry training and coaching that might be described as supervision. They also have experience of multiple Church planting work in their context; |
| Luke | 3 -5 years | Regional city | Luke has had specialised Church planter training as well as general ministry training. He has, however, very limited experience of coaching; |
| James | 3 years | Regional city | James received specific Church planter training and coaching and is presently undertaking general ministry training. After 3 years he was re-appointed by his superiors to another area of ministry; |
| Deborah | Over 10 years | Regional city | Deborah received general ministry training but has no specific Church planter training or coaching. |

3.4 Research design and chronology

To address the three research questions, a process was needed that involved a detailed and in-depth study of several individuals (Neuman, 2003; Wiersma, 1995). This section seeks to describe how this outcome was achieved via a wider view from a questionnaire and a more in-depth view of a series of interviews.

Using multiple data collection instruments in a mixed methods approach strengthens

the grounding of the theory in the data. This means that the “theory” about training, coaching and formation, emerges from both forms of data and is not fully understood until all the data has been analysed. As the two forms of data interact, there is also a synergy in the emerging evidence and the two types of data give a greater understanding and explanation of each other (Eisenhardt, 1989). The first view of this field of study is a “telescopic” view that engages the whole matter being investigated. This “telescopic” view is achieved through a questionnaire. But, because a naturalistic enquiry requires a deep understanding of the matter being investigated, there is need for a view of the fine detail of Church planting within the various social contexts in which it takes place. To achieve this, a “microscope” view was used. The perspectives arising from the interviews clarified and elaborated upon issues arising from the questionnaire.

To enact the telescopic or holistic perspective of the perceptions of the participants, a questionnaire was employed. Questionnaires are a useful tool for fact-finding and may be adapted to obtaining information relating to beliefs and attitudes (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). In addition, it is a tool with several advantages. The first is cost effectiveness but also it is familiar to most potential participants and less intrusive than a personal phone call. Finally, because it is self-administered, it is more reliable the perceptions of the participant.

A questionnaire requires clear research questions if it is to be cohesive and useful (Mitchell & Jolley, 1996). In this study there are three research questions and these were used to formulate the items that populated the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire was “structured” (Mitchell & Jolley, 1996, p. 452); meaning that the respondents were each asked a standard list of items in the same order. The items were sequenced to keep similar items together and this sequence is explained in a later section in this chapter in section 3.5.1. Once completed the responses were compiled into a schedule by the researcher.

In order to enact the microscopic view and develop a deeper understanding of the participants’ perceptions, interviews were used to enquire of the participants about their work in their real life context (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). Each case is a “bounded system” (Stake, 1995, p. 444), and there are a number of ways in which these bounded systems occurs in this study. For example, the number of people involved and the limited duration for any observations about the perceptions of

Church planters of training, coaching and formation to be made, bound this study. Each case is also bounded by the fact that it concentrates on one particular program (Merriam, 1998), namely Church planting leaders and their experiences of training, coaching and formation. Seeing each case as a bounded system, allows for the focus to be firmly placed on examining the perceptions of the practices and attitudes of each participant within their own social context.

This design employs interpretative case studies that contain description used to provide evidence for certain theories or to challenge or develop theories relating to a subject (Merriam, 1998). Borrowing from grounded theory, the data analysis began as soon as the first data was collected. This was done to give the study flexibility and openness (Charmaz, 2000).

3.5 Data collection instruments and procedures

In this section, the data collection instruments associated with this study is described. A blank copy of the questionnaire instrument is available in Appendix 3 and the interview schedule instrument is included in full in Table 3.3 in this chapter. In addition, an example of one of the transcripts of an interview is to be found in Appendix 4. While the detail of the administration of these instruments is described in full in the sections that follow, it should be noted that for each instrument, care was taken to be sensitive to the risk of influencing participants' responses through a desire to satisfy the researcher's expectations. In each circumstance, participants were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and that they should respond as honestly as they could through the data collection procedures.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

To complete the questionnaire, the participants were asked to respond to 20 items about their experiences relating to training, coaching and formation and to the delivery of these elements in their own personal development.

The questionnaire was structured around six sections and consisted of a combination of two multiple choice response items and one alternative response item for section 1 and Likert response items for sections 2-6. Each section focussed on a different aspect of the preparation and ongoing support offered to Church planters. Each aspect or theme had emerged from the literature review and other information requested by the

researcher to complete a picture of the context of the participants. The sections that were employed in the questionnaire were:

1. Levels of experience among the participants;
2. Accessing training and coaching;
3. Training as preparation;
4. Coaching that enhances training;
5. Personal formation; and,
6. Future intentions about training and coaching.

Table 3.2 Questionnaire summary

| Sections: | Description: |
|--|---|
| 1. Levels of experience among participants - items 16-18 | Asked general questions about the levels of experience among the participants; |
| 2. Accessing training and coaching - items 11-15 | Items related to how the Church planter gained access to training and coaching; |
| 3. Training as preparation - items 1, 2, 4 and 10 | Items pertinent to the participants overall experience of training as preparation; |
| 4. Coaching that enhances training – items 3, 5 and 9 | Items relating to the enhancing role that coaching may have on the training received; |
| 4. Personal Formation - items 6-8 | Items addressed the connection between ministry and personal formation; |
| 5. Assessing the value of training and coaching - items 9-10 | Items asked for perceptions about the value of training and coaching specifically; |
| 6. Future intentions about training and coaching - items 19-20 | Items asked about the perceptions of participants of training and coaching going forward. |

The questionnaire was administered on one occasion at the beginning of the study. Participants' responses to the questionnaire were analysed and this analysis was used to inform the selection of individuals who were to be invited as volunteers for the interviews and to form the questions to be asked in the next phase of the study. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale, ranging from 1-5 (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree) to facilitate the responses of the participants, with the exception of items 16-18 where two multiple choice response items and one alternative were used. These multiple choice items requested that the participant choose from a list of

possible responses the response most applicable to them. In item 16 there were four choices relating to experience in years; in item 17 there was a simple yes/no choice; and in item 18 there were four choices relating to experience in multiples of churches to be reviewed. The Likert scale itself was chosen because it was able to “build in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response whilst still generating numbers” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003, p. 253). It provided a limit to the range of possible responses that the participants may make and allowed a “greater subtlety of response” (Cohen et al, 2003, p. 253) for the participants as they determined the strength of their response to the various items. The results from the questionnaire also informed the researcher about issues that required further illumination or elaboration in each of the semi-structured interviews, used to gather data for each case study, that were the basis for the second phase of this mixed method study. This second phase is now described and explained in the next section.

3.5.2 Case studies

The qualitative stage of this mixed method study was a series of individual sets of case studies based on interviews which had been conducted with five participants who had been selected and invited to participate and who had volunteered from among the 15 questionnaire respondents.

Interview questions that formed the basis of five case studies were developed from an analysis of the questionnaire data. Responses to questionnaire items indicated those issues that were critical, from the perspective of participants, to the preparation and ongoing support of Church planters. For example, the participants responded almost unanimously with *strongly agree* to item 6 about the value of formation and this indicated the critical nature of formation to the participants. While the questionnaire enabled the identification of such issues, other matters required further exploration in order to develop the deeper understanding desired by this study. There are two examples that illustrate this need for further exploration after the questionnaire. Participants’ responses to item 2 – “*Training for my role as a Church planter was good preparation for me as a Church planter*”, may acknowledge a commitment to training as preparation for Church planting, but it cannot imply what the type or nature of training was involved in that preparation. Also, the results from item 7 – “*I received in my training, instruction that led to the development of my formation*”,

while confirming a connection between training and formation could not confirm the nature of that training that assisted in the development of formation in the learner.

When exploring the issues identified via the questionnaire, interviews were used to:

1. Clarify with the participants about matters left unresolved after the analysis of the questionnaire;
2. Probe for further insights in the interview that would cast more light on the delivery of training, coaching and formation; on how these supportive elements are accessed; and how these factors support the whole process of Church planting; and,
3. Test the researchers speculations arising from early analysis of the questionnaire data.

The questions developed are set out in the following table.

Table 3.3 Protocols for the interviews

| |
|--|
| Section One: General Background Questions: |
| (a) Describe the new Church established under your leadership; and, |
| (b) Relate the process whereby you came to be the leader. |
| Section Two: Specific Information relating to Training and Coaching: |
| (a) If you had specific planting training before you began your work as the leader of the new Church, or you undertook on-the-job training, describe this training and its components and how you came to undertake it; and, |
| (b) If you had coaching while you were leading this new Church, describe the components of the coaching relationship and how you came to be involved in it. |
| Section Three: Perceptions about the Effect of Training and Coaching: |
| (a) If you received specific planting training before your work as the leader of a new Church, or you undertook on-the-job training, describe the advantages this training gave you as you provided leadership to the new Church; and, |
| (b) If you entered a coaching relationship as you were leading your new Church, describe the advantages this provided to you as the leader of this new Church; and, |
| (c) Describe the value of any training or coaching you received upon the new Church itself. |

As described earlier, participants were invited to volunteer for the interviews on the basis of the diversity of their experience, both in years and in types of ministry, and because they were deemed to have levels of expertise that might be drawn on to drill down into the themes emerging from the questionnaire. Because of the distances between each of the Church planters involved, the interviews were conducted by telephone, employing a digital recorder and software that enabled the recordings to be placed on computer as a digital file in preparation for the transcription process. The length of the interviews varied from between 20 to 25 minutes in duration. In each case the interviews were conducted in the day and the times chosen were the choice of the participant so as to cause no inconvenience to them. The interview began with a brief introduction to the purpose of this research and an expression of thanks to the participant for agreeing to do the interview. The interview protocols were used during the interviews, but in each interview the researcher employed probing questions to gain more understanding. For example, Aquila had spoken of his sense of calling earlier in his interview and once the initial protocols were completed, the researcher returned to this theme with another question on that matter.

3.5.3 Chronology

This section outlines the chronology for the period covering from the issuance of letters of invitation in April 2010 to the completion of the transcripts of the interview in February 2011. Table 3.4 sets out the chronology for the research below.

Table 3.4 Chronology

| Date: | Action: | Outcome: |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| April 2010 | 20 Participants were contacted by letter asking them to volunteer (see Appendices 1 and 2); | 17 or 85% of those invited returned the consent forms; |
| September 2010 | The 17 Church planters who had returned the consent forms were sent the questionnaire; | 15 of the 17 or 75% returned the questionnaire; |
| December 2010 – February 2011 | The five participants who volunteered to be interviewed all completed their interviews. | Five transcripts were completed in March 2011. |

3.6 Methods for analysis and interpretation of data

Because a mixed method research design was employed in this study, both quantitative and qualitative data have been collected. Therefore, two approaches to analysis were employed. Given that within this thesis, one form of data collection and analysis informs the other, and the findings of the study are dependent on the implementation of different types of data analysis techniques, detailed descriptions of data analysis procedures are reported in conjunction with the data to which they are applied. However, a general outline of these procedures is presented below.

3.6.1 Analysing questionnaire data

Questionnaire data took two forms, responses to Likert items and responses to multiple choice response items. The data from the Likert items in the questionnaire came in the form of numerical scores, extracted from the Likert scales for each item and these were analysed by the calculation of mean scores, to determine the level of agreement of participants with each item. The degree of agreement was determined by the following table that aligns each category of agreement with the relevant band of mean scores.

Table 3.5 Questionnaire categories of agreement

| Category of agreement: | Band of mean scores: |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Strongly agree | greater than or equal to 4.5 to equal to 5.0 |
| Agree | greater than or equal to 3.5 to equal to 4.5 |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | greater than or equal to 2.5 to equal to 3.5 |
| Disagree | less than or equal to 2.5 to equal to 1.5 |
| Strongly Disagree | less than or equal to 1.5 to equal to 1.0 |

Responses to the Likert items were also presented in the form of various tables and figures, in order to represent the responses of the participants according to the levels of experience of the participants.

Items 16-18 employed multiple-choice items to establish the various levels of experience existing among the participants. The results from these three items were totaled into numerical scores alongside each of the choices included in the item and in

the case of items 16 and 18, were placed in tables and figures. In the case of item 17, the results were numerical scores to show the number of participant's answers to the yes/no alternative response. These were included in a figure.

3.6.2 Analysing the case studies

The qualitative data was developed into five case studies to clarify and elaborate on the information that could not implied by the responses to the items in the questionnaire. The cases show the type and mode of training and formation that the participants accessed and the details about any coaching experience they may have had while they were working as Church planters. In addition, the case studies demonstrate the role that formation played in their personal and ministry lives. The interview transcripts were analysed using a naturalistic inductive process. This requires that the researcher must be immersed in the detail in the data so that the themes and patterns may be discovered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The overall analytical strategy was to develop a descriptive framework that organised the data across a number of cases (Yin, 2009). By this means, where appropriate, as in the case of the "Vision of Scripture and Ministry" theme, the qualitative data itself provided a structure (Yin, 2009). In a naturalistic inquiry, some theory emerges from the data because "the inquirer cannot know sufficiently well the patterns of mutual shaping that are likely to exist" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 41) especially where, as in this case, multiple realities exist. The process for developing the structure used to organize the individual cases is described in the next section and detailed descriptions of analytic procedures are reported in conjunction with the data to which they are applied.

3.6.3 Thematic analysis

The qualitative data from the five participants give the researcher the big picture of how these participants do Church planting and the part that training, coaching and formation play in that whole picture. To organize each case, four themes were chosen to provide a framework for the analysis of each the case studies. This framework was: a) the motivation to become a Church planter; b) the formal supports that were in place to find training and coaching; c) the strategies employed when planting a Church and, d) the individual vision of Scripture and ministry.

The choice of these themes was made after the interviews were completed and transcribed and, as the researcher immersed himself in the data, each of these themes began to emerge from all five cases. For example, the first two requests made of the participants in the interviews were to:

1. Describe any new church established under your leadership; and,
2. Describe the process whereby you came to be the leader of this new work.

In the responses, a very personal story began to emerge of how the journey of Church planting had begun for each of them. In the context of these personal stories, insights into why, for example, some Church planters seek training and coaching and others do not, began to emerge. Thus two major organizing themes used in the case studies were: “Motivation to become a Church Planter” and “Strategies Employed when Planting a Church”. A third theme related to the major research questions and was name, “Formal Support”. Under this theme, the perceptions of the participants about training, coaching, team relationships and the role of the denomination (where appropriate) for example, were included.

Coding processes used were based on grounded theory methods and used on the transcripts of the five interviews. In the case of the three themes mentioned above open codes were used when deciding to which heading an extract from the transcript belonged. For example, Matthew speaks of a *conference* and of a *Masters course*, while James spoke of a Church *planting course* and a *course* in his church. All these were identified because the research questions asked about training and therefore belonged to the “Formal Support” theme used to organize the case studies. After reading the transcripts and repeating this coding process, the researcher conducted a coaxial coding exercise using data that did not fit readily under the three initial codes. In this exercise, the codes used in the transcripts were grouped and regrouped until a further theme for use in the structure of the case studies appeared. This process led to the “Vision of Scripture and Ministry” theme employed as a final heading in the structuring of the case studies. The table below (3.6) sets out the summary of the open coding and coaxial coding exercise in respect of the “Vision of Scripture and Ministry Theme”.

Table 3.6 Coding of transcripts (example)

| Open codes in the transcripts: | Coaxial code: |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Theology, kingdom, Holy Spirit, faithful, evangelism, church, discipleship, prayer, spiritual, salvation, Gospel, apostolic. | Vision of Scripture and Ministry |

The four themes used to organize and provide structure to the case studies have been outlined. Two of these themes were derived from the research questions, specifically: (a) Motivation to become a Church planter; and (b) Strategies employed when planting a Church. The third theme – “Formal Support” was derived from the literature review and the fourth theme – “Individual Vision of Scripture and Ministry” was procured inductively from the data arising from the interviews.

3.6.4 Connection of methods to research questions

A general outline of analysis procedures, as they relate to specific research questions is presented below.

Research question 1: *What type and mode of the delivery of training and formation prepares Australian Church planters before they commence?*

Data for this question were provided by the questionnaire and the interview. Mean scores for the collective responses to the Likert items were used to determine the participants’ dispositions toward and/or perspectives on training and formation. Then, follow-up participant interviews were used to further explore issues that require clarification and elaboration from the questionnaire process, so as to illuminate the participants’ views on specific issues related to training, coaching and formation.

Research question 2: *What type and mode of delivery of training, coaching and formation assists Australian Church planters once they have begun?*

Data from the questionnaire and the interview were also used to address this question. Means scores from the whole group who participated in the questionnaire were used to identify the views or perceptions generally about the delivery of training, coaching and formation after they had begun their work. The following stage, the interviews, explored the issues relating to support, so as to show exactly what forms of support are relevant.

Research question 3: *What supports are most appropriate for Australian Church planters?*

Data from the interviews were the source for addressing this question. These interviews, gathered into individual case studies, illustrated what the participants perceived to be the most appropriate support.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Naturalistic inquiry is sometimes accused of being undisciplined and of being only subjective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purpose of this section of the design of this research is to outline how this study has implemented various means to demonstrate the trustworthiness of this inquiry. To do this, the standards of trustworthiness will be outlined followed by a discussion about how these standards are applied to the processes of this study.

3.7.1 Establishing standards of trustworthiness

In naturalistic inquiry, “trustworthiness and its components replace more conventional views of reliability and validity”. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003, p. 138). As a result, the naturalistic inquirer seeks to mount arguments upon clear criteria that will be persuasive about the trustworthiness of the whole inquiry. The criteria that have conventionally been found to be persuasive were posed with four questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln & Guba (1985) identified these four standards of trustworthiness and linked them to the aforementioned four questions.

1. Truth value – how can one establish confidence in the “truth” of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which the context in which the inquiry was carried out?;
2. Applicability – how can one determine the extent to which the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents)?;
3. Consistency – how can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects (respondents) in the same (or similar) context? and,

4. **Neutrality** – how can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer? (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290).

In conventional inquiries, criteria such as validity and reliability, for example, are applied. In naturalistic inquiry, Lincoln & Guba (1985) argued of the inappropriateness of the “conventional criteria” (1985, p. 294) and of the need to propose alternatives as mentioned above, for use in naturalistic inquiry.

The researcher therefore, took steps that would meet the criteria proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and in doing so, developed a confidence concerning the findings of this study as being trustworthy. These steps are described in the following section.

3.7.2 Standards of trustworthiness applied to this study

To meet these standards for trustworthiness, this research design incorporated the following strategies that are summarized in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Summary of strategies employed to confirm the trustworthiness of the study

| Criteria: | Action taken to promote the criteria: |
|------------------|---|
| Truth-value | The anonymity of the participants in the questionnaire provided credible findings. |
| Applicability | By deciding to invite a wide range of Church planters – male/ female inexperienced/experienced and city/rural, the researcher provided transferability by offering sufficient data “to make such similarity judgments possible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298) by later interested parties. |
| Consistency | The design of the research and the way it was implemented was described in full. Also, the operation to gather the data was outlined and each step in addressing the data was catalogued. |
| Neutrality | To achieve this level of accuracy, the researcher declared his prior contact with some of the participants as a limitation and used member checking in relation to the case studies, sending the case studies to each participant to confirm the accuracy. |

Several responses from the five participants involved in the interview process were received that confirm the trustworthiness of the case studies. Aquila confirmed the accuracy of the case study developed from his interview, saying in part “thanks for telling my story” (personal communication, December 19, 2011). James (personal communication, January 6, 2012) responded “you have summarized my thoughts well” and Luke wrote after seeing his case study, “I appreciate what you’ve done in extracting key aspects of the planting journey” (personal communication, February 3, 2012). Finally, the role of the research supervisors who oversighted the journey of the research process, were supportive of the trustworthiness of the study because the data has been shared with them through the undertaking of the study.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Clearance was obtained from The Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Q2010 03) in the March of 2010. Once the HREC confirmed that there was minimal risk for the participants and researcher, an opportunity to participate in the study was extended to the potential participants via a letter of invitation (see Appendices 1 and 2). The letter indicated to potential participants that participation was confidential and voluntary. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any time and that they would be able to review their personal data for accuracy before it was included in the study.

The consent forms from each of the participants (see Appendices 1 and 2), incorporated agreement to complete the questionnaire and to be recorded in the interviews. The researcher transcribed the interviews personally, to further ensure the anonymity of the participants and these transcriptions are found in Appendix 5 with the names of the participants preserved by assigning an alias to each interviewee.

The participants’ names on both the questionnaire form and the interview transcripts were removed once the data was noted and analysed. The invitations to participate emphasized that they would only be involved by their agreement, and that they could leave the study at any time without penalty. In addition, to prevent any financial cost to the participants, all costs for postage and phone calls were paid for by the researcher. The final ethical issue - that of the opportunity for the participants to see their case study before inclusion - was addressed by sending the transcripts to the

participants for them to check for themselves the accuracy of the record and of inviting the relevant participant to comment or correct.

The research gathered from the questionnaire and the semi-focussed interviews will remain confidential and, according to the *Retention & Disposal Schedule for Australian Catholic University August 2010* (section 7.7.3), be kept in a locked filing cabinet for seven years from the last action and then destroyed.

3.9 Framework for presentation of findings

The data, analysis and commentary emerging from this study will be presented across four chapters. Chapter 4, which follows next, reports on and analyses the questionnaire in a manner explained by the telescope metaphor. This takes a holistic view of perceptions of the participants relating to training, coaching and formation. Chapter 5 brings the results of the interviews together into five case studies. These are analysed as it were, under a microscope so that these cases provide a deep analysis of the matters that were not possible to examine through the telescope. Chapter 6 provides a synthesis of the view of both the telescope and the microscope and the final discussion is set out in Chapter 7 that includes the finding, incorporating a model for a collaborative approach to Church planting.

Chapter 4

The View from the Telescope

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of the questionnaire that was the first stage of this mixed method study. The questionnaire provides the “telescopic” view of Church planting among the participants, and in doing so, paints a broad landscape of the issues relating to training, coaching, formation and access that are relevant to Church planters. The analysis of the questionnaire data reported here seeks to inform a greater understanding about the type and mode of the delivery of training, coaching and formation in the preparation and support of Church planters in Australia.

The four critical issues that had emerged from the literature have been identified at the conclusion of Chapter 2. A review of the literature found that training as preparation is important for the development of workers in all contexts; that coaching can enhance this training; that formation is developmental and may be introduced to the Church planter by the instruction of the training experience and by coaching in an ongoing manner once the Church planting leaders have begun their work; and, that access to training and coaching which promotes formation may be enriched by a supportive relationship with a sending Church or Denomination. These four critical issues led to the development of three research questions:

1. What type and mode of the delivery of training and formation prepare Australian Church planters before they commence?
2. What type and mode of the delivery of training, coaching and formation assists Australian Church planters once they have begun?
3. What supports are most appropriate for Australian Church planters?

These research questions have now assisted in the development of the questionnaire that the participants in the research completed in the first stage of data gathering for this study. The analysis in this chapter reports upon results that are pertinent to all three research questions.

4.1 Reporting the analysis of the data

The reporting of the analysis in this chapter will be done through a series of figures and tables, together with relevant commentary. Firstly, the results of the three items relating to experience will be reported. Secondly, the five items that relate to how the participants may have accessed training and coaching as a result of the support of their sending Church or Denomination. Thirdly, the results of the participant's responses to four items related to the critical issue identified earlier, "Training as Preparation". Fourthly, there will be a section devoted to another of the critical issues, "Coaching that Enhances Training", which involves three items. Fifthly, there are three items pertaining to another of the critical issues identified as "Personal Formation" and sixthly, there are reports of the participants' responses to two items relating to the attitudes of the participants going forward, about training and coaching.

The participants were asked to respond to Likert items in the questionnaire and with the degree of agreement measured on a five point scale from 5= strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree. There were three exceptions to the use of Likert items. Item 16 asked the participants to choose their level of experience in a multiple choice response (i.e. 0-1 years, 1-3 years, 3-5 years or 5+years); item 17 required them to choose either a yes or no response in an alternative response item; and, item 18 was another multiple choice item and required them to make a choice of experience in multiple churches by choosing either 1 new church; 2 new churches; 3-4 churches and 5+ churches to identify their level of experience in multiple churches.

4.2 Levels of experience among the participants

In order to discover the various levels of experience among the participating Church planters, three items were included which were demographic in nature. Three levels of experience were employed in each of the figures based on the responses to item 16. The item asked for a response to: *"I have been involved as a Church planter, (a) 0-1 years; (b) 1-3 years; (c) 3-5 years; (d) 5+ years"*. The participants in the 1-3 years and 3-5 years experience bands were combined into one new band for ease of use. The new band became known as 1-5 years. The results from item 16 are reported in Figure 4.1.

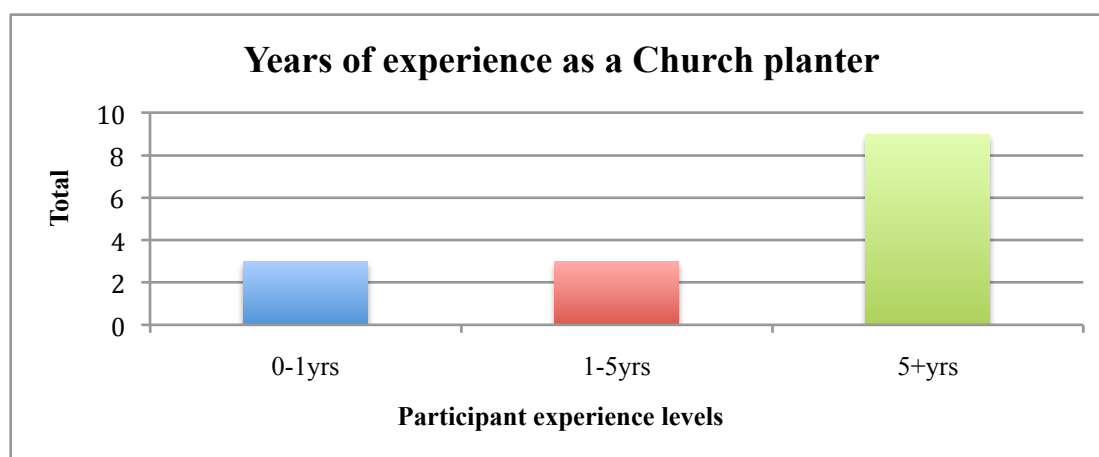


Figure 4.1 Years of experience as a Church planter

The figure shows that the largest groups of participants ($n=9$) are planters who have 5+ years experience in Church planting. The two other experience bands identified were 0-1 years experience band ($n=3$), and 1-5 years ($n=3$) experience band.

To follow the line of enquiry relating to experience, item 17 asked:

This is my first role as a Church planter and was a yes/no alternative response item. The results are reported in Figure 4.2.

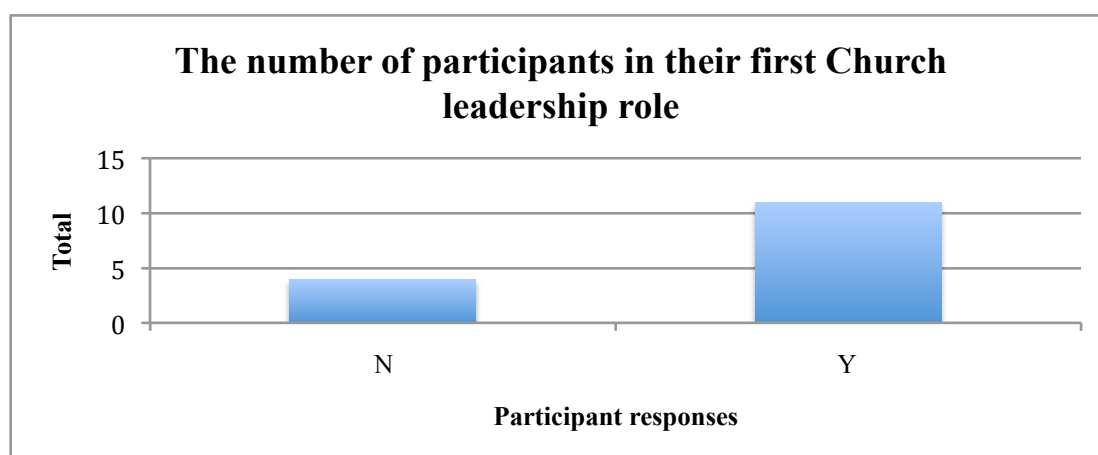


Figure 4.2 The number of participants in their first Church leadership role

Figure 4.2 (above) shows that the majority ($n=11$) was in their first Church planting leadership role. Therefore, the majority of participants have been Church planting for more than five years, but the majority of the Church planters are still leading their first Church plant.

To follow this investigation a little further, item 18 was specifically directed at the level of experience among the participants in multiple Church planting contexts. This item stated:

I have been involved in Church planting for – 1 new church; 2 new churches; 3-4 new churches; and, 5+ new churches.

The perceptions of the participants' perceptions are reported in Figure 4.3.

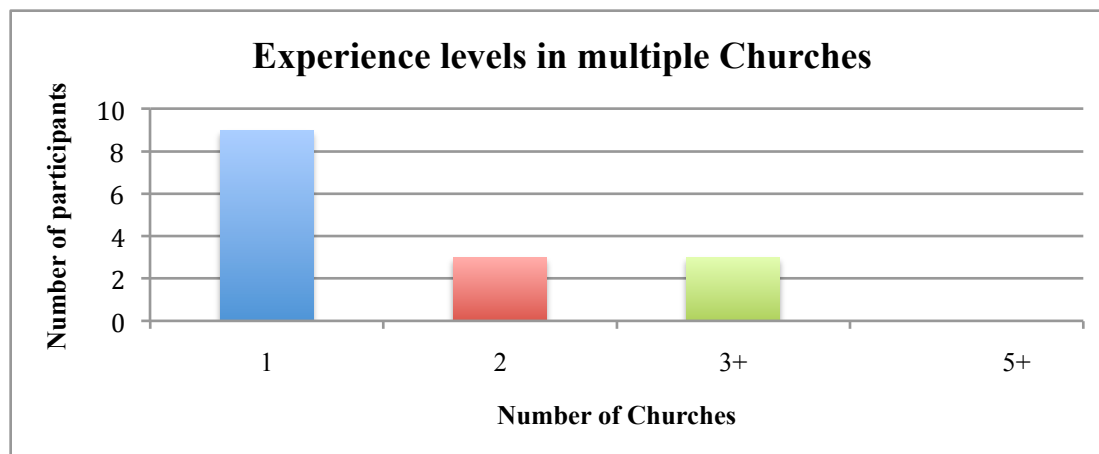


Figure 4.3 Experience levels in multiple Churches

The results from item 18, show that three of the Church planters were in their second Church and a further three were now in, or supervising, a third or fourth new Church. There was, however, no-one among the participants in this study with experience beyond this level.

Responses to this suite of items indicate that the participants' experience in Church planting varies in terms of years of involvement and also with the number of Church plants that have been initiated. Because of the broad range of experience represented within this group, participants are well situated to offer different perspectives as informed participants on the challenges and opportunities of Church planting.

4.3 Accessing training and coaching

In this section, the results from items 11-15 will be outlined to follow a line of enquiry about how the Australian Church planters in this study accessed their training and coaching.

Item 11 begins this series of items by asking for the participants' responses to:

I was offered training before I began my role as a Church planter by my sending Church/Denomination.

Figure 4.4 represents the participants' responses to this item.

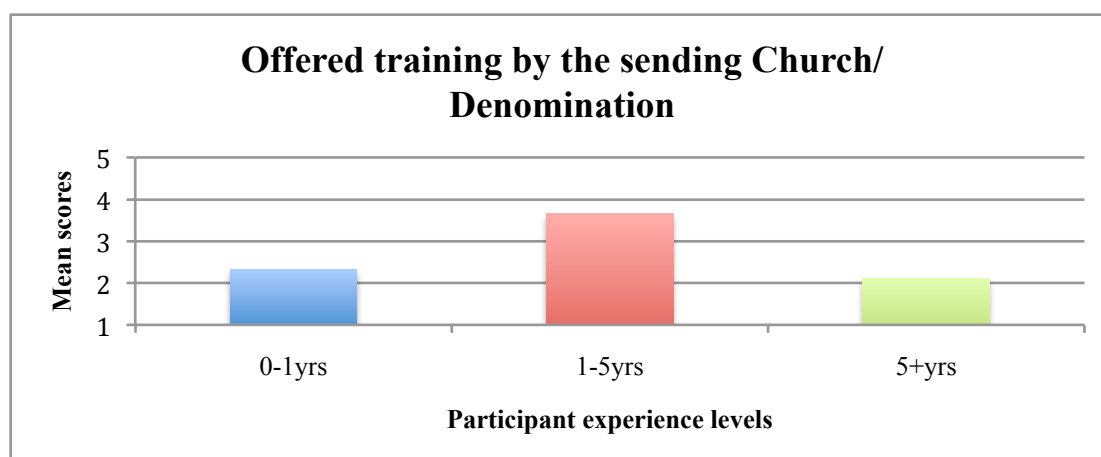


Figure 4.4 Offered training by the sending Church/Denomination

The mean scores recorded for the participants in the 0-1 years (n=3) and 5+ years (n=9) experience bands were 2.33 and 2.11 respectively. It may be concluded from this result that some of the participants in these groups had been offered training by their sending Church or Denomination. This points to the possibility that the preparation of some of the participants in this study, for their work as Church planters, may have included the planned involvement of the Church or Denomination who had sent them, in offering training. In contrast, the participants in the 1-5 years group (n=3) recorded a mean score of 3.66. Two of the participants in this group (n=3) had been offered training by their sending Church or Denomination.

The line of enquiry about how Church planters are accessing training continues with item 12 and the result is represented in Figure 4.5.

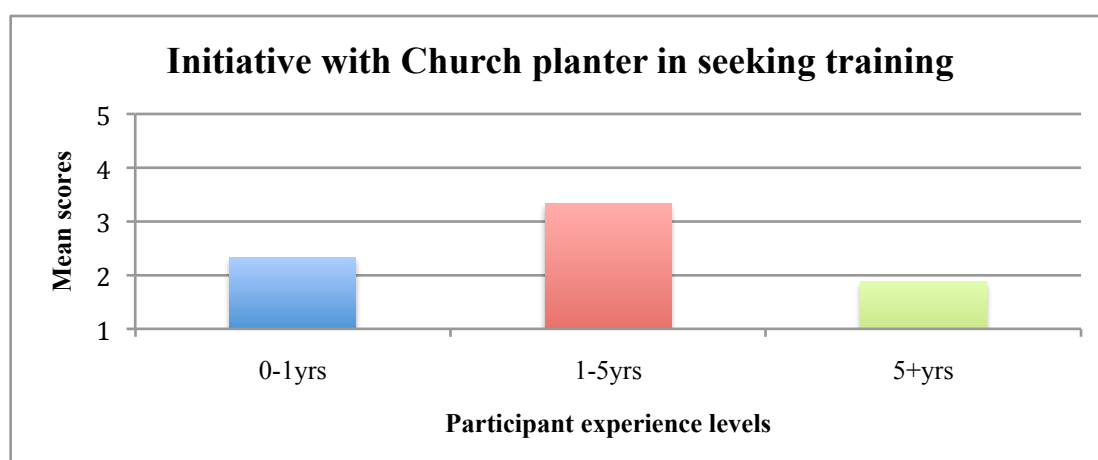


Figure 4.5 Initiative with Church planter in seeking training

The item requested a response to the following statement:

I asked for and received training before I began as a Church planter by my sending Church/ Denomination.

The responses to this item show that the participants in the 0-1 years and 5+ years experience bands recorded mean scores of 2.33 and 1.88. It may be concluded that, while some of the participants in these groups did take the initiative to gain access to training by requesting it from their sending Church or Denomination, other participants did not. In contrast, the 1-5 years experience band recorded a mean score in the neutral spectrum (3.33), from which it may be concluded that there were participants in this experience band who did take this initiative. These results point to two possibilities in respect of those participants who had not taken the initiative about seeking training. It may be possible that some had either been offered training by their sending Church or Denomination after they had begun their work, while others may have come into their Church planting work in a way that did not involve a sending Church or Denomination and therefore they did not intentionally seek training.

To discuss more insights about the manner in which Church planters had accessed training another item was proposed to the participants. Item 13 asked the participants if they had been denied training. The statement stated:

I asked for training but was not given training before I began as a Church planter.

The results from item 13 are set out below in Figure 4.6.

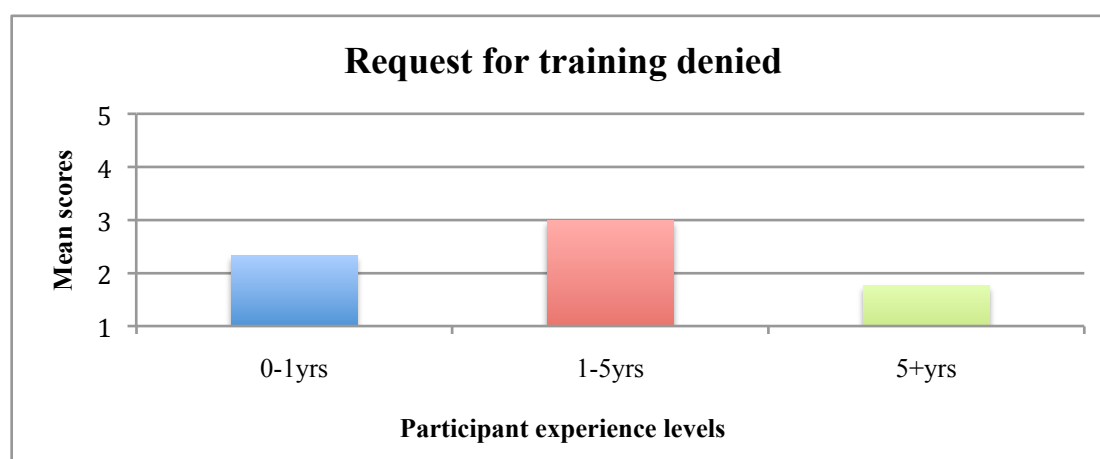


Figure 4.6 Request for training denied

The participants in the 0-1 years and 5+ years experience bands recorded mean scores of 2.33 and 1.77 respectively. This result proposes that most of the participants had not had any request for training refused. The result recorded by the 1-5 years experience band, was a mean score of three. A conclusion on this specific result

cannot be implied. But the results overall did verify that for most Church planters seeking training assistance from their sending Church or Denomination, the training is provided when requested.

To conclude this suite of items about access to training, item 14 stated:

I was not offered training before I began my role as a Church planter by my sending church or denomination.

The results of the perceptions reported to this item are set out in Figure 4.7.

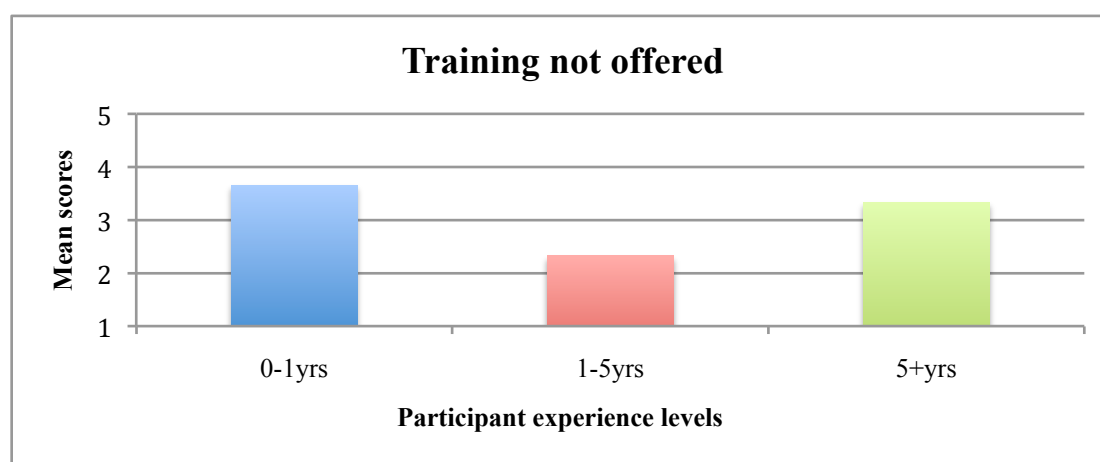


Figure 4.7 Training not offered

This respondents' report indicates that some of the participants in the 1-5 years experience band had been offered training by their sending Church or Denomination, recording a mean score of 2.33. The 0-1 years and 5+ years experience groups however, recorded mean scores of 3.66 and 3.22 respectively. These results propose that either the sending Churches or Denominations do not arrange training in every case even though the participants view it as the preferred option or, that Church planters do not all have a collaborative relationship with a sending Church or Denomination.

One item is included in this section about access, about the delivery of coaching to Church planters, asking:

My sending Church/Denomination helped me find a suitable coach for me while I was a Church planter.

The representations of the results from this item are set out in Figure 4.8.

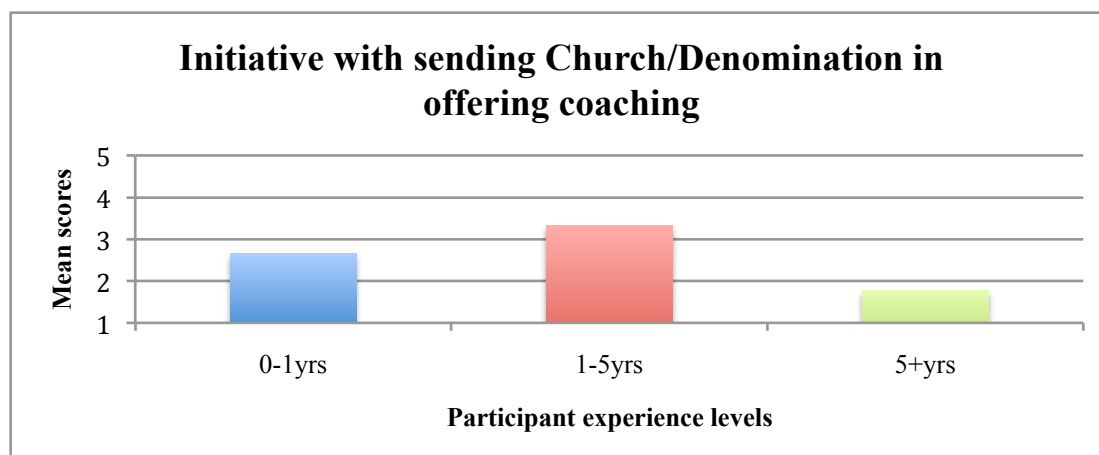


Figure 4.8 Initiative with sending Church/Denomination in offering coaching

The 1-5 years experience band result was 3.33, a result that points to the possibility that for some of the participants in this group, the sending Church or Denomination had taken the initiative to offer coaching. The result from the 0-1 year band was slightly lower, recorded as 2.66 and indicates the strength of agreement among the participants in the band was generally lower. In contrast, the result of the 5+ years experience band was 1.77, which is a result that may mean that the majority of this group (n=9) had not been offered a coach on the initiative of their sending Church or Denomination. It may suggest that the sending Church or Denomination does not always make the appointment of a coach for a Church planter sent out by them. It may also be that this result confirms that some Church planters are entering their work in Church planting by a journey that does not include a relationship with a sending Church or Denomination.

Items 11-15 produced results that pointed to a number of possible conclusions about the way Church planters in this study accessed training, coaching and formation. Firstly, these results report that participants did undertake training for the development of skills for their work in the preparation stage before they began their work, but this result also revealed that other participants did not have any training in their preparation stage. These items also suggested that some of the participants had taken the initiative to identify training and others had been offered it. The report also points to the possibility that some participants may have entered their work as Church planters in a way that did not incorporate any involvement with a sending Church or Denomination. In the item about coaching, some of the participants confirmed that they had been offered a coach and others verified that they had not been offered such support. This evidence also seems to suggest that some participants have come to

their role as a Church planter without any involvement in a process whereby they were sent into Church planting by any sending Church or Denomination.

4.4 Training as preparation

Having established, in section 4.2 the various levels of experience relating to Church planting among the participants involved in this study and in the previous section the items relating to access, the analysis now turns to the issues that are the focus of the first research question of this study about what type and mode of the delivery of training and formation prepares Australian Church planters before they commence? The first item stated:

Time spent being prepared for my role as a Church planter was helpful.

The figure reporting the result for item 1 in the questionnaire, is set out below in Figure 4.9.

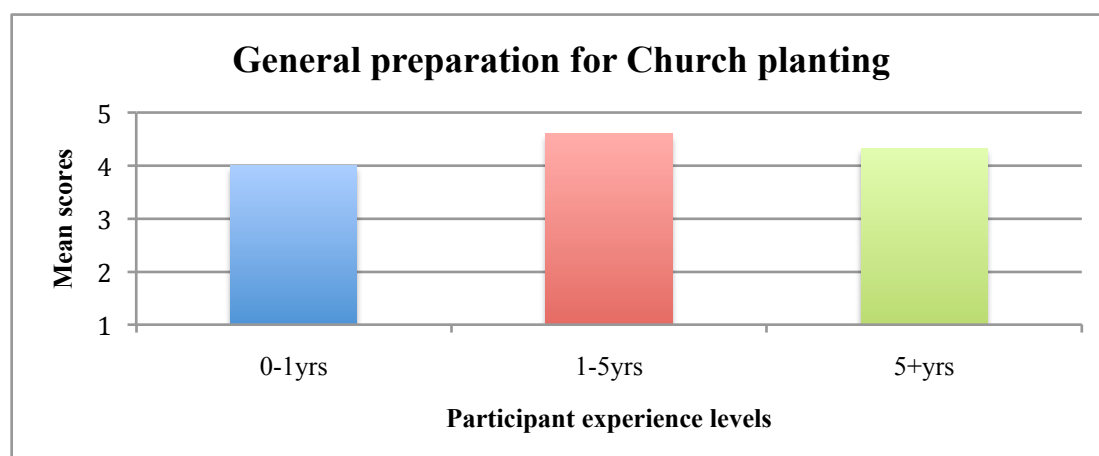


Figure 4.9 General preparation for Church planting

The results of item 1 of the questionnaire reveal that participants in all three experience bands felt that their preparation was helpful. The mean scores for each group were 4 (0-1 years group), 4.66 (1-5 years group) and 4.33 (5+ years group). Two of these results are in the *agree* spectrum and one in the *strongly agree*. What type of preparation these participants had or had not experienced cannot be implied from this set of responses but it can be concluded that they felt that there was value in being prepared for the challenge they were about to encounter.

The Figure below (4.10) represents the results from Item 2.

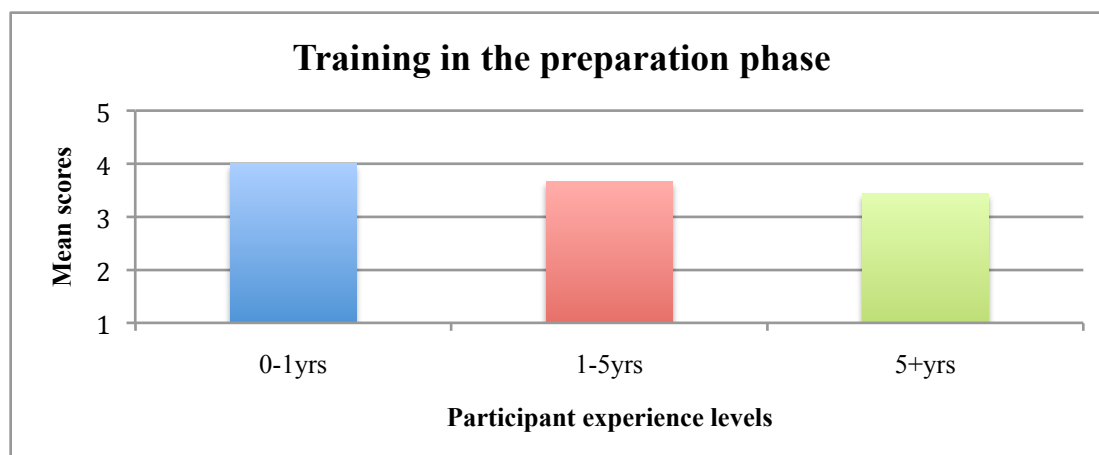


Figure 4.10 Training in the preparation phase

Item 2 sought participants' views about the training received in relation to how well this prepared them for their role as Church planters and this item asked:

Training for my role as a Church planter was good preparation for me as a Church planter.

The responses to this item identified that the participants in the 0-1 years experience band recorded a mean score of 4 and those in the 1-5 years band a mean of 3.66, both in the *agree* spectrum. Those in the experience band 5+ years recorded a mean score of 3.44 which is on the positive side of neutral. From these results it can be concluded that participants, in the main, believed that some form of training as preparation is of value to those who embark on the endeavour of Church planting, however, it is unclear what type of preparation these participants received and what elements of this preparation they saw as training. In addition, there appeared to be a slight decrease in the level of agreement with the benefits of training as preparation for the role of Church planter.

Item 4 of the questionnaire canvassed the participants' perceptions about the importance of the skills they may have acquired during their training before they began their work as Church planters. Skill development in Church planting may, for example, include learning to cast vision as a Church planter and to lead in the effective management of the challenges involved in the development of the Church planting team.

The item was: *I learnt important skills from the training I received before I began as a Church planter.*

The results are in Figure 4.11.

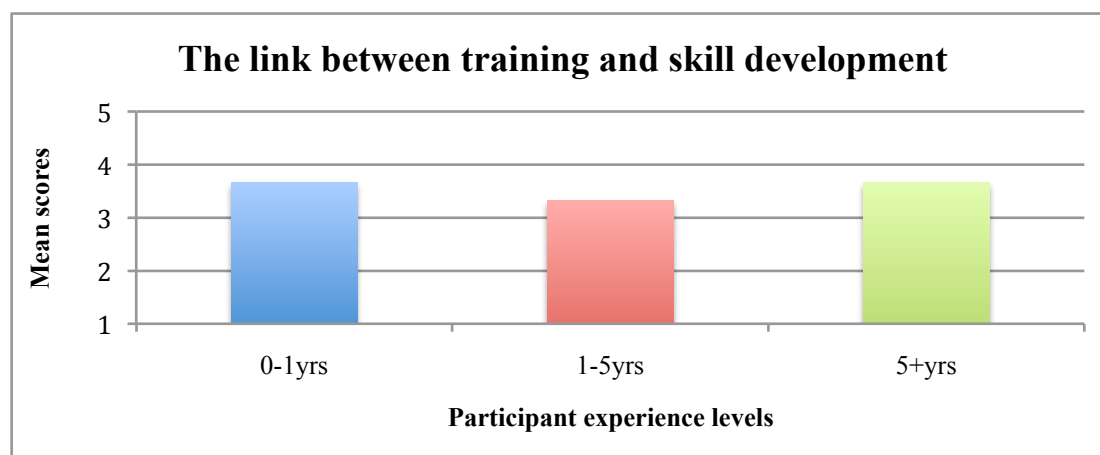


Figure 4.11 The link between training and skill development

Responses to this item revealed that participants held a slightly more positive than neutral view of the importance of the skills they learned during preparation for their role as Church planters. The mean scores recorded were 3.66, 3.33 and 3.66 for the 0-1, 1-5 and 5+ years bands of experience respectively. This may indicate that some participants have discovered important skills they find useful now they are in the field that they were not exposed to as part of their preparation. Alternatively, the skills they now see as valuable, but do not recognise as being part of their preparation, might have been included in their initial instruction, but were not appropriated because they did not see these as important in the context of preparation.

Another item about training asks:

From my experience, getting training before you begin as a Church planter is the best option.

The result is outlined in Figure 4.12.

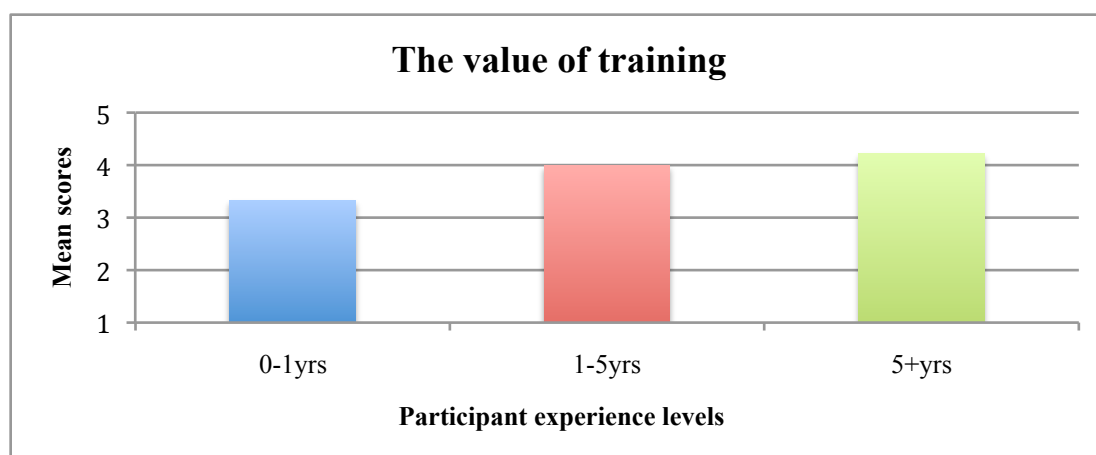


Figure 4.12 The value of training

The participants' responses to this section of the questionnaire show that the two more experienced groups felt that training before commencement, as a Church planter is the best option. The mean scores for the 1-5 years and 5+ years experience bands, were 4 and 4.22 respectively, both in the *agree* spectrum. The least experienced group, in their first year as a Church planter, were neutral with a mean score of 3.33. From the responses of the participants in the 1-5 years and 5+ years experience bands, it may be concluded that these participants favour the training option as the most appropriate preparation for Church planting. The slightly lower mean score from the 0-1 years experience band may point to the possibility that one or two of the participants in this small group (n=3) may not have undertaken training and therefore were not able to form a view on the training as the best option for the preparation phase for a Church planting leader.

Summary – The responses to this group of items reveal that participants in all three experience bands felt that their preparation was helpful. The mean scores for item 1 in each experience band were 4 (0-1 years), 4.66 (1-5 years) and 4.33 (5+ years) respectively. These results all approach *strongly agree*. It cannot be implied from these results what type of preparation these participants had or had not experienced, but we may conclude that they felt that this preparation was helpful as they prepared for the challenges they were about to face. It is also unclear what elements of that preparation they regarded as training. There did appear to be a slight decrease in the level of agreement with the benefits of training as part of the preparation for the role of Church planter.

The responses to item 4 reveal that participants have discovered skills they regard as important and which they are already employing in their work, however these skills may not have been acquired in a training opportunity as part of their preparation. Alternatively, the skills they found valuable for their work may have been included in their initial training, but not recognised as such until they were appropriated in a particular ministry context.

4.5 Coaching that enhances training

Item 3 asked participants if they believed coaching assisted them with strategic aspects of the role of Church planter. The item asked for a response to:

Coaching helped me with the strategic aspects of my role as a Church planter.

Participants' responses to item 3 appears in Figure 4.13.

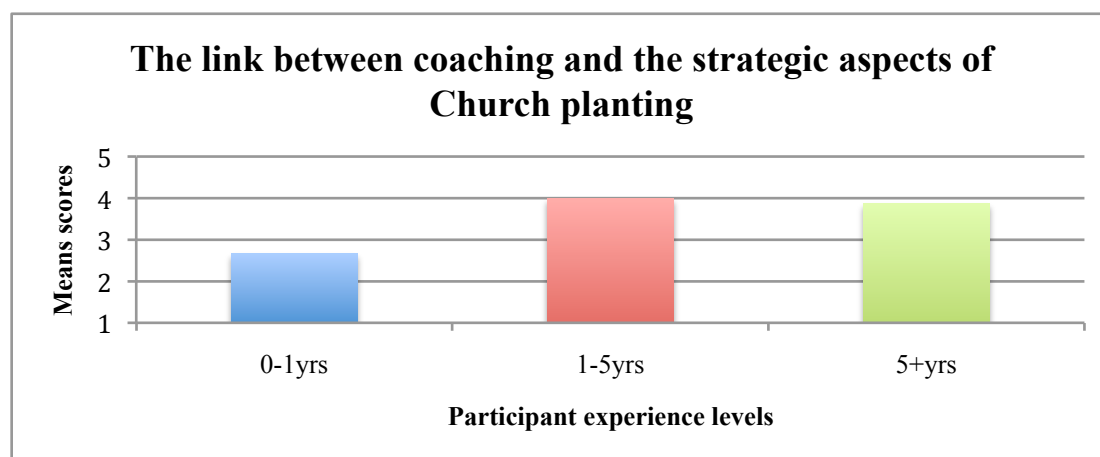


Figure 4.13 The link between coaching and the strategic aspects of Church planting

Responses to this item show that participants in the 1-5 years and 5+ years experience band felt that there was a link between coaching and the strategic aspects of Church planting, with a mean score of 4 and 3.88 respectively. Contrastingly, those participants in the 0-1 years experience band, recorded a lower score of 2.66 and this may indicate that their limited experience in years has meant that they have not yet had the opportunity to see the value of coaching in relation to the strategic aspects of their role. This may also be, because the strategic dimension of the role of a planter is more apparent over a longer term of engagement in the work than this group has currently experienced.

The next report concerns item 5 and the responses of the participants are represented in Figure 4.14.

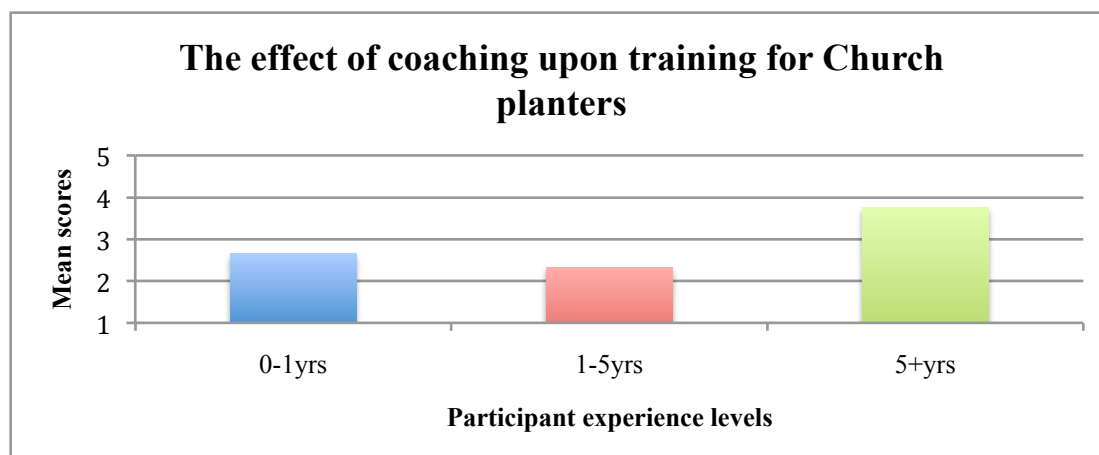


Figure 4.14 The effect of coaching upon training for Church planters

Item 5 addressed participants' perceptions of the value coaching added to the training and asked:

The experience I had with a coach made the training I had received more valuable to me.

Responses to this item reveal that participants in the 0-1 years and 1-5 years experience bands, did not feel that coaching had added any value to the skills they may have acquired in training, as their mean scores were 2.66 and 2.33 respectively. In contrast to these responses, the 5+ years experience band were more positive, recording a mean score of 3.77. If the low mean scores recorded by the 0-1 years and 1-5 years experience bands were because the participants had not been part of a coaching relationship, then this result may point to the possibility that coaching is not a major aspect of planning for the preparation and support of a Church planter by either those who send the Church planter or the Church planter themselves. The most experienced group, the 5+ years experience band, with a background in the challenges of starting a new faith community, recorded a result that may indicate that they may be more intentional in seeking a coaching relationship because they have come to realise how such a relationship may assist them in their work.

The low scores recorded by the participants in the 0-1 years experience band for items 3 and 5 may illustrate that the opportunities to see firsthand the assistance coaching might give in relation to strategic aspects of their role, were limited by their lack of experience. Another possibility is that the strategic aspects of Church planting

become apparent over a longer period of engagement with Church planting and this was confirmed by the results of the other experience bands to item 3.

If the low mean scores recorded by the 0-1 years and 1-5 years experience bands in item 5 were because the participants had not been part of a coaching relationship, then this result may point to the possibility that coaching is not a major aspect of planning for the preparation and support of a Church planter by either those who send the Church planter or the Church planter themselves. Meanwhile, the result of the 5+ years experience band may point to the possibility that they may be more intentional in seeking a coaching relationship because they have come to realise how such a relationship may assist them in their work.

Item 9 asked participants about the value of coaching from their own experience. The item was:

My coaching experience as a Church planter convinced me that I need a coach in whatever work I am doing.

The participants' responses for item 9 are represented in the Figure 4.15 below.

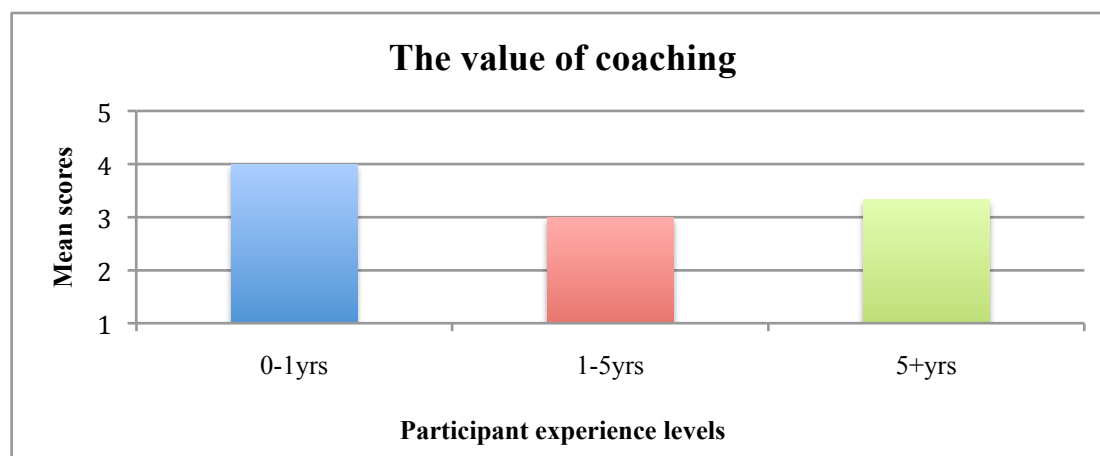


Figure 4.15 The value of coaching

Responses to this item identify that the least experienced group (the 0-1 years experience band) felt that their experience of coaching had assisted them in their ministry as a Church planter, to the extent that they were convinced of its value in any context (mean score 4). This contrasts with the responses of the participants in this experience band to items 3 and 5 and suggests that while they may not have experienced strategy and training enhancement there may be other aspects of a coaching relationship that they have experienced. The results of the 1-5 years and 5+

years experience bands were neutral in their responses, recording mean scores of 3 and 3.33 respectively. These results suggest that though there is a slightly lower level of agreement among the participants, coaching is still valued generally. However, this does not suggest what the type or mode of delivery of this coaching was involved. Summary - The results from these three items about coaching suggest that some participants with an experience in a coaching relationship were able to verify a link between coaching and the enhancement of training received and also a link between coaching and the strategic aspects of Church planting. Some also confirmed the value of coaching generally and this seemed to come from participants who had not confirmed the link between coaching, skill enhancement and strategy. However, there is evidence that some participants could not affirm the presence of a link between coaching and training or strategy. In all responses it could not be implied what the type and mode of delivery of coaching was involved.

4.6 Formation

In the sections above report on the results from items 1-5, 11-15 and 16-18, which related to training, coaching and experience. Questionnaire items in this section relate to the formation of a Church planter. The term “formation” in this study refers to the development of the character of the Church planter, by the work of God within them. Formation may appear in the leadership and personality of the Church planting leader, through the catalyst of their training, or through the impact of their ministry experiences or a combination of both these sources.

Item 6 of the questionnaire sought responses from participants about the importance of formation to the role of a Church planter. It asked: *I believe that personal formation is crucial to me in my work as a Church planter.*

The participants’ responses to item 6 are in Figure 4.16.

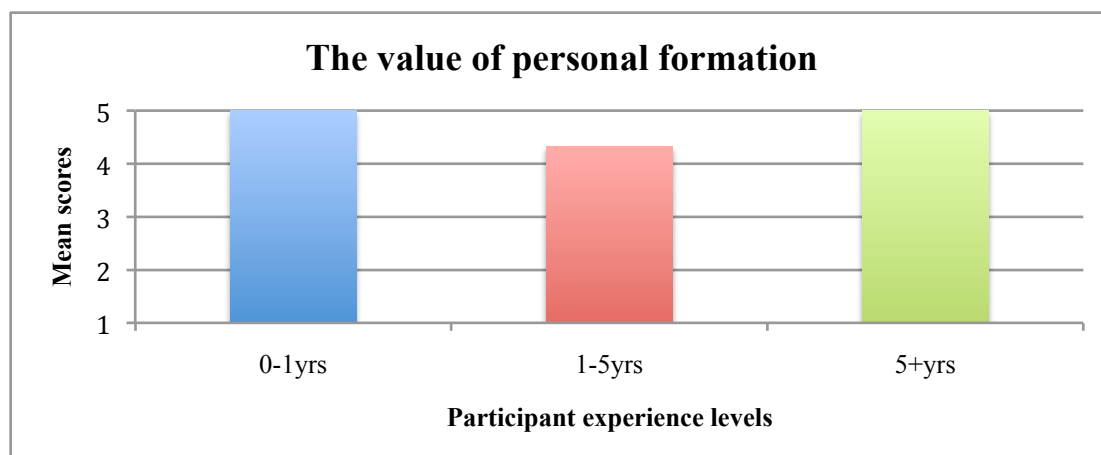


Figure 4.16 The value of personal formation

The 0-1 years and 5+ years experience bands both recorded a *strongly agree* response (5), and the 1-5 years experience band a response approaching *strongly agree* (4.33). Participants place formation as a factor that contributes greatly to their capacity to carry out the work of a Church planter effectively.

To continue the line of questioning related to formation, item 7 canvassed the perceptions of the participants about the effect of training on the development of their formation asking:

I received in my training, instruction that led to the development of my formation.

The results from this item are represented in Figure 4.17.

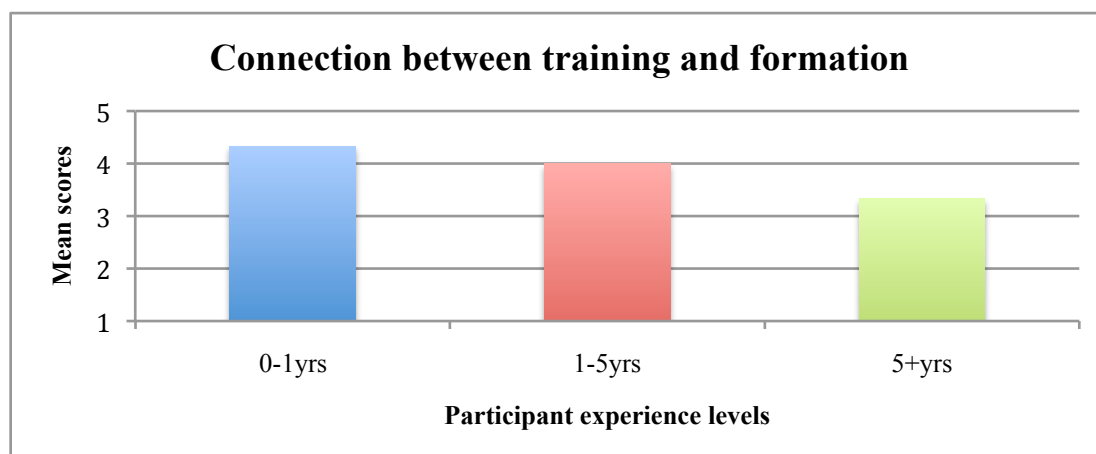


Figure 4.17 Connection between training and formation

Responses to this item reveal that participants in 0-1 years and 1-5 years experience groups *agreed* that instruction about formation had been a part of their training experience, and that this instruction led to the development of their formation. These

two groups of participants recorded mean scores of 4.33 and 4 respectively. Meanwhile, the mean score for the 5+ years experience group was 3.44. The slightly lower mean score result from this experience band may indicate that some of the participants in that group had not received training. Alternatively, it may indicate that the formation element may not have been in any training they had received. These results lead to the conclusion that formation has been a part of training experiences for some Church planters, but it is unclear how training in formation was delivered in this training experience. Item 8 of the questionnaire asked for a response to the statement:

There has been more effect on the formation of my life through the process of my ministry than in the training I received before I began as a Church planter.

Responses to this item are set out below in Figure 4.18.

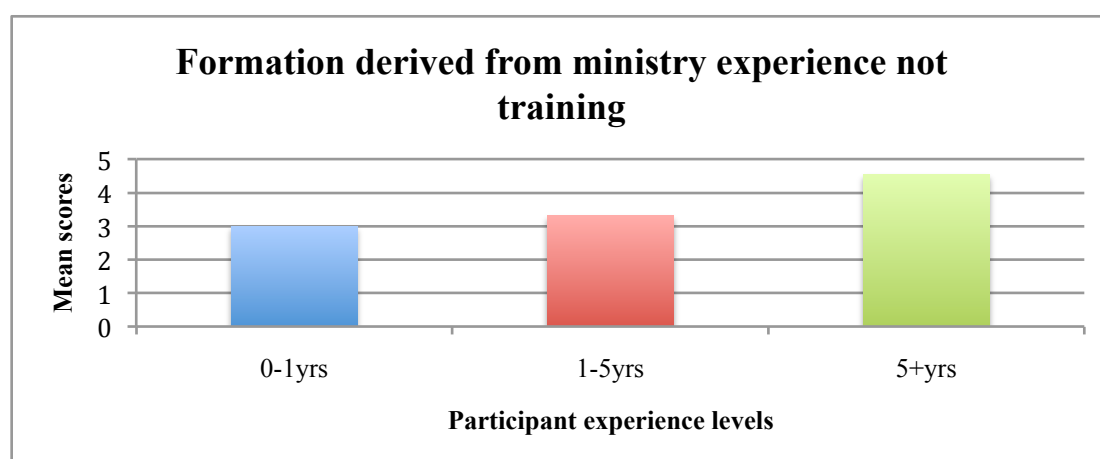


Figure 4.18 Formation derived from ministry experience not training

The results reveal that the participants in the 5+ years experience band felt that formation had been the outcome primarily of their ministry experience, rather than any training received. This group recorded a mean score approaching *strongly agree* (4.55) in response to this item. In contrast, the other two groups of participants with 0-1 years and 1-5 years experience, recorded more neutral mean scores of 3 and 3.33 respectively. This result points to the possibility that as a Church planter becomes more experienced, their ministry may become the primary source of formation in their life and work. This apparent contrast with the result from item 7, that verified formation as a part of training that was valuable to the participants, might be explained by the likelihood that some of the participants in this experience band had not been trained before beginning their Church planting work.

4.7 Future intentions about training and coaching

Items 19 and 20 addressed the perceptions of the participants about training and coaching, from the perspective of their level of experience in Church planting and how that may influence potential future decision making. Item 19 requested a response to:

I don't believe I need either training or coaching to do the role of a Church planter.

Figure 4.19 reports the results.

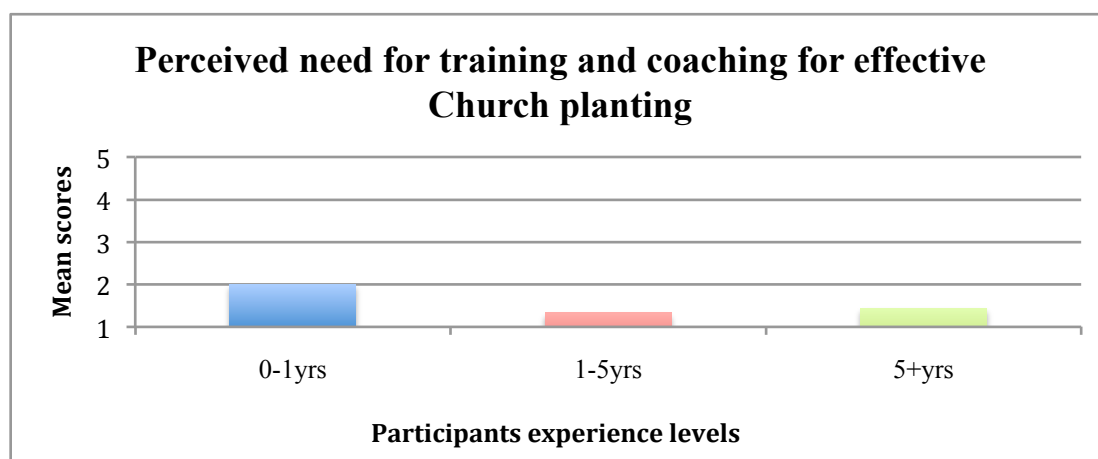


Figure 4.19 Perceived need for training and coaching for Church planting

The responses to this item from all three experience bands, were all in the *strongly disagree* spectrum, being 2, 1.33 and 1.44 respectively. What type of training and coaching is not implied by this set of responses, but from the result it may be concluded that the participants have come to appreciate that training to develop formation and skills, and coaching to develop strategy, are valued by them as Church planters.

The final item that was to address future intentions about training and coaching asked:

If I ever become a Church planter again, I will make sure that I receive both training and coaching.

The results from this item are represented in Figure 4.20.

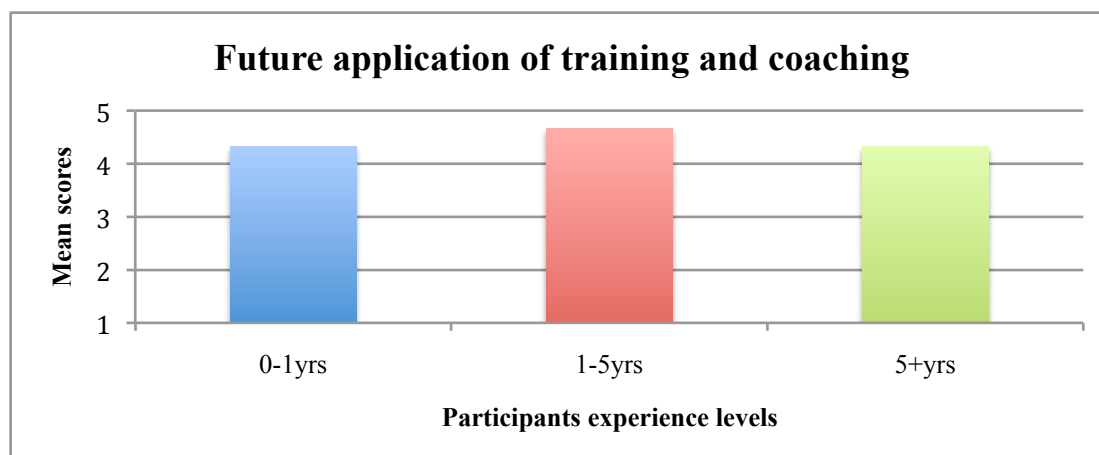


Figure 4.20 Future application of training and coaching

The results from the participants' responses reveal that if they were to attempt to establish another new faith community, they would access training and coaching to assist them with the skill development, strategic planning and formation relevant to that work. The 0-1 years, 1-5 years and 5+ years experience bands recorded mean scores in the *strongly agree* spectrum (4.33, 4.66 and 4.33 respectively). What type of training or coaching could not be implied by this set of responses, but the participants' perceptions supports that experience has taught some of the Church planters to value their training and coaching so that they have a strong commitment to training and coaching in principle among the Australian Church planters involved in this study. It suggests that experience has led the participants without such training and coaching to the same conclusion.

4.8 Summary

This chapter reported and analysed the results from the questionnaire that was the first step in the analysis described in the design chapter. Overall, the results of the participants' perceptions reported in this chapter reveal that they are committed to the principle of a preparation phase for a Church planter before they begin their work; they believe training, to be the vehicle to address skill development and formation; and coaching, that enhances their training and assist them with the transfer of learning and the strategic aspects of their work, were ways to address the effectiveness of their leadership as Church planters. However, the nature of this training and coaching could not be implied from their responses. The participants in this study also indicate they see formation to be a vital matter to them as leaders.

While the results of the questionnaire have explained some of the perceptions of the Church planters in this study about training, coaching, formation and access to support, other issues need further clarification and elaboration. These issues have coalesced around the themes chosen for the organisation of the case studies in Chapter 5.

Around the first theme, *Motivation for becoming a Church planter*, there is the question about why Church planters take up such a work as Church planting. This question arises because of the perception raised in the analysis in this chapter that some Church planters may begin in concert with sending Churches and Denominations and others do not. Understanding what motivates Church planters to become such a leader may assist greatly in the care and support of these leaders. Around the second theme, *Formal support*, some of the participant's verified an intentional support in accessing training, coaching and formation but the question that the results did not imply, was the type or mode of delivery of this training, coaching and formation. Therefore further elaboration from the participants on this point may assist to provide understanding about how effective training, coaching and formation options for Church planters, either as preparation or as professional development may be offered. The third theme to be employed in Chapter 5 is *Strategies employed when planting a Church*. The questionnaire left some unresolved matters relating to the work of Church planting itself. For example, an understanding of what Church planters are actually doing in their work will assist both them and those who support them: to identify the training, coaching and formation that will effectively help them to acquire the relevant skills; see those skills transfer into the Church planting context through the assistance of a coach; and assist with the ongoing formation and the development of the strategic aspects related to Church planting on an individual basis. The final theme is the *View of Scripture and Ministry*. The principle questions relating to this theme refer to the practical role of formation. The participants strongly affirmed the value of formation, but the questionnaire could not imply for example, the way formation assists a Church planting leader.

By bringing the questions to the participants in the interview process around these four themes, the case studies may be able to help elaborate and clarify the unresolved issues arising from the questionnaire.

Chapter 5

Insights from the Microscope: Case Studies of Five Church Planters

5.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the quantitative data from the questionnaire was reported and analysed. This analysis began to discover that Church planters value training as preparation for their work; that coaching enhances the training received; that formation introduced initially into the training offered to a Church planter before they commence their work, it also increases incrementally while the Church planter is on the field; and, accessing training, coaching and formation is potentially a role for a sending Church or Denomination. This chapter includes five case studies that were used to present the qualitative data in narrative form. The participants, whose stories are told in these cases, are those who had been invited and who had volunteered from among the original 20 Church planters who had taken part in this study.

Each case will be examined separately using the same four themes to promote an effective comparison. These four themes were identified as they emerged from research questions, research literature and the analysis of the qualitative data as outlined in Chapter 3. The themes were adopted in the case studies because they assisted in forming a clearer understanding of the issues of training, coaching, formation and access as they relate to the whole planting process and to needs of the individual planter. The four themes were: the motivation to become a Church planter; the formal supports that were put in place to sustain them as Church planters; the strategies employed when planting a Church; and their personal vision of Scripture and ministry. Place names in the extracts from the interviews are replaced with pseudonyms.

To introduce the participants in the interviews, a table included in Chapter 3 is included again but it is organised in the order in which their cases appear in this chapter:

Table 5.1 A summary of the backgrounds of the participants in the interview process

| Name of participant | Experience as a Church planter | Context | Comment |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Matthew | Over 10 years | Suburban – major city | Matthew and his wife Sarah share this work. Matthew has general ministry training and coaching/ supervision. They have experience leading three new Churches; |
| Aquila | Over 20 years | Rural | Aquila and his wife Priscilla share this Church planting work and have not had any training experiences or coaching relationship. They have experience of leading four new Churches in their region; |
| Deborah | Over 10 years | Regional city | Deborah received general ministry training but has no specific Church planter training or coaching. She has been the leader in one new church plant; |
| Luke | Over five years | Regional city | Luke has had specialised Church planter training as well as general ministry training. He has however, very limited experience of coaching. He is still leading his first new Church; |
| James | Three years | Regional city | James received specific Church planter training and coaching and is presently undertaking general ministry training. After three years leading one new Church he was re-appointed by his superiors to another area of ministry; |

(A more detailed version of this table is included as Appendix 6)

5.1 Matthew

This Church planter has, in the past 12 years as a paid worker by his denomination, developed a network of three new Churches and other ministries in a fast developing suburban area in the south-west of a state capital. He continues to follow his commitment to being a life-long learner in the area of Christian ministry generally

and to developing new ministries in order to meet the needs of people who live within the communities in which he moves.

5.1.1 Motivation to become a Church planter

Matthew described how he came to be involved in Church planting. It was a process that began with a conviction that God was speaking to him. This sense of conviction started with a question that came to him while he and his wife Sarah were travelling to the church they attended in the central business district of the capital of his state. The question related to why he was driving past so many churches from his suburban home to the city centre to attend his own Church. It was not a struggle with any perceived shortcomings with Church itself that was his motivator, but an inner sense that something had to be done about the places where there were no Churches, particularly none that belonged to his own tradition. He spoke of an impression that he felt had come from God:

Why are you driving all this way into town when there are people all around you who need to hear about Jesus?

Later Sarah came to share this conviction too. Matthew reflected that she had spoken of:

An epiphany in the mall near where she worked and realised a lot of people were near us who weren't experiencing life in all its fullness.

This positive conviction became the core motivation for Matthew and started the process in which he and his wife became Church planters. Matthew found that his denomination had fixed concepts about the way the ministries of the Church were to be done. These concepts contrasted with his own sense about what kind of Church would effectively reach the people living in his suburb. So part of the decision making about becoming a Church planter was taken up in facing these challenges. He reflected that:

I have a particular position on what the Church is supposed to look like and how it's supposed to be structured and what the Pastor is supposed to do. So the challenge was that we share with them (Matthew's denominational leaders) how we see Church and the Kingdom.

In practical terms, Matthew sought to take the Church to the suburb rather than to develop services to which people could come if they chose. He spoke of the excitement of that time and of feeling that he was motivated for a lifetime. The establishment of the first Church that began over 12 years ago was based on simple and personal convictions that were lived out in front of people.

5.1.2 Formal support

Matthew did not have specific training relating to Church planting. He did make mention of a conference he attended on Church planting held in Korea. He described this conference as something of a catalyst for the development of his thinking about Church planting. The invitation to attend this conference was made by the Denomination after he had declared his interest in a Church planting role. Matthew's ministry supervisor viewed this conference as suitable for introducing planters to Church planting. During the interview, Matthew described the conference as inspirational and encouraging. However, he added that since the beginning of the first new Church, he has deliberately sourced his own training. This training has been both formal through a Masters programme and informal training through his attendance at conferences, workshops and an extensive habit of reading. All of his training choices were made according to what was relevant for him and his wife Sarah as Church planters.

He describes himself as being:

A person who works best in a structured environment. I like to build a structure around me to get things done. I read key books about what it is to plant a Church.

Matthew is an example of a self-motivated life-long learner. The general ministry training he did receive included leadership development within a Masters of Divinity programme. However, what he enjoyed most about this formal training was its relevance:

I had been trained in something Tuesday night that I could put into practice Wednesday. So I really enjoyed training and I am continuing to study now.

On the question of coaching Matthew also had a clear perspective. Although his denominational leaders did not require him to have a coach, his initial coach was the administrative supervisor for those who did Church planting within his denomination.

This person assisted him in the process of having the new Church approved by the denomination. However, it was not personal support. After a time, Matthew identified and approached someone to be his coach from among the leaders of his denomination and to be a more personal support for him. Matthew uses the terms ‘coach’ and ‘mentor’ inter-changeably but does emphasise that the relationship carried an accountability objective:

I chose to come under the influence of (a leader) who oversighted me and I met with him once a month. I asked him to coach or mentor me so I was in a relationship with someone who I report to positionally (meaning that this person was his superior to whom he was required to report).

In addition to this, Matthew has valued the influence of peers. These relationships have been valuable for prayer and encouragement especially because these peers were engaged in the same kind of work:

I associate myself with those in similar Church experiences. We get to talk about how we are going and to pray for each other, encourage one another and ask the difficult questions required.

There are also definite views about the advantages of training and coaching.

For Matthew, the value of training has been to gain access to good materials. But there was another element to it. This was the timely nature of the training. He said that:

It provided me with material for training others – just-in-time training which I think is important and is the way we train anyone in ministry...the idea is of structured training alongside the life-on-life training that happens.

Matthew does see coaching as important. The aim of good coaching, in his view, is to assist the planter to gain self-revelation about the various aspects of ministry in which he is engaged:

Helping me to de-brief. Not looking for answers – just looking for someone to hear what was going on in my world and urging me on at different times and asking questions about whether there was a better way to get things done.

These three sources have been a support for Matthew in his work: a Masters degree, an extensive reading programme and the intentional seeking out of a mentor or coach to assist him personally.

5.1.3 Strategies employed when planting a Church

As with many modern Church planters, Matthew places a high value on teamwork and being a member of a team. This concept of teamwork became the first strategy to be employed by Matthew as he began to develop the new Church.

He also described Church planting as an “apostolic” work. This is a term that he uses to refer to the nature of this work of establishing new faith communities or Church planting. Essentially, it is referring to the planter as being “sent” and usually this means the planter has been sent into an area where there are no Churches or at least no Churches with the planter’s denominational distinctiveness. But Matthew also strongly believes that planters:

Need others around them in partnership. Empowering leaders around them.

His deep convictions about partnership in this kind of ministry extended to working with Sarah in every aspect. He was clear from the beginning that he would not undertake Church planting, no matter how he felt about it, without Sarah sensing her own convictions about the importance of the work for her. This was to be her decision too. But once Sarah shared with him the belief that Church planting was what God wanted of her, Matthew saw that the first step was to raise a team around he and Sarah. However, Matthew and Sarah would not approach anyone to form the team they wanted for the work. They committed the need to God in prayer and he reported that the new team members began to hear of what Matthew and his wife Sarah were planning and sought them out. Matthew said:

We asked God to stir the people who wanted to do new things and after about six weeks three couples joined and we were able to start off from this base.

And once the team was gathered their first corporate step forward taken was to ask the people in the suburb around them what kind of Church would be relevant to them:

We did ask the people in our suburb what it would look like to have a Church in our suburb – if they were going to Church what would it be like. We doorknocked about 40% of our suburb and we worked with our strength.

The strength Matthew referred to was the second strategy employed. They formed a “Big Band” based on the good relationships that had been developed with others in the suburb that shared their interest in music. Eventually the group grew to involve about thirty local residents. The Big Band allowed the team to become more engaged with “their” community and while the team members involved were members of the Church, the community members were not required to join the Church. This was a particularly strong engagement with the suburb and provided a good foundation for what was about to happen over the next few years.

Another key strategy emerged from a resource that Matthew had accessed. A book by Christian Schwartz called “Natural Church Development” had confirmed to him a strategy relating to the development and deployment of the team itself. Drawing from the book, Matthew adopted a distinctive strategy for use in the Church:

My paradigm is that people are created to be able to work with others and God designed us to work in community – that’s the preferred design.

There was one more strategy employed relating to a creative plan for the use of the building that was developed with the help and support of their Denomination. Although the new Church began in a lounge room, they have since then, made many different uses of their building. For example, their building has come to house welfare programmes, multiple services including worship services for language groups other than English and even options for various sporting groups.

The strategies for this new Church therefore, included the centrality of a team to do the ministry, a Big Band that developed co-operative networks across the area and a unique use of the Church building when it became available.

5.1.4 Vision of Scripture and ministry

There are two main theological factors important to Matthew as a Church planter. First of all there are the common formation issues. In describing the role of the Church that he planted, Matthew says it was:

Primarily targeting people who want to become more like Jesus, a journey towards Christ-likeness...people who are Jesus followers released into fruitful ministry.

However the dominant theological factor in Matthew's ministry is the Kingdom of God:

The main focus for us is to see more of God's Kingdom come...Kingdom priorities.

For Matthew and his planting team, these Kingdom priorities helped to decide what needed to be done. In his view, concepts about Church and ministry are very similar in nature and it is not all about worship. These two theological factors (Christ-likeness and the Kingdom) guided the work that Matthew was doing. The evidence for this is that from the first work planted 12 years ago, there are now ministries in sports services, youth services, unemployment, pre-employment as well as new works in two other suburbs nearby and also a ministry for Korean speakers in the area. These two practical theological frameworks seem to be constantly guiding the whole process.

Matthew's view also is that you cannot separate skills and formation:

My passion is for formation and doing new things. So I don't know which is the cause and effect. My relationship with Jesus gave me a greater heart to reach people who don't know Him.

5.1.5 Summary

This Church planter is an example of the self-starter attributes that operate in many that are doing this kind of work. In terms of experience, this Church planter belongs to the 5+ years experience band, as well as being one of the leaders with experience across multiple new Churches. He and his wife have a unique partnership that provides a lot of forward momentum for the work to diversify and maintain its creativity. His attitude toward training is intentional and practical and the strength of his commitment to formation is a key foundation to his ministry. He has limited experience of a coach but has shown a clear commitment to accountability through his relationship with his supervisor. This case also showed that the relationship Church planters have with their Denominational leaders is important for resolving the expectations of them and in the accessing of appropriate support for them in the form of training and key resources.

5.2 Aquila

Aquila and his wife Priscilla began their work in 1989 in a small rural area on the mid-north coast of one of the eastern states of Australia. This beautiful area is known locally for its three iconic peaks. The region is a maze of narrow roads and small villages. The area does not have a large population and many of the young people born and raised in the area leave at the conclusion of their schooling to attend universities and seek careers in the larger centres to the south. The churches of this region are small and their members ageing and there has been little or no evidence of any pattern of Church planting in the region historically. The exception to this trend is the work of this one couple and their teams comprised of local people. Aquila has over 20 years experience as a Church planter and leadership experience in four new Churches. He and his wife supported themselves financially at the start, but now draw their support from the new Churches that have been established.

5.2.1 Motivation to become a Church planter

Aquila explained his reasons and/or motivation for beginning a Church when he had moved into a new district with Priscilla and their children. In particular, he indicated that he and his wife had accepted a leadership role, out of a sense of necessity, as there were no leaders for the small existing Church of their own Denomination which was located not far from their new home:

There was nobody else who was around to do any of the work. We moved to the district with the idea of being involved in the local Church but because the local Church wasn't there, we built our own.

But they began with a specific commitment to a certain method of ecclesiology that transcended their Church tradition in a fundamental way:

It was an (Evangelical Denomination) but we looked at a community Church with a Denominational connection. So that was planted then.

Having explained their idea about community, they admitted that they had no training before they began their work. What they did have was a deeply spiritual view of the value and role of the Scriptures and of the importance of caring for people. Although Aquila had no training in Church planting, he shared in the interview some of the key insights he had gained. One such insight related to the understanding about ministry. Aquila said:

You've got to know more about the culture, more about evangelism and more about building from scratch, more about being alone, all those sorts of things.

In addition to the fact that there was no specific training received for this work, there were also no formal coaching arrangements put in place prior to beginning the work of planting, or since. Aquila began because he felt God's call on his life to do it:

A very distinctive call for both my wife (Priscilla), and I to say that we plant. But that was probably caused by a general dissatisfaction for Church ... that dissatisfaction with how to make the attractional model work, which we're not against. With the dissatisfaction there to prompt us to go...

The use of the term “attractional” is made to explain a model of ministry where a Church provides services and ministries at a particular venue and invites people to come to a venue to be a part of those services and ministries. The term “attractional” is often used when discussing the contrasting ministry model known as “incarnational” which describes the practise of taking the services and ministries of the Church to the people wherever they are to be found. In this context, Aquila described his approach as not being against the “attractional” model but about an intentional ministry commitment to his community.

The motivation that Aquila showed was of an abiding dissatisfaction at the operation of churches in the area historically and the sense that God had indeed called him to respond and do something for the people of that region.

5.2.2 Formal support

It does seem though that he didn't have a map or clear strategy prior to beginning the work of Church planting. This apparent “lack” of prior training or coaching meant that he needed to develop some alternatives to training and coaching to support himself through the venture. Therefore, Aquila began to seek out the resources he would need informally for what he was facing. He said:

We started pretty much by saying ok, there's got to be an answer out there that we don't know, we've got to find them because we can't necessarily turn to somebody who may intervene and have easy answers for us.

There appears to be no reason for rejecting the idea of receiving training and coaching. Rather, it seems that by the time he had been in his field of work and saw

some value in training, he was already too committed to the field of his work to leave it for any time – even for something like training.

There was however, evidence of informal or on-the-job training. This involved extensive reading and questioning as well choosing to attend the right conferences and in seeking the right conversations. But there is little evidence that his Denomination played any intentional role in assisting him to access training and coaching that would promote skills and formation developmentally. He was asked whether he viewed general ministry training as sufficient for a Church planter. His reply showed a qualified agreement that general ministry training would be adequate. Aquila said:

I would think so because a lot of things like knowing your Bible and knowing your people are universal. However (there's) a lot of instinctiveness about planting. It's really important that you understand planting rather than just pastoring a Church.

However, coaching was identified as something that, in retrospect, may have assisted him in his work. Aquila commented:

I think that if we'd had formal coaching we could have planted a lot quicker, a lot easier. I think sometimes we came the long way round to try and find things. We didn't have a map. We planted one Church and didn't realise we would plant another. So I think if we'd had a coach or had known the right questions to ask him we would have been able to move faster.

This role for coaching has been something that has crystallised for him over 20 years of experience in doing this work of Church planting. He still does not personally have the support of a formal coach. However, his intentional approach to reading and researching the issues he faced has helped to create an on-the-job learning approach that has provided much of the support that he needed.

5.2.3 Strategies employed when planting a Church

In 2005 they began to work to establish a Church into a small village nearby. Like the original Church, this was to be a village-based Church:

We had done a lot of ministry work in the ("Freetown") community over a number of years from the ("New Village") base and some of the key figures in

the (“Freetown”) community actually invited us on the basis that there was a lacking in their community.

Aquila was asked a question about the nature of some of the challenges that he had faced in his work. In addition to the comments about making a commitment to community building, he made another commitment to developing leaders:

Developing local leaders and training leaders is an ongoing challenge. Working within the pool of people we’ve got. I mean these are small communities of 500 people. We don’t have a huge pool to work from... seeing leaders blossoming and develop in their giftings in a way that they would never have done if we hadn’t planted.

But this was not just about developing individual leaders either. He was developing leaders to take part in a team oriented leadership model. Aquila and Priscilla have a longstanding commitment to the development of teams. These teams are the ones who have taken up the responsibility for the progress of the work in the various centres that have begun. He noted that:

For us (referring to himself and Priscilla), we looked to work at team building as very important because we were looking to plant again and again and again. The three skills a leader has to have are evangelism, organisational skills, relational skills and be willing to work as a team.

Their model therefore was to develop teams with local people from each community for the leadership of the new Church in each community. This strategy was to seek to ensure ownership of the new Church in that village. It also meant that the process of discipleship ended up as a process for developing leaders. The advantage of this strategy was in addressing the issues of ministry across numerous and specific rural cultures more effectively while at the same time managing to keep a central vision in place:

I think it’s been that we’ve been modelling. A lot of their leadership development has been in watching us. I think it’s been important for them to watch us and put these things into practise.

Three clear strategies emerged from the interview and these have been carefully employed by Aquila in his work. They have implemented a team approach to ministry, then carefully established their understanding of the context of each place

where the churches were to be planted, and finally committed themselves and their teams to community based work as a way of entering each village and of building trust.

5.2.4 Vision of Scripture and ministry

It is apparent however that even though Aquila has had no training and coaching, he has nonetheless developed a strong sense of what is needed in this kind of work. Aquila commented in the interview about what a planter or planting team member looks like:

We look for people with character. For people who persevere in adversity. For people with a heart for a local community. Sometimes we parachute people into a local community. Someone with a heart for that area. I think a planter has got a character to be accountable.

Both Aquila and Priscilla do see the value of skills and formation and that of training and coaching, but place spiritual formation ahead of all these components relating to Church planting. Spiritual formation becomes the basis for the effective use of training in skill development:

The formation kept us there while we developed the skills. If we had been trained in the skills earlier I think then that would have been a benefit to us. But the skills are not as important to us for our survival as personal formation has been.

This planter, after 22 years, has a very specific view of their ministry:

I don't think it's my role in the Church or my calling to be just caring for a bunch of sheep. I'm not being disparaging about this and I understand the role of pastoral care but my role is to train people to do the pastoral care. Team coach is probably a better word.

Aquila is an example of effective Church planting leadership because not only have they planted one Church, they have also, out of that Church, planted several others and all this has been done in a rural context which is unusual in Australia. They are looking further towards the horizons:

We have a vision to plant in 10 of these little country towns around our region.

Aquila has therefore come to place a high value on the development of the character of the worker and in particular, developing in the worker a compassion for the people to whom they are sent. Indeed, each person in the team is deemed to have his or her own calling and ministry and the role that Aquila has adopted is to acknowledge and develop that in each person.

5.2.5 Summary

This experienced planter has, without any formal training, illustrated the value of intentionally applying oneself over a long period of time, and learning from experience. Aquila is part of the 5+ years ministry leadership experience band as a Church planter. He is also one of the five Church planters who participated in this study with experience across multiple new Churches. His spouse, Priscilla, is a full partner with him in this work and is as responsible for the outcomes as Aquila. This Church planter's attitude towards training and coaching is positive in principle, even though he has no personal experience of either, beyond the informal learning he and Priscilla have intentionally undertaken. His attitude to formation is significant because he sees formation as the factor that keeps a Church planter involved in his/her work while skill development proceeds. His Denomination has seemingly not played a significant part in the process. This contrasts with James who did have intentional support from his sending Church, and Matthew who took the initiative to develop a collaborative relationship for support from his sending Denomination.

5.3 Deborah

Being a Church planter fulltime is a challenging task but doing this kind of work whilst working fulltime in a profession is a remarkable achievement. Deborah is one of the more experienced Church planters in this study with over 10 years experience that has all been achieved in one suburban church. Her approach to Church planting has combined vision with consistent hard work and a strong sense of the spiritual nature of her work.

Across Australia, Church planters like Deborah face very clear challenges in creating a new Church that will be relevant to the people among whom they live. Unlike Aquila who is working in a rural context, Deborah's ministry plan involves seeking to reach a middle-class area of a large coastal city in eastern Australia. Her new Church is typical of suburban churches found in Australia with a wide range of ages

represented in the congregation but with an emphasis upon young families. However, this particular work is unique in its leadership. Deborah represents a small group of highly capable and mobile women in the ministry of Church planting in Australia and the only female Church planter in this phase of the research project. With over 10 years experience as a Church planter and still in her first Church, Deborah provides rich insights about herself and her work as a Church planter who also maintains fulltime employment alongside this work.

5.3.1 Motivation to become a Church planter

Like many planters, Deborah spoke of a restlessness that she felt within her about Church life and what her part was in the plan of God. In particular, it was on the question of the mission of the Church that she felt this restlessness the most. She spoke of how she and her husband Samuel (who plays a support role) had felt prior to launching this new Church:

We'd been feeling that God really wanted something of us. So for about three or four months there was a big cry for that. We'd been unsettled in our own Church for quite a while.

Deborah had been thinking about the mission of the Church and the connection of this mission to what she felt was the call God had placed in her heart. She had become involved in a Bible study group who were exploring what God was saying to them as a group. Each member of this group had felt that God was leading them into something, but for a long time had no sense of the direction they would take going forward. In the middle of this period of several years Deborah's Denomination made a request:

I had a call unexpectedly asking if I was interested in starting a Church in Newcastle. We thought God was leading us somewhere and God wanted us to start a mission in that area.

This call became a significant motivation for starting the new work. But that wasn't the only motivation. Another factor that had a real effect upon her and the group she studied with was their feeling that the existing models of leadership employed in the local Church in their area were ineffective. For Deborah and her group there was a conviction that current leadership methods were a strong disincentive in the task of enlisting and empowering people in the Church. She commented:

I felt that it turned people away from being involved in all aspects of what Church life is. You just tended to just be going along and just sitting there and not being motivated. But God convicted (made it clear to) me.

Deborah, like other Australian planters, took into her Church planting work a sense of call that was a deeply held conviction. There was also within her, a sense of unease about the way that Church was conducted and a belief that something must be done about it. The invitation from her denomination brought all this together and Deborah came to see that God was asking her to address the need for a new Church in her area.

5.3.2 Formal support

Deborah did not have specific training relating to Church planting prior to beginning her work. She did however, have the benefit of general ministry training provided by her Denomination some years before and also a teaching degree. While she conceded that there were some skills relating to Church planting that she had not learnt, she qualified this by saying:

I think the key thing for anyone that is planting a Church is that they are good at listening to God....regardless of how well you are trained and training is good...but if you don't keep your devotional life strong and if you don't listen to God no-one is going to see a Church grow.

This is a qualified support for the adequacy of both general and specific training in relation to Church planting for the Church planter.

And when the subject of coaching was raised she gave a quick “no” as her answer to indicate she had not intentionally accessed this kind of support during her time as a Church planter. But what Deborah did acknowledge was that someone who made a commitment to developing a relationship with her while she was doing the work of establishing this new faith community, would have been valuable to her as a planter. While she didn't use the term “coach”, she did speak of someone being available to give assistance to a planter to understand the dynamics of planting itself.

The question then was raised about what sources Deborah drew support from that were helpful to her. She defined these resources in the word “networking”. She cited several networks that had been helpful to her as the planter and to the team working with her. She mentioned the Willow Creek Association, the Hillsong network and the local network of pastors. Her approach to training was to develop an understanding of

what was needed and then to look around for someone (or an organisation) who might have been able to support her. She also accessed materials that would feed into what was needed in the Church plant or for the area around it. She confirmed that she saw this as a kind of informal training and she commented that this form of training was best drawn from many sources:

...rather than getting it from one institution.

Deborah's qualified support for training is made on the basis of a deep conviction about the spiritual life of the planter. Her general ministry training and multiple sources for on-the-job learning have proved helpful to her in her work as a Church planter.

5.3.3 Strategies employed when planting a Church

The crucial factor in the strategy employed by Deborah was team. The new Church began from the basis of a long running Bible study group. This meant that the leadership of this new work had been part of the process of deciding what the will of God was and how that will was to be worked out. Deborah said:

We stayed with a team, a few couples. We started out with 12. We had a few people who would give their house on a Sunday. We had about 12 there and that's probably where it started.

Drawing on that team strategy, every member of the new work would have something specific to do and there was no-one who was exempted from this opportunity and challenge. But while the team members were enthusiastic they did not cover the full range of skills required to meet all the needs of the new Church plant. Deborah noted:

You had to be a leader of something. We had prayer, teaching and youth. All areas of the Church and they would be responsible for that. They still needed monitoring and so we were still supporting those people and that's where I think, it runs out.

Two clear perspectives about her experience of team can be seen in Deborah's comments. On the one hand the team shares the responsibilities, but on the other, someone was seen as necessary to be supplying support and guidance for the team members. The strength of team was that every member of the team was involved in something. The weakness was that it remained with Deborah to be the one who had

her own area of responsibility plus overall responsibility for the monitoring of the team members. This extra work for a worker-planter (someone who planted a new Church while maintaining a fulltime job) proved costly both to the leader and to the work:

One leader can grow a Church to 50 and we have four leaders and they can grow it to 200 and that has been significant when you consider that none of us have been fulltime.

The final strategy worthy of note is the commitment made to evangelism and discipleship. Many of those who became followers of Jesus through the ministry of Deborah and of her Church have maintained their faith and gone on to develop their own sense of mission as God has required it of them. But this strategy too was costly. Deborah describes the area in which the new plant is located as quite hard ground for evangelism. This meant that evangelism met resistance and the process of bringing someone to faith in Christ was a long one. But nevertheless this commitment was important to this new work making any forward progress. The planter noted:

We started in an inner suburb where there was no Church and we really tried hard to reach people and it wasn't an easy suburb.

Deborah believed in the development of a team to complete the work of establishing a new Church in her suburb. But she also enunciated a commitment to each member of the team sharing in the responsibilities for the ministry as well as an intentional commitment to evangelism and disciple making.

5.3.4 Vision of Scripture and ministry

Deborah had a strong sense about what would produce growth in any new work. The interview made it clear that she believes that skills do not produce growth in a new Church. While she acknowledged that these skills have a place there in the process, there is a strongly held understanding of the role of relationship with God:

Only God will do it...while God does develop us and training will help, I think that the times when the Church really advances is when we are on our knees and we are hearing from God the most.

In addition to this belief in God's pre-eminent role in Church planting, she also rates the formation of her team members very highly. Once again, while Deborah

acknowledged that skills have value, she quickly relegated them to being of a lesser importance to other things:

Spiritual formation...that's been a passion, what keeps you. God is the passion of my heart. Spiritual formation keeps you growing and becoming stronger and stronger and will teach you; otherwise I think the skills alone won't do that.

Then, she places vision as the next key factor in the process of Church planting, making a direct connection between vision and planting and noting that without vision there is no planting. Deborah places a high value on the vision of the founder of her denomination. In describing her thoughts about vision, she borrows from a shipping analogy:

We (the Church) should be a battleship not a cruiseliner. On a cruiseliner everyone is just being entertained whereas on a battleship everyone has a job to do. When we get a vision for the lost we'll go out and plant more Churches.

For this planter, everyone needs to share in the vision of bringing people to acknowledge of Christ so that everyone can play a part in this work as well.

When Deborah took a critical look at the ministry focus of the new plant, she spoke of a ministry pendulum and of a swing between evangelism and discipleship for the group and its leadership. This swing involved being committed to evangelism (the task of sharing the good news about Jesus to people who have not heard it) and then the task of helping those who have decided to follow Jesus to do so consistently, discipleship. Her comments make it apparent that this is quite difficult to manage with any sort of balance:

I think the pendulum swings and we think we better go disciple more people and then you're not putting as much time into evangelism so just trying to balance and it becomes difficult when you haven't got much time.

In addition to all this, Deborah remains strongly committed to her basic instinct about the work of planting – the primacy of the place of prayer. She does not agree that Church planting is straightforward. Instead she makes it clear that a planter, through a real commitment to prayer and an awareness of the shared nature of this call to mission, can become effective at reaching people as well as helping them to grow as believers personally.

Deborah's vision of Scripture and ministry was based around her convictions about the sovereignty of God and the way that sovereignty was working out through His people being primarily prayerful. She also saw that ahead of skill comes formation and the fact that the call of God applies to all those who follow Jesus.

5.3.5 Summary

Her case confirms that general ministry training can be a preparation for Church planting at least in part, and that one way to deliver coaching and further training after the work has commenced, might be by adopting an informal approach that is largely chosen by the leader themselves. Her perceptions about developmental nature of formation are in line with the scholarship, and she positions formation, continuing development of prayer life and faith above skills development or training. Her case confirms the important role of the Church planting team formed around the leader and because of the deeply spiritual approach to the work, she recognises the value of prayer and the Scriptures and the work of God as primary in the process of Church planting.

Deborah's views about access indicate that she believes that the Church planter themselves should decide about the timing and nature of any training opportunity or coaching relationship. However, she did also comment on the difficulties she has faced with the ongoing formation and coaching of her planting team. Being able to tap into additional sources of training for skills development and formation would have been appropriate and helpful in her case. This is an argument for the role that a sending Church or Denomination may have in arranging access to the right resources at the right time, or at least sharing information about opportunities that exist. This might be done without removing from a Church planter the option of choosing the training and coaching that would promote formation that is deemed to be appropriate. This kind of intentionality is especially needed whether the Church planting leader also maintains a fulltime job as well.

5.4 James

James is no longer a Church planter. Three years after commencing his only experience as a Church planter in a suburb of a regional city, he was appointed by his sending Church to a new role away from the field of Church planting. But his story is indicative of the challenges and difficulties that these leaders face in their work. His

journey to Church planting from his place within his sending Church, contrasts with the others that are included in this research. For example, it is marked by the strong influence of his Church leader and the vision that this leader had for Church planting. James is the least experienced of the participants to be interviewed. He served for three years in one Church and worked part-time in his profession alongside his work as a Church planter.

5.4.1 Motivation to become a Church planter

James and his wife Martha began the process that eventually led to Church planting by James' decision to take up an opportunity to access some non-formal training offered by his home Church. At this early stage, James had no personal sense of calling about Church planting. The training itself was in Biblical studies, which did prove very helpful to him personally and, as part of this training, his Pastor had presented to him a strong vision for Church planting. His story does not include dissatisfaction at the direction and culture of the Church where he served. Quite the contrary, James was committed to the vision of his home Church and its leaders and had made a strong personal commitment to them and to the direction that they set out. As a member of his local Church, James speaks of the motivation for starting out as a planter:

The process back then was a two-year internship that was in-house. It was a mixture of four hours of lectures, minimum of 10 hours of hands-on practical ministry each week and then there was a mentoring side of things...from the outset the Pastor set a vision and asked, "would you be interested in planting a Church?"

Entering the internship was the intentional step that was taken for personal development. While there were different streams available to the interns in the program outlined by the Church, James chose Church planting and did so because of the invitation to him by his Church leader.

5.4.2 Formal support

Training and coaching do play a significant role in James' experience of planting. The first step had been to seek the in-house training offered by his own Church but throughout his experience from that point, there is a strong and intentional commitment to training and coaching specifically for Church planting. In the

interview it was also revealed that this training and coaching was something that James had been offered by his sending Church. They actively and intentionally arranged for James and Martha to receive specific Church planting training at the “Training Centre”. This Centre provides training in all the aspects of Church planting and it was part of the two-year internship process into which James had enrolled. Commenting on this training James said:

The in-depth stuff was at the Training Centre. Three and a half months fulltime and being part of a Church there was an excellent experience.....with Church planting there has to be specialised training.

He said later that the reason he values specialised training for Church planting was that he was able to learn:

The key elements to start the Church and also the elements to sustain the Church, keeping it going week after week.

And this training did have other things that were valuable to James:

So the advantage of the training was to open my eyes to the world of leaders. Working with people, making strategic decisions was probably the greatest asset of the training.

At the conclusion of the training James and his team left their Church to plant the new Church. James described this process:

There was a commissioning service when we were actually released and prayed for. The whole Church was able to be a part of it and that was a great joy actually.

The language James used in assessing the value of the coaching which continued once he and his team had begun their work is similar. He noted:

I think the greatest thing was it gave me the opportunity with key leaders.

James has an ongoing commitment to training and is presently working through a course on Christian Ministry from Tabor College, Adelaide as a means to further develop him as a leader. In addition to this training he was also offered coaching, although not specifically relating to Church planting. His comments reveal that it was more akin to mentoring:

It was new territory...it was more mentoring than an official coach who could help us from experience... in hindsight it would have been of benefit if we had explored that a bit more.

The term mentoring used in James' interview refers to discussions in which the progress of the new Church was reviewed, but always in hindsight. His preference for a coaching relationship was for a more proactive relationship that dealt with issues. For James this meant that a coach would actually assist the planter to think through the process for the work as it was going on. However that was not James' experience at the time.

Of the organisational aspect of the new Church he said:

The complexity was huge. I think to embark on a journey like this without people around you who can ground you a little but so that what you experience is quite normal would be a good thing.

These unrealistic expectations seemed to 'dog' his efforts and when asked about the advice he might pass on to new planters he was again quite specific:

I think it's the ability to place healthy expectations around what it is going to be like...when you embark on something like this you have an understanding...but the reality is often very different.

His advice is equally specific about the need for a planter to be surrounded and engaged with a team for the work of Church planting:

I think to embark on a journey like this without people who can ground you a little bit so that what you experience is quite normal would be a good thing.

There were therefore significant formal supports arranged for James as a Church planter. His sending Church arranged for him to access specific training that related to Church planting and this was followed by a mentoring or coaching relationship and James has continued to seek out relevant learning as he continues in his ministry.

5.4.3 Strategies when planting a Church

The basic strategy for this new Church was the development of a team. During the first few months of the Church plant the meetings of the team were held at the home of James and his wife who were both professional people. The team met regularly to

gather a sense of what they, as a team, felt God wanted and how this would be worked out. In the interview he reflected:

When I look back on it now, I look at it from the eyes that are a little more mature in terms of ministry focus. There was a lot of passion and whole heap of energy but it was still pretty raw.

James spoke of Church planting in an attractional sense. This term refers to the model of Church that involves the team providing services and inviting or attracting people to attend. This is the traditional methodology that the Church has adopted over many centuries. In this model, there is a crafted worship service each Sunday as well as ministries aimed at various demographics that existed within the area in which the Church was planted. This model was chosen rather than a more incarnational model of Church. This term is used to denote a strategic shift where the focus of the ministries of the Church is formulated around going to the people in their area rather than waiting for them to come to the Church. There were significant implications that had to be faced:

We didn't realise how much hard work it takes to plant a Church...the logistics of making Church happen. Set up and pack down. Impact on families. The greatest challenge was the sustainability of making Church happen.

James' reference to "making Church happen" is a commentary on the impact of the model in practical terms upon the team members themselves. The Church planter and his team also sought to adopt the strategy of building community through intimate relationships as a means for helping people come to follow Jesus.

James shared an example of this:

A young man coming to the Lord, then his girlfriend, and then we had the joy of marrying them.

This might be termed relational evangelism. And finally, there was also the practice of a role being allocated to each person in the team. In the interview James commented upon the motivation of the members of his planting team:

The unity and passion of the people who were usually "pew warmers" were rolling their sleeves up making Church happen.

James, like most planters, built all his strategies around the concept of a team to do the work of Church planting. His choice of the attractional model for his new Church created both opportunities and challenges. In addition he used a strategy of relational evangelism for seeking to reach those who do not know Jesus and a clear role for each member of the team.

5.4.4 Vision of Scripture and ministry

In the interview, James spoke very highly of formation as the theological basis for the preparation of the workers for this kind of ministry. His experience of the time he spent with the key leaders of his Church played a significant role:

Personal spiritual formation has to be the greatest asset that takes place. You can only lead to the depth and growth that you have yourself.

Coming out of this was the value of the devotional life of the leader and his or her team and the sense that while the skills help you, there is a deeper requirement. James speaks of seeking the Lord through a daily commitment of time as the basis for everything else that would happen. When asked about what advice he might give to potential planters he is very clear:

I would be interested to know what their plans were for preparation for training and understanding of what they feel God is calling them to do.....and I would be encouraging people to explore practical ways to empower them before they jump into it.

There is a strong element of realism in James' theology. While on the one hand he expresses a great capacity for faith in God and the ability of God to transform, James also senses how challenging it is to bring others to faith in Christ. He commented:

In Australia it's a jolly hard thing to do. So I think that it's not going to be a quick process.

He refers to a number of unrealistic expectations that affected the work he endeavoured to do over the three years that he was a Church planter. These unrealistic expectations related directly to this observation about the process of bringing people to faith in Australia. James noted:

When you see a few people (come to faith) it's quite incredible. So I think knowing that it's not going to be a quick process (is important).

James' reflection upon the experiences he has had as a Church planter is pragmatic on some levels but as he shows here, his approach is grounded in a strong enthusiasm for bringing others to faith in Christ. This is the core to his vision for ministry. He has, as a result, come up with two insights about what theologically could effectively ground a Church plant. The first insight centres on a willingness to use a diversity of leadership and skills. James noted that changes are needed in the skills of the Church plant leadership as the Church goes through its various phases of growth or maturity. The second insight centres on a willingness to be relational rather than system-oriented which, he admitted, had tended to dominate his own leadership where he sought to maintain a high level of organisation to ensure the success of the new Church:

One of my great mistakes on reflection was that I was a highly systematized type of leader and it was too early in the process. We should have been concentrating on building relationships with people. That was a style that did not work with people.

James' view of Scripture and ministry have led him to see the spiritual life and the formation of those involved in Church planting as the most important thing. In practical terms, James' plan was to provide a pastoral approach that seeks to constantly build strong relationships as being the best strategy for establishing and sustaining a new Church, but this was something in which he struggled to find consistency. He clearly believes that the team needs a great diversity of giftedness to meet the challenge of establishing a new Church in those first weeks, months and years.

5.4.5 Summary

James acknowledged throughout the interview that, from his initial raw enthusiasm, there is now a more measured maturity in his attitude towards Church planting and ministry generally. This Church planting leader belongs to the 1-5 years experience band and, while his spouse is involved with him in the work, there is little evidence in the case that would describe the nature of her supportive role. He is strongly committed to training, coaching and formation and perceives the value of training as preparation that is specific to Church planting as contributing to the effectiveness of a Church planter. His descriptions of disappointment in ministry are couched in

language that reflects learning and a developing insight about his personal formation. His relationship with his sending Church is very intentional and supportive.

5.5 Luke

Luke began a new work in a suburb of a regional city in coastal Queensland that has developed from a holiday destination based on pristine beaches and a few resorts to being a growth area with new suburban developments appearing everywhere. This is also an area with a dynamic and diverse population. Over five years ago when he began, he supported himself financially through the work he and his wife do in a Christian ministry. Although this is the only Church Luke has planted, it is different to the Churches around it. This is a planter who uses the iphone and Facebook to organise key events in the life of his new Church and isn't afraid to experiment with different ways of doing Church ministry.

5.5.1 Motivation to become a Church planter

There is a level of dissatisfaction for Luke when he describes his experience of Church. When asked about his reasons for starting a new Church, he did not speak of being sent to begin the new work, but of feelings and ideas that had developed about new models for structuring this kind of ministry work in Australia. In the interview he expressed his feelings about himself:

I was disgruntled and disappointed...convinced that doing it this way would be better. The reality was there was a tremendous amount of fear. I realised that I was part of the problem, thinking I had all the answers.

The choice about the model for doing this new work was based on a desire to try something specific in this new work. Luke commented:

We aim to create an environment where things just happen. Part of the programme is to help people to do whatever they feel God wants them to do.

Luke has a history of involvement in various churches in his area. But in the interview Luke reviews what he sees as the weaknesses of the Church in Australian society. Luke, it seems, is on a journey of change about the Church as it seeks to reach the nation. He said, while speaking about the effects on Church life of trends in Australian culture:

I think that as I have got further away from the Church as I used to know it, there has (been a) greater value for me on the people that I have won now rather than training them for some position of ministry.

Yet Luke's sense of what an effective Church would be for an Australian context remains a strong motivator in his decision making process prior to starting this Church planting ministry. His strong commitment to Church planting was eventually recognised by his Church who released him, but who seem to have no role past that point. Luke's motivation therefore seems to revolve around a sense of dissatisfaction about the way Church is done and a preference for some creative new ways of reaching out to Australians with the Gospel.

5.5.2 Formal support

Luke was trained at the "Training Centre" and this was a personal decision to seek specific training for planting. But he also did some general training and had some very strong convictions about one aspect to the training he received. Luke said in the interview:

I must admit I found the theology training to be of great benefit, but everything else was a waste of time... I think the thing I walked away with all those years ago was the primacy of the Gospel and the priority of evangelism and that is just being outworked in Church planting. If it hadn't been for College I would never have realised what this was all about.

Luke claimed this theological study on the nature and content of the Gospel was the dominant aspect of his training. He clearly believes that this is central to the experience he has had in training and sees the experience as a driving force for him in his work.

But, whereas Luke had both general training and planter-specific training, he has not really experienced any value in coaching. He commented that:

I tried coaching but it never worked out. Maybe I am not ready for it.

However he does advocate a form of coaching. This form is known as peer coaching. Luke describes this type of coaching as a group based model:

Everybody in our planting team is a coach to each other. There is no doubt about that. I am constantly picking their minds...I think with these informal arrangements you can get to the heart of the matter.

These informal kinds of arrangements for coaching seem to fit the very informal model adopted by Luke and his team. It's not about having a question that needs to be answered but a far more personal approach that revolves around a process of relationship building.

The formal supports for Luke are a strong training experience that was both general about ministry and specific in terms of planting and, in particular, there was a strong influence on his approach to Church planting from his theology studies. There is also a model of peer-to-peer coaching that has been developed within the team in which he is working.

5.5.3 Strategies employed when planting a Church

Luke was asked about the kind of Church he led. His terminology was interesting because it belongs to a new methodology for Church planting which uses the term "organic" to describe itself. This model is a very simple, flexible structure that is being employed to develop the life of the Church within its community. When asked about the strategies for the Church he had planted, Luke said:

I think the thing I notice is that they are far more flexible and fluid....living your life naturally. You don't have to do this and you don't have to do that. You don't have to do things that you don't think are important.

This is a model which doesn't necessarily exclude anything used to develop new Churches historically, but which places the emphasis on the immediate. Its ministry is based around discipleship and practical works. However Luke acknowledges that the creativity in using such a model of Church planting is limited by the resources available to the planter and their team. This is often a critical limitation.

Leadership is also a key aspect for Luke as a Church planter. When asked about the style of leadership that is most relevant to Church planting, Luke commented:

When I first started I would have thought an entrepreneur style, charismatic personality was essential. I don't think any of that stuff matters...you need people who are devoting their lives to winning their friends for Christ.

This reveals that while leadership is an issue for Luke, it is the right style of leadership that is most critical. This is a leadership by example that is to be found in the natural forms of evangelism across real human relationship networks. This seems to be the most significant strategy at work in the new Church planted by Luke. The strategy of this particular new Church seems to revolve around this leadership issue and the flexible, fluid or “organic” model of Church that has been chosen.

5.5.4 View of Scripture and ministry

The key theological factor is the understanding to the Gospel. There are a number of other key theological factors at play in this new Church too. For example, Luke favours training in theology with the specific purpose of planting. He emphasises:

Not just doing theological training but for evangelism and planting. I would also be encouraging people doing it as a group. There is no point doing it on your own. It's not one person's responsibility.

This means that theology must have a context in which it can work practically. Rather than it becoming an information gathering pursuit, theology might be found to inform a methodology that might practically assist Church planting and this extends to the theological underpinnings relating to Church itself. Indeed, Luke seems to feel that having a history in the Church is not an advantage in the task of Church planting:

If a person has a long background of Church history the training is a lot different than for someone who has no Church experience...it always comes back to the primacy of the Gospel and the priority of evangelism. It takes a lot more for an older Christian to understand these things.

In addition, the theological emphasis is also on the character of the worker. Formation is seen as crucial to the preparation of the individual. But for Luke, formation is not the only answer. For this Church planter, formation requires specific skills alongside and therefore skills and formation are not separate items. Luke reflects that:

I see lots and lots of people who seem to have great formation and had amazing experiences but without the training (as described in his earlier comments) they don't relate to a world which is lost.

5.5.5 Summary

This Church planter clearly prefers a smaller and more fluid model for his Church planting work and one that requires a fresh approach to the thinking about how Christians should understand Church. He comes from the 5+ years experience band of Church planters in the study but has that experience in one church. Luke is a Church planter who is convinced, that the future of the Church will only be assured by a conscious Church planting strategy that is centred on a fresh understanding of the Gospel and the Church. The key support role nominated in his case is that of his planting team that includes his wife. He is committed to training and has undertaken training that is both specifically relevant to Church planting as well as training that is general and formal in nature. He has little experience of coaching and does not articulate a strong position on formation, preferring to emphasise a practical view of ministry that is measured in what is relevant to those around him who need to hear the Gospel.

5.6 The critical issues related to each case

Each of the cases tells a unique story. The table that follows (Table 5.2) summarises the critical issues identified in the review of the literature and how these influence each of the case studies in practical terms:

Table 5.2 Summary of the critical issues related to each case

| Critical Issue: | Matthew | Aquila | Deborah | James | Luke |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Training as preparation | No experience but has pursued formal training while on the field | No experience but has pursued informal training while on the field | General ministry training and has pursued informal training while on the field | Received training as preparation specific to Church planting | Received training as preparation specific to Church planting |
| Coaching that enhances training | Limited to supervision | No experience | No experience | Limited to supervision | No formal coaching but uses “informal coaching”. |
| Formation as developmental | Strong aspect accessed through training and ministry experience | Strong aspect accessed through ministry experience | Strong aspect accessed through general ministry training and ministry experience | Strong aspect accessed through training as preparation | Provided limited commentary |
| Access – support to training and coaching | Collaborative arrangement in place | No collaborative relationship in place | No collaborative relationship in place | Collaborative relationship in place | No collaborative relationship in place |

5.7 Characteristics of effective Church planters

Each of the Church planters whose stories have been included in this chapter have certain characteristics that might be described in terms of a metaphor for Church planting leadership. These metaphors assist us in understanding the five leaders who were a part of the interview process and the ways that they accessed support and the type of support accessed by them. There is great variety in the styles of leadership and approaches to Church planting among the Church planters involved. In addition, their preparation phase and experience of training, coaching, formation and access has varied too.

Malphurs & Mancini (2004) developed five categories to explain the metaphors for leadership used by Jesus Christ and these helpfully inform the characteristics emerging from the case studies. The first group of metaphors is described as the community-oriented (or people centred) metaphors that describe leaders whose primary emphasis in ministry is in relationship with other believers and with God. The second category of metaphors is called the cause-oriented (or task centred)

metaphors that convey a description of leaders whose primary motivation is purposeful activity. These metaphors are summarized in the following table:

Table 5.3 Five metaphors for understanding effective Church planters (Malphurs & Mancini, 2004, p. 78-79)

| <i>Servant</i> (Community) | <i>Shepherd</i> (Community) | <i>Harvester</i> (Cause) | <i>Messenger</i> (Community & Cause) | <i>Fisherman</i> (Cause) |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| denoting acts of personal service (Matt.18: 4; 23:11; Mk. 9:35; 10:35-45; Luke 12:37; 17:8 & Jn. 12:24-26) | denoting care and spiritual provision for fellow believers (Jn.21: 15-17) | denoting those involved in the immense task in a strategic sense (Matt.9: 37-38; Jn. 4:35-38) | denoting someone who carries great authority and speaks as a representative (Lu.6: 13; Jn.13: 16-17); | denoting someone who reaches others on a personal level (Matt. 4:19; Mk.1: 17; Lu.5: 10) |

In the following sections there is a discussion about the participants and the metaphor, which most accurately presents them as people and as Church planting leaders and how this explains their attitude and commitment to training, coaching and formation.

5.7.1 Understanding the participants through metaphor

The ‘Harvester’ metaphor is best applied to Matthew because of the strategic nature of his approach to his ministry. Matthew described his work as follows:

It developed from my wife and I studying in our lounge room to several ministries in sports services, youth services, unemployment, pre-employment programmes, programmes for people out of employment.

Matthew, commenting on his search for relevant training, also made a general comment on the style of his leadership:

I am a person that works in a structured environment. I like to build a structure around me to get things done.

And when speaking later of the right kind of leadership for Church planting, Matthew said:

I think it’s an apostolic (a Biblical term meaning “sent”) leadership style with the ability to initiate new things – to create something from nothing – that’s a key part of it.

This Church planter’s perceptions also agree with the literature about the value and role of formation (Banks, 1999):

My personal passion is for formation.

His case confirms that, as a ‘harvester’, the delivery of training, coaching and formation, after the commencement of the work, must be guided by the relevance of the training and coaching, and the collaborative way that the Church planter and those who oversight him/her, seek out together appropriate options which meet the goals set by the Church planting leader. This case suggests that the perceptions of this ‘harvester’ about training are that prior to commencement, training may not have to be intentionally formal, but that it may be informal (i.e. conferences, peer networks, reading etc.), and that coaching is a useful relationship for a Church planter to seek out. As a harvester, his primary focus is the harvest and sees himself competent to make value judgements about his own training, coaching and formation, using the maximising of the harvest as the criteria.

Aquila is a leader who expresses aspects of the “Servant” and “Messenger” metaphors. His commitment to community work as a first step to Church planting and his unique role in the region in which he is working, illustrate this idea:

We had done a lot of ministry work in the community over a number of years and some of the key figures from the community actually invited us on the basis that there was something lacking in their community.

While Aquila addressed how he saw his leadership:

I am not the shepherd guarding the sheepfold from the wolves. I would rather teach the sheep to go out and catch wolves. I don’t particularly identify with the shepherd.

In his commitment to community work as his key strategy, Aquila illustrates the “Servant” metaphor described by Jesus in Matthew 23:11 (NKJV) – “He who is greatest among you shall be your servant.”

But the “Messenger” metaphor is equally effective in describing Aquila’s leadership which is very team oriented. This is something that is a key requirement of the “Messenger” who represents another and carries the authority of that other person. Aquila, his wife Priscilla and their family originally came from outside the area in which they are working but they have stayed with a very specific task in mind, becoming already aware of what is required of him:

Developing local leaders and training leaders.

The attitudes of Aquila towards formation emerge in this comment about identifying future leaders – “we look for people with character.” His perception about the delivery of training after commencing the work is that which is chosen by the planter on the criteria of relevance and which has the advantage of accessibility without his having to leave his work. His case cannot address the first research question because he did not have any training before he began his work, and while he values coaching in principle, he has not entered into a coaching relationship. It is ventured that his sense of the immediacy of the needs of his community caused him to address the needs of others before his own. His recognition of his spouse Priscilla is a critical component of support in his work. Outside of this, the support of peers seems the next most appropriate source.

James is best understood by the “Shepherd” metaphor and, in particular, by the spiritual care and provision for others that he was committed to in his Church planting ministry. In describing his new Church he does so as a shepherd would:

The unity and passion of the people who were usually pew warmers were rolling their sleeves up making Church happen. That was a great joy to watch. A young man coming to the Lord, then his girlfriend, and then we had the joy of marrying them.

When talking about the important things relating to his ministry, James speaks not only of evangelism but also:

The elements to sustain the Church keeping it going week after week.

And later on in the interview James spoke of a people centred role as being crucial to a Church planter generally and he did so as a “Shepherd” would by making it centre on people:

How do you assimilate people, how do you follow up people, how do you pastorally care for people.

His attitudes to formation are strong, and his perceptions are that the best delivery of training and formation is in a specific training course relating to Church planting prior to commencing the work. In addition, he sees that there is a need for ongoing learning (chosen by himself) afterwards. His case also shows the role of the coach alongside a Church planter may (as in Matthew’s case) be done by a supervising minister to

whom he is accountable. James' evidence points to a strong role played by his sending Church and leadership. He sees the importance of being shepherd for his Church and accepts that his Church will also shepherd him and this role was, for him, a most appropriate form of support for a Church planter.

For Luke, the ministry of Church planting revolves around reaching out to the people around him. When describing how he organizes events related to his new Church, Luke said:

There was nothing organized and nothing planned, it just happened. I put out a message on Facebook from my iphone and people just turn up.

He spoke later in the interview about some of the challenges of this style of leadership that he personally had found difficult:

One of the bad things is that it (the ministry) is time consuming. You never get tired of going to the beach but you do when you are constantly with people. And if you are not a social butterfly and love relationships then this is not the kind of thing you want to do unless you are called to do it.

When asked about the challenges of this kind of ministry, Luke illustrates the "Fisherman" metaphor by describing himself in a manner that makes it unmistakable that he reaches out to people on a personal level:

One minute you are over the moon and the next day you are devastated.

The "Fisherman" metaphor assists us to understand that this Church planter has, as his primary motivation, the "catch". That is, the task of helping people share in his faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Luke's attitudes to the value of training will be secondary. Overall, his story points to a preference before commencement, in training that is specific to Church planting, and in the delivery of training options chosen by himself of a formal nature (as in the case of Matthew and James) as being the most helpful and appropriate in assisting him after he had begun his Church planting work. His case does not illustrate a strong attitude to formation or coaching during planning and this points to the possibility that the primacy of his evangelism leaves little room for anything else. The primary support structure he mentions is that of the team around him (including his wife) who are involved with him in the establishment of the new work.

5.8 The extended metaphor framework

When telling the story of Deborah as a Church planter however, it became clear that a metaphor from the framework of Malphurs and Mancini (2004) was not appropriate. In part, this is because of the way she centred her thinking about what “Church” means:

We should be a battleship not a cruise liner. On a cruise liner everyone is just being entertained whereas on a battleship everyone has a job.

Comments like these show that Deborah is a different kind of planter and the community or cause oriented metaphors don’t really apply to her. There is a gap here that requires that the framework provided by Malphurs and Mancini be extended.

In describing how the new Church came into existence, Deborah said:

This (i.e. the team) had formally been a Bible study group that we ran and that group was just exploring what God was saying to us and leading us to and we’ve been doing that for a few years.

For Deborah, growing a Church is not the responsibility of the Church planter or their team. She said, “Only God will do it”. She is clear how things will happen:

I think that the times when the Church really advances is when we are on our knees and we are hearing from God the most.

Her instinct about training is that she would network rather than source training “from one institution”, illustrating that she places a lot of trust in her instincts. One of her last comments in the interview she described the right kind of leadership profile for a Church planter. The description she gives is consistent with the shepherd metaphor:

It’s got to be someone who’s not authoritarian at all; it’s got to be relational. It’s got to be understanding, coming alongside, to work with, to be able to motivate and go forward.

Yet Deborah’s leadership is more clearly understood in terms of a “priestly” metaphor. This metaphor describes a leadership that builds shepherd-like leaders around them with authority to lead and whose view of the Church is spiritual, in the sense that they see it as something beyond human organisations, and is described more as a union of people with their God.

Her attitude towards training is not a strong feature of her case. She has had general training, but prioritises in a way consistent with the “priestly” metaphor, her relationship with God. The same apparent indifference is present about coaching. Yet she does see relevance for informal training and seeks such networks and conferences that will support and strengthen her understanding of Scripture and her view of ministry. For her the key to planting is the recognition that it is God’s work. This view is consistent with the priestly metaphor and is a key element of her sense of authority as a Church planter.

The extended framework that would include Deborah therefore, would take the form below.

Table 5.4 Revised metaphor framework for understanding effective Church planters (based on Malphurs & Mancini, 2004, p. 78-79)

| <i>Servant</i> (Community) | <i>Shepherd</i> (Community) | <i>Harvester</i> (Cause) | <i>Messenger</i> (Community & Cause) | <i>Fisherman</i> (Cause) | <i>Priest</i> |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Denoting acts of personal service (Mat.18: 4; 23:11; Mk. 9:35; 10:35-45; Luke 12:37; 17:8 & Jn. 12:24-26) | Denoting care and spiritual provision for fellow believers (Jn.21: 15-17) | Denoting those involved in the immense task in a strategic sense (Mat.9: 37-38; Jn. 4:35-38) | Denoting someone who carries great authority and speaks on behalf of Another (Lu.6: 13; Jn.13: 16-17) | Denoting someone who reaches others on a personal level (Matt. 4:19; Mk.1: 17; Lu.5: 10) | Denoting someone who views the Church as a spiritual union and ministry as a matter of prayer and spiritual authority (1 Pet.2: 5,9; Rev.1: 6; 5:10) |

5.9 Conclusion

The metaphors describe a diversity of leadership styles existing amongst Church planters. Their unique make-up as leaders does impact on their perceptions about the critical issues in this study and the way these issues affect the conduct of their Church planting ministry. For example, each of the leaders has a preference for certain types of training. Matthew, because of his “Harvester” approach, looks carefully for a real plan for training across multiple learning methods (formal, non-formal and informal) while Deborah, as a “Priest”, places training as secondary to the pursuits of her spiritual life and requires learning to only be informal in nature. James, as a “Shepherd” leader, looks carefully for training that will benefit the Church and

therefore is firstly trained in practical ministry in a non-formal context within his church. Aquila, as a “Messenger” or “Servant” leader, has chosen training that is relevant and informal so as not to remove him from his role among the members of his community whom he serves. Luke, as the “Fisherman” leader, is open to any training (formal, non-formal or informal) as long as it will assist him to be effective in his evangelism work.

This variety of leadership styles extends to the different experiences they have had of coaching as well. Only Matthew and James have any clear evidence that gives any insight into the role of coaching among the Church planters in this study. And they describe this relationship as “supervision” rather than coaching. James may well have chosen this arrangement because of his close ties with his Church leader and it is possible that Matthew chose this because he wanted to attend to the accountability questions, confident his planning would cover everything else. The other participants, Deborah, Luke and Aquila, provide almost no evidence that would inform a greater understanding of the role of coaching for them as a Church planter. This lack of evidence points to the possibility that the intentionality needed to provide support in the form of a coaching relationship may not be universally present among Australian Church planters. It may also suggest that the priestly, fisherman and servant leaders may not prioritise coaching, on the grounds that it is a personal consideration and they have chosen to prioritise the needs of the people around them instead.

The leadership metaphors also illustrate the different perceptions among the participants of the role of formation. In this study all the participants agreed that formation is developmental and no-one has perceived this more than Deborah. Her view is that the formation of the leader is paramount. In their own ways however, Matthew, James and Aquila agree, while not necessarily discerning the value of formation from that of skills. Nevertheless, these Church planters recognise the way that formation contributes to the health and therefore the longevity of the Church planting leader. It is only Luke who has little to say about formation and it is ventured that this is only because, for him, evangelism is the primary factor.

The participants in the interviews also raised a number of important themes that have emerged that would be worthy of further study. For example, the case of Deborah has shown how a group of people can arrive together at a sense of concern for the spiritual welfare of an area, and makes a commitment to its welfare. This is done

without some of the usual supports like a full-time minister, purpose-built building, or financial backing of a Denomination. Each leader's experience of their relationship with their spouse is also significant. For example, Aquila speaks of the call to Church planting as, "a very distinctive call for both Priscilla and I" and James, when he described the decision to take specific Church planting training, says "we were the third couple" to go to *The Training Centre*. Matthew's comment was "I felt we must do it as a partnership or not do it at all". It is only Deborah and Luke who make no comment about their spouse's role. This points to two possibilities. Firstly, that the spouse does play a key role in the support and longevity of a Church planter. Secondly, it also points to the possibility that in the case of "Priestly" and "Fisherman" type Church planting leaders, this role may be assumed and supportive, rather than intentional and engaged. The interviews reflect the strength of the role played by the spouses and this role is worthy of further study.

Finally, the different metaphors help to understand the Church planters and their relationship with their sending Church or Denomination. The support of a sending Church or Denomination, in gaining access to training as preparation; the enhancement of training by coaching; and formation as developmental, is seen by some participants as very helpful support. But this is not the case of all the participants examined in these case studies. For some like Deborah, Luke and Aquila, there is little evidence of intentional support in terms of gaining access to resources and key professional development from any sending Church or Denomination. Indeed these three leaders have been able to find various ways to find the support they needed. The cases of James and Matthew are examples of how sending Churches or Denominations who proactively and reactively assist those they send out to access whatever the Church planter needs. Further consideration of this matter will be raised in the discussion chapter that occurs later in this thesis.

In the next chapter, Chapter 6, there will be further synthesis of the quantitative and qualitative data in order to bring an even clearer understanding of the perceptions of these Church planters about their work and their experience of training, coaching and formation and the way these experiences can assist in more fully understanding the survey data.

Chapter Six

Reflections on the telescopic and microscopic viewpoints

6.0 Introduction

The questionnaire results were reported in Chapter 4, in a series of figures and accompanying commentary, and Chapter 5 organised the perceptions arising from the interviews into a series of case studies. Chapter 6 brings the results from both the questionnaire and the interviews together, to provide another layer of analysis based on the perspectives of Church planters about training, coaching, formation and access. Specifically, in this chapter, the interaction of the participants' responses to both the interviews and the questionnaire will be presented in a side-by-side comparison.

Once the responses from the questionnaire had been analysed, issues arose that required further clarification and elaboration. For example, the type of training that the participants had undertaken could not be implied from the results of the questionnaire so this issue was explored during the semi-structured interview phase. These questions enabled the researcher to dig down into the perceptions of the Church planters to provide greater understanding about their perceptions of training and formation before they began their work; about what training, coaching and formation was useful after their work had been commenced; and what support they might describe as appropriate for them as Church planters. This would include how they may have been assisted to access the kind of training and coaching that would promote their formation. Before proceeding to the examination of the critical issues of this thesis, some clarification of the terminology used in the discussion outlined in this chapter will be presented.

6.1 Training as a preparation for Church planting

In this section, the participants' perceptions of training as a part of their preparation are examined. The term training in this study is used to describe a learning experience, designed to develop new skills in the person who is undertaking the

training (Allan, 2002; Mercer, 2005). In the questionnaire there were two items that asked for responses about training as preparation, specifically, items 2 and 4. The vertical axis shows the level of response made to the item, calculated as a mean score, and the horizontal axis shows how these responses have been partitioned into groups representing a level of experience as a Church planter. That is, 0-1 years, 1-5 years and 5+ years.

6.1.1 Results about training from the questionnaire

Item 2 stated *Training for my role, as a Church planter, was good preparation for me as a Church planter*. The figure below (6.1) reports the responses of the participants.

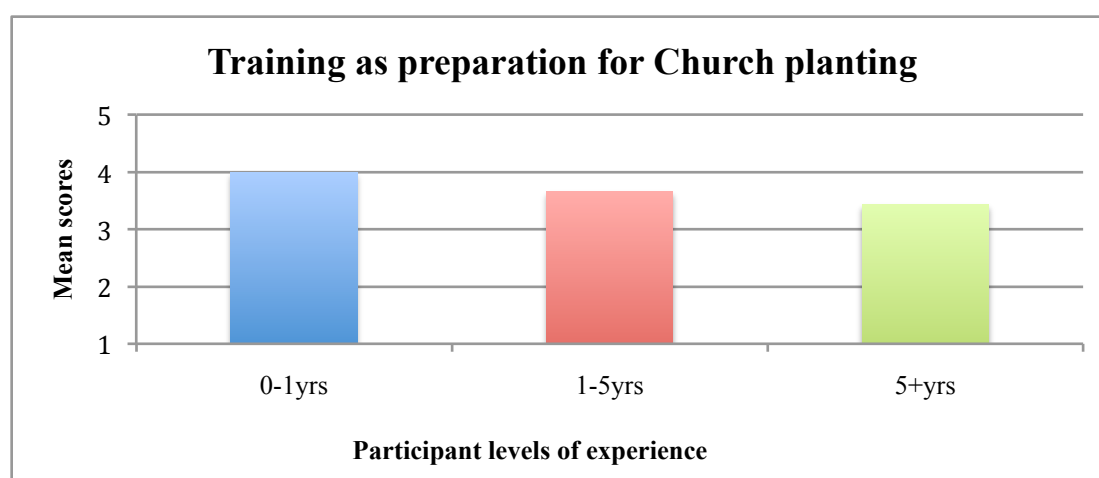


Figure 6.1 Training as preparation for Church planting

The analysis of this item, initially reported in Chapter 4, indicated that participants in this study believed that some form of training in preparation is valuable. The mean scores could not imply either the type of training that may have been experienced or exactly how many respondents were trained. It is noteworthy that the literature on training does not limit its value to a delivery that is prior to commencement of a Church plant. Harrison (2003), Connor (2008) and Hirst (2008) all conducted studies that looked at ongoing training once a worker was back in their workplace. These studies confirmed there was a link between new skill development and training. The individual responses of the participants to item 2 are incorporated into a table (Table 6.1) to further clarify the matter. The mean scores are noted in the column following the responses from each respondent's in their experience band.

Table 6.1 Participant responses in detail for item 2

| Participant No. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-----------------|---|---|---|----------------|---|---|---|----------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------|
| Response | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 3.66 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3.44 |

This table shows that two in three of the participants from each experience level provided *strongly agree or agree* responses to this item. This points to the fact that the Church planters who participated in this study did find training as preparation for Church planting important. The less favourable responses from participants 3, 5, 10, 11 & 15 point to the possibility that these participants did not have any training as preparation for their role as Church planters to reflect upon. This result may also mean that more experienced Church planters (participants 10, 11 and 15) value what their experience has taught them ahead of any training they may have undertaken. However, when exploring this issue during the interviews, it was found that one out of five Church planters did not receive any training either before or after they had begun work. Further, one had general ministry training before commencement but no specific training as preparation for Church planting; one had no training before commencement but accessed important training experiences afterward; one had taken up no formal training options either before commencing their work or afterward; and, two out of five received training as preparation for their work as a Church planter. This comparison indicates that intentional planning for Church planter preparation, either on the part of the sending Church or Denomination or the Church planter himself or herself, may be lacking.

Item 4 stated, *I learnt important skills from the training I received before I began my role as a Church planter*. The result is set out below in Figure 6.2.

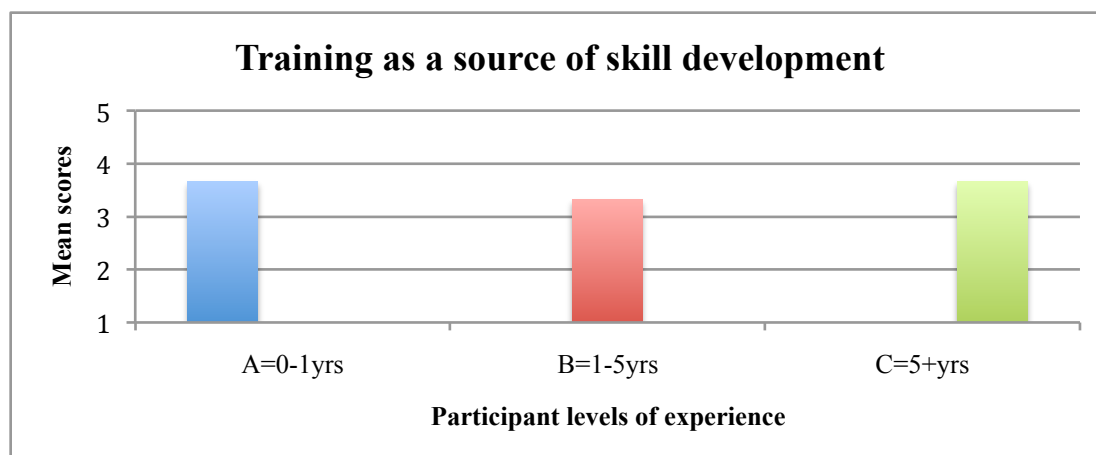


Figure 6.2 Training as a source of skill development

The responses reported in Chapter 4 for this item indicated the perception of the respondents was that some had acquired important skills through their training that they now find useful in their work as a Church planter. The mean scores for each of the three experience bands show that the 0-1 years and 5+ years groups are in the agree spectrum and the 1-5 years group result was on the positive side of neutral. However, as was the case with item 2, the opportunity to review the individual scores for this item provided more insights. These responses are set out below in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Participants Responses in Detail for Item 4

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3.66 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3.33 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.66 |

The scores in Table 6.2 shows that the responses of several participants across the three experience bands affected the mean scores overall of each group. The table also shows that participants 3, 5, 10, 14 & 15 gave responses to the item that point to the possibility that they had experienced no link to any training and the potential for an acquisition of skills for their work as Church planters within it. Participants 3, 5, 10 & 11 revealed in their response to item 2 that they had not experienced training as preparation. However, taking the responses to items 2 and 4 together, the results verify that notwithstanding what the participants identified above believed, two in three of the participants in this study affirm the value of training as a preparation for their work as Church planters and they believe that this training added to their skill-set as they prepared for their role as Church planters. This latter result is consistent with the

literature that promotes a link between training and skill development (e.g. Allan, 2002; Mercer, 2005). The responses of the rest of the participants indicate that either they did not receive training or that the training experience was not helpful in the acquisition of skills for their role as a Church planter. The interviews therefore will be used to illuminate the type of training valued by the participating Church planters and the most appropriate delivery of this training.

6.1.2 Insights on training from the interviews

In the interviews some saw that “training” referred to formal study at recognized learning institutions and this kind of training may include online learning. The perceptions of the interview participants explain this further.

Matthew is particularly committed to a formal type of training delivered alongside the requirements of his work as a Church planter and his training experience is ongoing:

I enrolled in a Masters of Divinity. And I am continuing study now, a Doctorate of Ministry.

His preference for formal training is understood as comprising approved courses done at recognized institutions involving classroom learning. Others, such as Deborah, also committed to an approved training course offered at her Denominational college that was a general preparation for Christian ministry within her Denomination:

I was trained (in Denominational college).

Two other participants also received formal and non-formal training. But not at a seminary or university, but an approved training centre that offered courses that were specific to the work of Church planting. This was *The Training Centre* mentioned in the opening chapter of this thesis. Both Luke and James confirm their experience. Luke said:

I received (specific planter training) through The Training Centre;

James verified it also:

We came up to The Training Centre.

But these two participants who took the training specific to Church planting have also continued with formal study at other institutions.

Luke indicated his choice:

I did several theology units.

James confirmed his ongoing learning:

Now I am continuing to study through Tabor College.

James' decision to continue his studies at Tabor College most likely arises from the value he places on learning as a way of preparing for future ministry roles. These kinds of decisions illustrate the way in which some of the Church planters in this study took a proactive stance in their learning and made decisions consistent with a desire to be a lifelong learner.

James reflected about the training that was offered from his Church. This is a type of "non-formal" training and is described as unaccredited training offered to assist those engaged in ministry in their local Church. James is the only one of the five participants in the interview process who had undertaken this type of training:

I started a two year internship programme that was in-house (referring to his local Church). It was a mixture of four hours of lectures, minimum of 10 hours of practical ministry and then there was a mentoring side of things.

The third definition for training in this study is known as "informal" and refers to learning that comes from conferences, networks and personal reading and research. There was a wide experience of this type of training among the participants involved in this study. For example, Matthew, who has a strong formal training background, also clearly sees the value of informal training. He mentioned several types of training as being part of his experience in Church planting:

A Church growth conference in Korea; I read key books about what it is to plant a Church; the tool kit by Bob Logan (referring to a resource prepared by the author Bob Logan to assist Church planters while they were progressing in their ministry).

These insights suggest that one mode of delivery and type of learning used in training may not necessarily suit everyone. Deborah's experience is similar to James', but while her formal training was at a Denominational college, her informal training includes sources of training beyond her Denomination. There are multiple sources of this "informal" training available:

Just us seeking people out; going to conferences; joined Willow Creek Association; the network at Hillsong (a Church in a capitol city nearby); accessing training sessions.

The list of options in informal training may extend to include membership in what might be called professional networks for those involved in ministry. Deborah's evidence does not delineate between networks for Church planters or ones that are inclusive of anyone in Church based ministries, but it does show the variety that exists within the dimensions of informal training.

Aquila's evidence showed that he has had no formal training. However he has developed several sources of informal training to assist him in the ongoing development of both he and his wife as Church planting leaders:

Conferences and conversations; we are wide readers; we're subscribed to "Leadership" (reference to a regular journal on leadership from a Christian perspective).

This informal training however, on the basis of this evidence, does seem to depend on the initiative of the Church planter involved. For this kind of training to work, the Church planter themselves must take the responsibility of the learning to access resources personally, having determined what kind of resources he/she may require. The accessing of these resources is based on decisions made about outcomes and learning needs by the participant personally. This is very different from formal training where the learner is required to be in a learning environment and then must complete evidence to confirm that he/she has learnt what is in the curriculum.

6.1.3 Summary

By considering the questionnaire and interview responses in this study together, two issues arise. Firstly, that training delivery in multiple forms is the preferred mode of delivery of training to the participants. Secondly, informal training that that can be directed to the personal challenges a Church planter is facing in their ministry, is the highly valued. Ideally this can be delivered through modes such as seminars, workshops, networks and discussions with peers. Denominations and individual Churches may offer Church planters formal and even non-formal training, but the Church planters may also access these methods of training themselves at their own initiative.

This result vindicates the value of delivering training as a preparation for the work of Church planting, especially if this training leads to the acquisition of significant skill development relevant to Church planting. It shows also, that the mode of training, if it is flexible in its delivery, is also advantageous; and, the relevance of the training is a key criterion when considering undertaking training particularly if this means the Church planter must leave their work to be trained. The needs of the Church planters in this study varied significantly. This uniqueness of each participant prompts him or her to prefer certain types of training. In the case of Luke the preference was for formal theology units that proved vital in his development; the cases of James and Matthew there is present a strong commitment to lifelong learning; and Deborah and Aquila's pursuit of informal training was equally significant to them.

6.2 Coaching that enhances training

The term coaching is understood to describe a relationship that is designed to assist someone who has acquired new skills to transfer their learning to their area of work or influence, and support the ongoing formation in the learner, so that the foundational learning experience that the training provided may be enhanced (Crane, 1999; Wang & Wentling, 2001). This section compares the results of both the questionnaire and the interview to understand more fully the way that coaching may enhance training.

6.2.1 Results about coaching from the questionnaire

Two items from the questionnaire were used to identify the perceptions held by the participants about coaching. Specifically, these were items 3 and 5.

Item 3 stated *Coaching helped me with the strategic aspects of my role as a Church planter*. The results from this item are represented below in Figure 6.3.

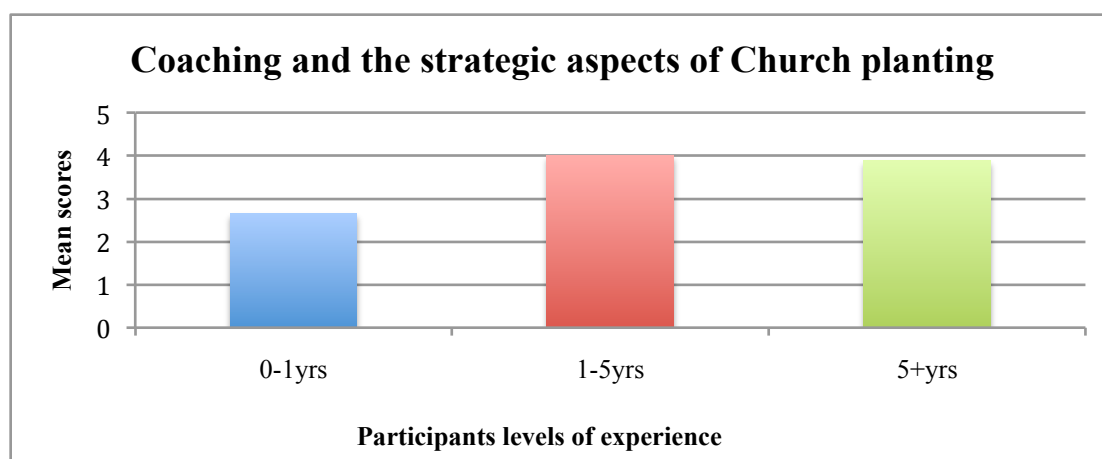


Figure 6.3 Coaching and the strategic aspects of Church planting

When the initial reporting of this item in Chapter 4 was made, the analysis was said to indicate that some of the participants had been able to make the connection between a coaching relationship and the strategic aspects of their work. The mean scores for the 1-5 years and 5+ years experience bands (both in the *agree* spectrum) validated the view of the participants that there does exist a connection between coaching and the strategic aspects of the Church planting role. It also showed that those in their first year of ministry have a less favourable view of coaching which may have been influenced by the limiting factor of their experience.

The full record of responses of the participants to item 3 is set out in the table below.

Table 6.3 Participant responses in detail for item 3

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2.66 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3.88 |

Across the three experience bands, eight of the 15 participants indicated that coaching had assisted them with the strategic aspects of their work. This result confirms the findings of the existing research (Crane, 1999; Wang & Wentling, 2001), without implying any detail about the type and delivery of the coaching relationship to the participant. However, some respondents may not have had an experience of coaching upon which to reflect. The results from item 2 in the questionnaire, reported in Table 6.3, shows that participants 3, 5, 10 & 11 (3 of the 5 participants noted for their responses to items 2 and 4 relating to the belief they had no training as preparation) as

well as (in this case), participants 6 and 7, belong to a group of participants who may not have had the experience of a coaching relationship.

Item 5 stated the following *The experience I had with a coach made the training I had more valuable to me*. The result is represented in Figure 6.4.

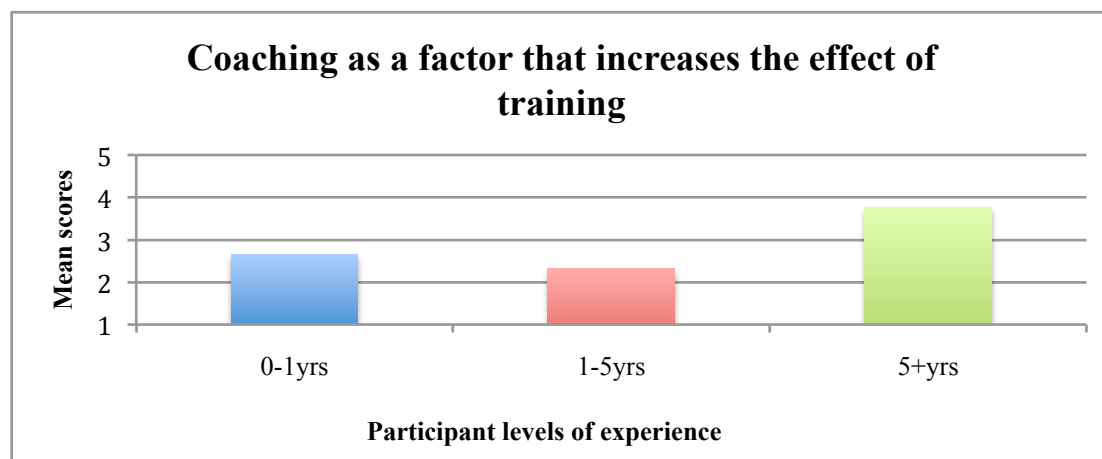


Figure 6.4 Coaching as a factor that increases the effect of training

In Chapter 4 the results from this item results indicated that participants in the 5+ years experience band, believed that their experience of a coaching relationship had added to the value of their training. Alternatively, participants in the other two experience bands did not seem to perceive any kind of any connection between coaching and an increase in the effect of the training received. The actual scores set out below in Table 6.4 clarify this initial perception.

Table 6.4 Participant responses in detail for item 5

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.66 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2.33 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3.77 |

The full record of responses to item 5 supports the degree of affirmation by the participants about the enhancing effect coaching may have on training. It shows that the eight participants (as in the case of the report of item 3) have employed *agree* and *strongly agree* responses that reflect their belief that the coaching they had received increased the value of their training. Seven of these participants came from the most experienced group in the study. In addition, the results from the questionnaire on this item, confirmed that one in two of the participants in the study had found that coaching helped them with the strategic aspects of their work. Therefore, on this

connection between training and coaching, just over half the participants in this study confirmed their agreement with the literature on the role of coaching (Crane, 1999; Wang & Wentling, 2001). However the same results identify that there were a significant number of participants who did not make this connection between coaching and training. This result may illustrate that not everyone who enters the field of ministry known as Church planting, has access to training and coaching and it is speculated that this is because they do not have a supportive and collaborative relationship with a sending Church or Denomination in place.

6.2.2 Insights on coaching from the interviews

The interview group was asked to talk about the specific type of coaching relationships they had experienced and how this was delivered. During this process however, it was discovered that Deborah had never accessed the services of a coach at any stage in her work as a Church planter. When she was asked in the interview, she gave a simple “no” and did not elaborate further. It is ventured that this fits someone whose life and ministry is described by the priestly metaphor as outlined in Chapter 5. When the views of Luke and Aquila are also taken into account, there is little evidence that they had, come to value coaching, as they had no experience of it. Aquila had nothing to reflect upon about coaching and only commented that:

There isn't a ready pool of coaches in our Denomination.

Luke's responses in the questionnaire reflected *strongly agree* answers to the items 3, 5 and 9 which enquired, about the perceptions about coaching. These responses seem to suggest for example, that he did find coaching assisted him with the strategic aspects of his work. Yet he seems to have attempted to develop a coaching relationship, but it was not successful:

I tried formal coaching but it never worked out.

Instead, he described what appears to be peer-to-peer coaching. He said:

Everybody in our planting team is a coach to each other.

The perceptions on this type of coaching from Luke's interview were quite developed:

I think with these informal arrangements you can get to the heart of the matter...I found with informal coaching that it deals with things that are far

more personal. Rather than just giving an answer. I guess there is a different paradigm to informal coaching.

Far from being opposed to the idea of a coaching relationship for Church planters, Luke proposes a new form or paradigm. This suggests that Luke believes that coaching as a support, may take many forms, and the flexibility and relevance criteria are the critical factors for them. The participants' insights on the matter of what might be called "formal" coaching relationships for a Church planter from the interviews, were only available from Matthew and James. While both these participants have some experience in a coaching relationship to draw upon, James described his experience of coaching as mentoring:

It was more mentoring than an official coach who could help us from experience.

Mentoring was discussed in Chapter 2 as a related support role that prioritises the person rather than the development of a person's skill set. This suggests once again, that on occasions, some participants in this study used the terms coach and mentor interchangeably. Matthew's response on this question indicates that he also uses the terms in this manner:

I chose to come under the influence of the leader who oversights me and I meet with him once a month. I ask him to coach or mentor me so I am in relationship with someone.

Matthew also described in some detail the value of this kind of relationship to him while in ministry:

Someone asking me questions with a view to giving me self-revelation about the aspects of ministry in which I am involved. Obviously with self-revelation you usually have energy to do something about it. Helping me debrief. Not looking for answers.

This participant's experience makes reference to the strategic issues of Church planting and showed that he had experienced a type of coaching role:

Not looking for answers – just looking for someone to hear what was going on in my world and urging me on at different times and asking questions about whether there was a better way to get things done.

This does not specifically mention strategic issues, but it does indicate that the tasks relating to Church planting were addressed during Matthew's sessions with his coach:

(A coach) helped me to debrief. Asking questions about whether there was a better way to do things.

Two of the five participants in the interview process (Matthew and James), provided the only insights on the question of the mode and delivery of coaching. They suggested that coaching can enhance the training experience of a Church planter and that such a relationship is delivered alongside the Church planter as they are at their work. However, when asked to comment on what might be relevant for Church planters coming into this work, some participants expressed views pertinent to the question of mode and delivery. Specifically, that the participants in this section of the interviews, spoke of a variety of support structures both formal (like a coach or supervisor) and informal (like those who personally encourage or even mentor the Church planter). To illustrate this, Matthew, who experienced a coaching relationship, was asked to speculate about what would be valuable for a new Church planter. He clearly referred to what might be described as a multiple support model for new Church planters that would assist them in what they were doing:

Constant encouragement and supervision so that there is a capacity to get things sorted and move forward. There shouldn't be only one support person – a Church planting team can have a number of supporters for the various facets of what they are doing.

Matthew seems to be proposing a less formal and collaborative model for supporting Church planters in the field. Both Deborah and Aquila, who had no coach during their work as Church planters, were able to describe the type of relationship that would have assisted them. Deborah had a number of approaches in mind. On the one hand there was a desire for someone who would support them (perhaps like a mentor) prayerfully, and on the other, someone experienced enough to answer questions related to the work (like a coach). Her specific comment however, seems to indicate that she believes that the terms, coaching and mentoring are synonymous:

Probably to have someone who can be a coach mentor and someone who would pray for them.

This comment is illustrative of the perception that the participants are looking for flexible but comprehensive support arrangements to work with them especially while they are in the field. Aquila though, seems to prefer to make reference to the strategic issues when he gave his response to the question he received on the value of coaching:

I think if we'd had coaching or had known the right questions to ask him we would have been able to move faster.

This response indicates that Aquila sees a coaching role as one that would have assisted him to complete the tasks more effectively that were set before him over his time as a Church planter. Yet two of the three insights outlined here are from Church planters with no experience of coaching. Perhaps Aquila and Deborah were not assisted to access a coach; perhaps they simply did not seek it; or, they did not recognise the value such a relationship may have for them in their ministry. Their case studies illustrated that there may be little intention and planning in assisting Church planters in Australia to access training and coaching suitable for them in their ministry.

Luke, who had spoken negatively about formal coaching, had positive comments about what he called “informal coaching”. This terminology may be interpreted as relating to Matthew and Deborah’s “multiple supports”:

I found that with informal coaching, it deals with things that are far more personal. Rather than giving an answer.

A mentoring relationship is being described here, as he seems to link informal coaching with personal issues. There is no mention of the strategic issues in this evidence.

Although Aquila has had no experience of coaching, both he and his spouse have several less experienced Church planters working with them, and he arranges for the coaching for these aspiring leaders:

Yes. We work very much as their coaches. We work with them looking at other options helping them to look for their own answers.

The absence of the experience has not coloured his view on the value of coaching. This support for coaching is shared by James who also commented on the assistance he would offer before a new Church planter began their work:

I would be encouraging people to explore practical ways to empower them before they jump into it.

6.2.3 Summary

All these results about the perceptions of the participants however, reflect that while the Church planters in this study have limited experience of coaching, it is still valued by them in principle. The results confirm just over half of the participants suggested that they believe coaching had assisted with the strategic aspects of the Church planting work. In addition, just over half of the participants believed that coaching enhanced what training they had undertaken in the manner prescribed by the literature on the subject of training and coaching. Once again the mode of delivery for coaching preferred by the participants requires flexibility and collaboration, rather than simply arranging a coach for a Church planter. The results also showed that some Church planters when using the term “coach” also used the terms “supervision” and “mentoring” synonymously with the term “coach”. But in addition, the results lead to the speculation that some of the participants may have become Church planters on their own initiative and their plans did not necessarily include the accessing of a coach.

6.3 Formation is developmental

The first two research questions aimed to explore the type and mode of delivery of training and coaching and through these, formation. This section enquires specifically about the instruction on personal formation that may have been a part of the training that the Church planters in this study had received, either in a preparation phase of training or about the delivery of it once they were engaged in their ministry.

6.3.1 Results from the questionnaire

In the questionnaire, the participants’ views on formation were gathered from responses to items 6 to 8. The term “formation” in this study describes the process in the *personal* preparation of the Church planter. Rather than skill development and strategic guidance, formation refers to the effect upon the character of the person who is leading the Church planting team. These items relating to formation begin with item 6. The item states: *I believe that personal formation is crucial to me in my work as a planter.* The figure below (6.5) sets out the results.

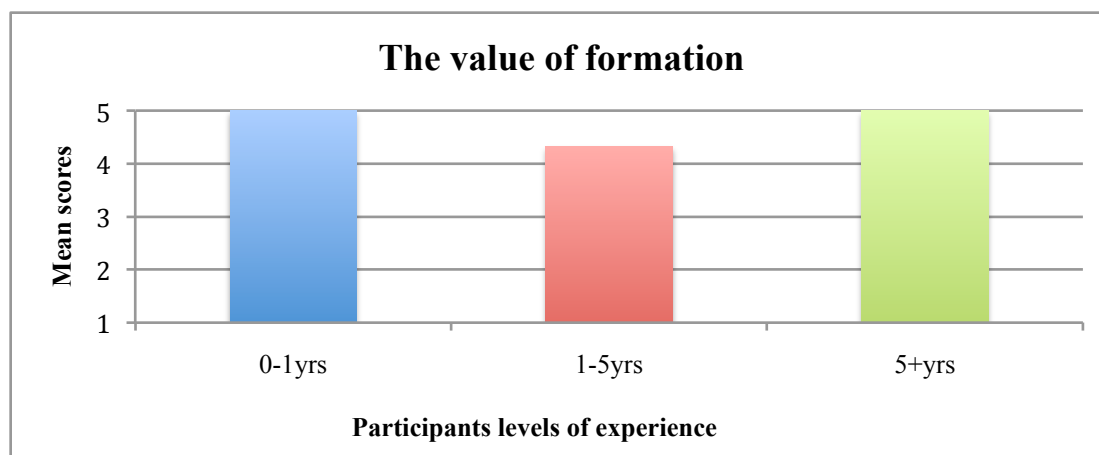


Figure 6.5 The value of formation

The analysis of this item initially reported in Chapter 4 indicated a strong sense of agreement among the participants about the important role formation plays in their lives as Church planters. The individual scores of the participants were almost all *strongly agree* responses. There is no doubt that the participants in this study see formation as crucial to their effectiveness.

The next item was asked for a response to: *I received in my training instruction that led to the development of my formation*. The result from item 7 is represented below in Figure 6.6.

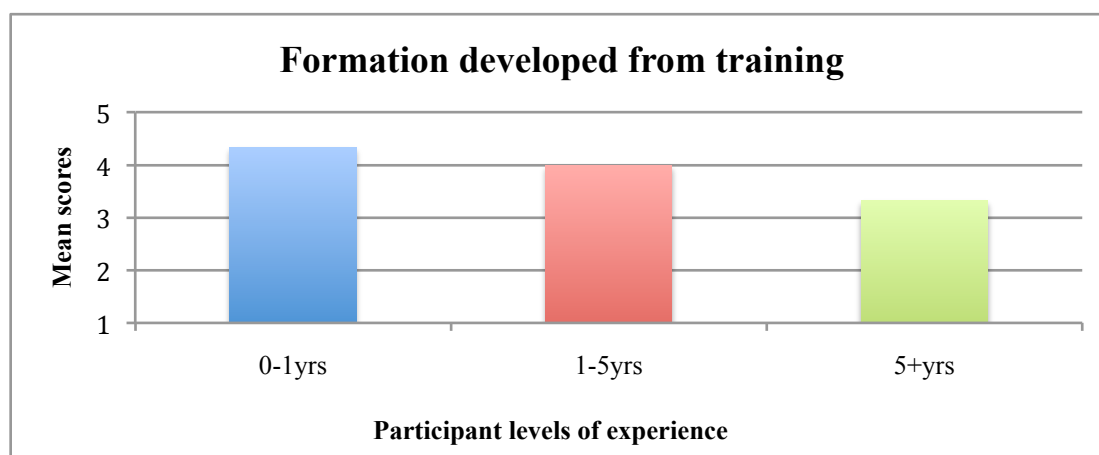


Figure 6.6 Formation developed from training

When this result was reviewed in Chapter 4, the conclusion was drawn that formation has been a part of the training experiences that the participants have undertaken. It is unclear whether this training had been training as preparation or ongoing professional development. The results from the 0-1 years and 1-5 years experience bands were both in the *agree* spectrum (4.33 and 4 respectively). The mean score for the 5+ years

experience band was slightly lower at 3.44, a score that approaches the *agree* spectrum.

The full set of scores for this item is set out below in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Participant responses in detail for item 7

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4.33 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3.44 |

The mean scores from the most experienced group (n=9) were affected by the fact that three of the participants (10, 11 & 15) and one participant in the 1-5 years band (n=3) gave contrasting responses. It is possible that this is explained by the fact that their training did not include formation; however, it is also possible that they do not, at this point, value training. Two in three of the participants however, do agree that there is a link between training as preparation and formation.

The participants were also asked to respond to the statement: *There has been more effect on the formation of my life through the processes of my ministry than in the training I have received*. The result is reported in Figure 6.7 below.

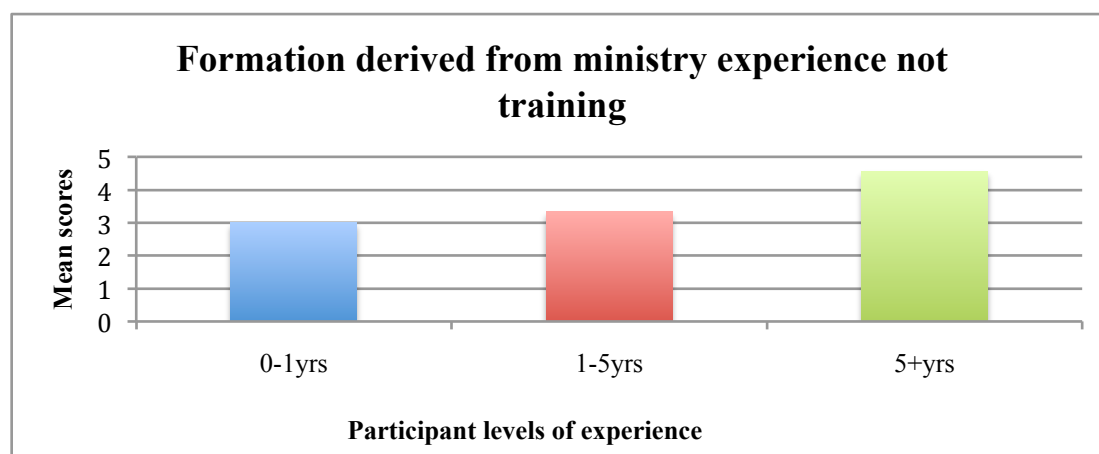


Figure 6.7 Formation derived from ministry experience not training

The mean score for the 5+ years experience band (in the *strongly agree* spectrum) seems to lead to the conclusion that, as a Church planter gains in experience, the ministry itself becomes the primary source of formation notwithstanding the content of their training. To assist in understanding this view, the individual scores are included below in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Participant responses in detail for Item 8

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3.33 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4.55 |

The individual scores indicate that, with experience, Church planters come to value their ministry above that of training in formation.

6.3.2 Insights on formation from the interviews

For some of the participants in the interviews, it was difficult to distinguish the value of formation from that of skill development. Among the participants there are some who value what was acquired in terms of new skills and in personal formation in their training as impossible to separate. Matthew's comment was:

Difficult to separate them...I don't know which is the cause and effect.

Luke also had a similar dilemma:

I think the personal formation is paramount...but without the training they don't relate to a world which is lost.

And James also could not separate them saying:

To separate them is difficult.

The comments of these three participants illustrate that they were not able to distinguish between the value of formation and that of their skill development. This may have been because their training incorporated both aspects in an effective way. It may also have been that their experiences as Church planters had also served to develop their formation and skill levels simultaneously. A third possibility might be that, for them, both carry equal weight in affecting them and their ministry as Church planters. One conclusion that can be made, however, is that Church planters do need both and some intentional planning might be employed to ensure that a Church planter is assisted to access both opportunities to develop their formation as a person and to acquire the requisite skills needed for a Church planter to be effective.

One participant in the interview process were able to distinguish between the value he gave to formation and to training, and he described the differences he saw in these two

critical issues arising in this study. Aquila saw the primary role of formation in sustaining them in the work they were doing:

The formation kept us there while we developed the skills. If we had been trained in the skills earlier I think then that would have been of benefit to us. But the skills are not as important to us for our survival as personal formation has been.

But this view is also shared by Matthew who reflected on his own relationship with God as pivotal to his effectiveness in the work of Church planting:

If I am not connected to Him (a reference to God and the role He played in his formation) I am not going to bear any fruit (a reference to effectiveness in evangelism).

There was a clear conclusion among some of the participants, that formation would be preferred before skills because of the way that formation helps the leader personally. James described skills as short term in value and formation as the long term value to him:

Skill forming was great just to make things happen. But that was a short term benefit. Personal spiritual formation has to be the greatest asset that takes place. You can only lead to the depth and growth that you have yourself.

These insights also show that James saw the value of formation to the Church planter as a primary influence. The view of Deborah is that the skills of a Church planter may be accessed in various forms of training and these skills assist in the practical outworking of the plans and strategies, but it is formation that prepares the planter personally and assists them in sustaining the work over time:

Definitely spiritual formation. Spiritual keeps you growing and becoming stronger and stronger.....skills alone won't do that.

6.3.3 Summary

The results from the items relating to formation led to several conclusions. Firstly, the value of formation was acknowledged as being critical to their work as Church planters and this view was held across all the participants in the study. Secondly, some of the participants verified that instruction in personal formation was a part of the training preparation for Church planting they had received. Thirdly, that 11 out of the 15 (73%) of the participants saw ministry experience as contributing more to their

formation than their training. Fourthly, participants could not separate the value of formation from that of the effect of acquiring new skills. In the case studies, James, Luke and Matthew for example believed the value of skills and formation to be inseparable; and fifthly, formation was viewed as a personal “asset”. For example, Aquila was asked if he felt formation was critical for survival and his response was “for endurance, perseverance.” The result from some participants that formation in ministry contexts becomes more significant to the formation they received in their training, does not infer that formation in any preparatory training is not useful to Church planters. Instead it illustrates the developmental nature of formation. Participants found formation in their training as preparation valuable and, significantly, its value seems to accrue in the process of ministry as well.

6.4 Accessing training and coaching

The third research question concerned the appropriate supports required for an Australian Church planter with specific reference to accessing training, coaching and formation. Access is the term employed in this thesis to describe the support offered to the Church planters in this study in entering appropriate training and coaching. The support of Church planters by the sending Churches and Denominations in the US, Europe and UK (Stetzer, 2003; Smith, 2007; Appleton, 2008) provide examples of what is envisaged.

6.4.1 Results about access from the questionnaire

The analysis of the results from items 11-15 were initially reported in Chapter 4 and indicated that, while the specific content or nature of the training and coaching offered to support the Church planter could not be implied, the results point to the possibility that there is little intentionality in the planning for the preparation and support of the Church planters in this study by their sending Churches or Denominations.

Item 11 asked for responses to: *I was offered training before I began my role as a Church planter by my sending Church or Denomination.* This item is about whether the initiative in the accessing of the training of the Church planter lay with his/her sending Church or Denomination. The individual responses for this item are summarised in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Participant responses in detail for item 11

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2.33 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 3.66 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2.11 |

The individual responses suggest that about one-third of the participants in the questionnaire were offered training by their sending Church or Denomination before beginning their Church planting role. The next item 12, asked for responses to: *I asked for and received training before I began as a Church planter by my sending Church/Denomination*. This was to continue the series of items about access and to examine whether the initiative lay with the Church planter and if it had been successful. The mean and individual scores are set out below in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Participant responses in detail for item 12

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2.33 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3.33 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.88 |

These individual responses show that one in three of the participants had in fact asked for support in accessing training of their sending Church or Denomination, and they had undertaken this training. The results also point towards the possibility that this pathway to access training through the support role of the appropriate sending agency or Denomination is not universally used. It may also be that, in the face of a lack of intention in the planning for them as Church planters, Church planters may identify their own training. Item 13 asked the participants to respond to *I asked for training but was not given training before I began as a Church planter* and the actual scores are clear that this was not the case. The mean and individual scores are set out below.

Table 6.9 Participant responses in detail for item 13

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2.33 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1.77 |

The mean scores result shows that the Church planters were not refused training when they sought it from their sending Church or Denomination and this is reflected in the individual scores with two exceptions. Two individual responses (participants 3 and 5) show that they had sought training unsuccessfully. There are two possible explanations for this result. First, these two participants had no collaborative relationship with a sending Church or Denomination in place; and second, it may be, that some sending Churches and Denominations are leaving the initiative for accessing training to the individual Church planters involved.

Item 14 asked for a response to the statement *I was not offered training before I began my role as a Church planter by my sending Church or Denomination*. The mean scores and individual responses are set out below in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10 Participant responses in detail for item 14

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 5 | 1 | 5 | 3.66 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2.33 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3.22 |

These scores at a first review give an inconclusive result on this item about training not being offered to the Church planters as they prepared for their work. But the individual scores show that just over one third of the Church planters who participated were able to confirm that training had not been offered. Another third took the *strongly disagree* response and this suggests that they are likely to be the one-third mentioned in respect of item 11.

The final item related to accessing coaching. In item 15 the participants were asked for a response to: *My sending Church/Denomination helped me find a suitable coach for me while I was a Church planter*. This item was included was to clarify if coaching had been offered to the Church planters by their sending Church or Denomination. The mean scores and individual responses are set out in the table below.

Table 6.11 Participant responses in detail for item 15

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0-1 years Mean | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1-5 years Mean | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 5+ years Mean |
|-------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------------|
| Response | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2.66 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3.33 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.77 |

Analysis of this item, initially reported in Chapter 4, indicated that less than one-in-three had been offered coaching. There are two possible interpretations for this result. The first is that providing a coach for a Church planter is not a major aspect of planning for the support of a Church planter; and the second, that some Church planters simply begin their Church planting work without any collaborative relationship with a sending Church or Denomination who might have assisted them by supporting them to access a coach.

6.4.2 Insights on access from the interviews

Matthew confirmed that the initiative to access the training he had undertaken lay with him by responding with “yes” when asked if he had accessed training himself. When the interview question sought clarity that he had not been offered it, he gave this by answering “no” and when asked again that he had generated his own training experience, he once again he simply said “yes”. He did however add the following:

Some of the conferences I was asked (by his Denomination) to attend and I have attended.

Deborah was the one in the interview process who had some general ministry training, taken a number of years before she began her work as a Church planter. She confirmed that the initiative in accessing her training since that point had been with her:

There has been no training as a Church planter at all. So it was just us.

Deborah’s story actually shows that she has a clear preference for following her own instincts relating to Church planting rather than training:

Regardless of how well you are trained and training is good, but if you don’t listen to God no one is going to see a Church grow because it is God who will grow the Church.

Luke was not offered training but a particular recommendation was made to him. He said:

The Training Centre was suggested to me.

And he added that his Denomination had offered to send him to specific training in evangelism in the US but this opportunity had not eventuated:

Years ago there was an offer to go to the US But my grade point wasn't high enough to be accepted anyway so I never bothered.

Luke did attend *The Training Centre* but his interview reveals no other relevant details on this question.

Aquila belongs to the most experienced group of participants in this group of Church planters. He has confirmed however, that he has had no training during this time of Church planting leadership. When asked about training and coaching he simply answered “not formally, no.”

James is an example of a Church planter who was carefully prepared by his sending Church. When asked if he was offered training he replied “yes” and when asked if the training at *The Training Centre* had been offered to him he again replied “yes”. His initiative had been to seek the non-formal training offered at his own Church:

I started a two-year internship programme that I thought would just be Bible Study but I ended up planting a Church.

The experiences of James show that he may have taken the first step but the specific Church planter training that he took was offered to him by his sending Church prior to his beginning his work as a Church planter. The interviews confirm that the mean scores and individual responses of the questionnaire are trustworthy. The results suggest that the sending Churches and Denominations involved in Church planting are still developing their own strategies for supporting those they send out.

Only one-in-three are sending their Church planters for training and less than one-in-three offering coaching to those they are sending into this work. The interviews point to the possibility that coaching may not be highly valued as yet by the sending Churches and Denominations. When asked about whether she had accessed coaching, Deborah said “no” and made no further comment. Aquila also replied “no” to this question but added, “I don’t think our denomination has coaching for planters.” The result confirms however, that two of the participants in the study did take some initiative on this matter for themselves. Matthew said:

I chose to come under the influence of a leader who oversights me. I asked him to coach or mentor. We get to talk about how we are going and to pray for each other and encourage one another and ask the difficult questions as required..

Luke's response was:

Yes – it depends what you mean

But later he added when asked about any informal arrangements:

Lots of these. I think with these informal arrangements you can get to the heart of the matter.

James was well prepared for his work and his response on the question of suitable coaching confirmed that it was offered to him:

It was offered to me.

The participants in these interviews included four who had come from the 5+ years and one from 1-5 years experience band. However, they could only confirm that one-in-five were offered coaching and point to the possibility that sending Churches and Denominations do not incorporate the support of a coach for their Church planters in their planning. It is speculated that this result suggests that the understanding and therefore the strategies of the sending Churches and Denominations, is still developing.

6.4.3 Summary

In this study, one-in-three Church planters have accessed training through the initiative of a supporting Church or Denomination; 1 in 3 Church planters have requested access to training from their sending Church or Denomination; and, 1 in 3 were not offered access to training. The results indicate the possibility that while training is generally not denied if requested, providing training and coaching is; either not a major aspect of planning in respect to Church planting by the sending Churches and Denominations or some Church planters are simply starting their Church planting without making reference to anyone. The results from the study about access to coaching suggest that the appointment of a coach may not be a strong policy aim of those who send out Church planters. It may also indicate, as was the case in respect of training that some Church planters begin without accessing training or coaching because they are operating independently.

6.5 An emergent issue

The stories of the Church planters in the interviews revealed that the co-operation of the spouse, including the way in which they share in the sense of calling felt by the Church planter, emerged as a potentially critical factor. The themes of partnership and a commitment to the requirements of this kind of ministry were prevalent in most of the stories of the participants.

Two of the Church planters involved in this study explained in the interview that not only was their spouse sharing in the decision to actually commit to the work, but that they were also sharing in the price to be paid for that decision. Matthew has a strong training, coaching and formation experience among the interviewees. He is equally clear about the role his wife played in the preparation and operation of the new faith community he leads. When describing how he came to make the decision about becoming a Church planter, he spoke of his wife's commitment to the task as essential:

I said if this was right for me to plant then when I get back I needed (my wife) to have a total change of mind because at the moment she's not interested.

Matthew's wife did have a total change of mind about the idea of becoming involved in Church planting work. Matthew described this as an epiphany (a meeting with God) about the matter:

She said she had had an epiphany in the mall near where she worked and realised a lot of people were near us who weren't experiencing life in all its fullness. So then we agreed to do it.

In Matthew's case therefore, the spouse of the Church planter becomes a full partner in the work. And when deciding on where their work would be done, it was a joint decision:

(My wife) and I felt very strongly that we were to stay in (Gracetown) and not to move around.

James also comments on his wife's role, but does not enlarge on it beyond an inference. When speaking about the early period of the new Church's life he said:

We took a small team of people out and basically met for a period of a couple of months at home.

This kind of arrangement points to the conclusion that James' wife must have been in agreement to the leading of the new work, and this is further verified by the fact that James' wife attended the training at *The Training Centre* with her husband:

We came up to The Training Centre..... and spent three and a half months doing the Cert IV.

The insights of the only female planter in the interview stage of the research (Deborah) showed exactly the same thing. When speaking about her sense of calling, her language is clear:

We thought God was leading us somewhere and we thought God wanted us to start a mission in that area and so we spoke to the couples (in their Bible Study group).

The language used is in itself significant. All the participants in the interview stage use the plural when describing ownership and involvement in the process of Church planting. It is a shared work with diverse roles.

Aquila spoke openly of the role of his wife Priscilla in the Church planting work he has been doing:

Yes, my wife and I were the primary planters.

He specifically describes his wife as a Church planter. This infers a greater range of involvement for Aquila's wife. It was also clear that it had been this way from the beginning of the whole process by the way Aquila spoke of his journey from the very beginning:

We moved to the district with the idea of being involved in the local Church but because the local Church wasn't there we built our own.

And, when speaking of the resourcing process to find out how he should handle certain things this shared work theme was again evident:

We worked very very intensively, reading and asking questions for any issue we didn't know how to deal with. But we didn't have formal training.

The descriptions offered by the participants in the interviews showed that a Church planter's relationship with his/her spouse is pivotal to the longevity and effectiveness of the leadership of the new faith community. It's not just a moral support, because the descriptions reveal a proactive role played by the spouse. Sometimes this went as far as sharing in the motivation for becoming Church planters. This sense of calling for each person means more than a spouse agreeing to allow the Church planter to do something and promising to support. This is what might be described as a shared "calling". Aquila and his wife are an example of this:

It was a very distinctive call for both (my wife) and I to say that we had to plant. But that was probably caused by a general dissatisfaction with Church.

This study confirms the importance of the collaborative nature of the support role of the spouses in the Church planters' work across two important decisions. Firstly, as to whether the venture will be attempted in the first place and secondly, as to the sharing of the burdens and demands of the new work equally but in different ways.

6.6 Summary of the reflections of the telescopic and microscopic viewpoints

This chapter synthesised the results from the questionnaire and the interviews and, from a process of comparison, has woven a story relating to the perceptions of Church planters about training, coaching, formation and access.

The comparison of the analysed results from the questionnaire and the interviews indicates that the participants in this study believe that, while there is a link between training and skill development, it is the flexibility of the training, both before they begin and after they have commenced, that is the key consideration. This flexibility is both in its timing but also in its form, meaning that formal, non-formal and informal training may all play a role in both preparing and providing ongoing professional development for a Church planter.

The results also showed that, while the participants in this study have limited experience of coaching, it is still valued by them in principle. The results suggest that over half of the participants believe that coaching had assisted with the strategic aspects of the Church planting work. In addition, the participants verify an enhancing

effect upon training as prescribed by the literature on the subject of training and coaching. Once again, the mode of delivery for coaching preferred by the participants needs flexibility and collaboration, rather than simply arranging a coach appointment. The participants in the interviews however, were not able to add significantly beyond these observations.

The Church planters in this study were particularly strong in their belief that the personal formation of a leader is a key asset in their ministry as Church planters. Some were able to identify and validate that the inclusion of formation principles in the training they received as preparation for their work was critical in its importance to their work. It also became evident from the questionnaire and interviews that formation continues to be valuable to Church planters, while they are in the field.

Access to relevant training and coaching from the results of the questionnaire showed that some sending Churches and Denominations are supporting their Church planters by assisting them to access training that includes attention to formation; the acquisition of key skills; coaching that enhances the training received; and assistance from a coach with the strategic aspects of Church planting. This seems to be true whether the Church planters initiate the process or whether the initiative lies with the sending Church or Denomination. The results indicate however, that this is not true of all the participants in this study. The interviews show the role that sending Churches and Denomination may play, but the results of both the questionnaire and interviews seem to suggest that some Church planters enter their work without a collaborative relationship in place with any sending Church or Denomination.

In the final chapter of this thesis, a discussion of the findings will occur. Included in this discussion are matters that confirm the evidence from the literature that was examined in Chapter 2, and some findings that may add to the literature relating to the issues raised in this study. The discussion also includes some reflection on the practical implications of these findings and certain areas for future research that might be considered.

Chapter 7

Discussion

7.0 Introduction

In the final chapter of this thesis, the themes developed throughout each of the preceding chapters, are discussed. This will include: an outline of the research questions and the aims of the study; a description of the methodology that guided the thesis; a section in which the main findings are summarised alongside the research question to which they relate. This section also incorporates a description of how these findings contribute to current theories about Church planting and the implications of the findings for current Church planting practice; a description of the limitations of this study; and, a review of suggested areas for future research.

The focus of this research is on training, coaching, formation and access to these resources from the perspectives of current Church planters in Australia. These four critical issues emerged from the literature review of this study in Chapter 2 and guided the framing of three research questions:

1. What type and mode of the delivery of training and formation prepares Australian Church planters before they commence?
2. What type and mode of the delivery of training, coaching and formation assists Australian Church planters once they have begun?
3. What support structures are most appropriate for Australian Church planters?

The study therefore, endeavoured to explore how the leadership for Church planting might be prepared by training; how that training may be enhanced by coaching; how ongoing formation can be encouraged; and, how access to training and coaching could be arranged in a manner which would be supportive of a Church planter. To achieve this aim, Church planting leaders were invited to contribute their perceptions and impressions about their work through a questionnaire and an interview.

Following, in the next section, is a summary of the methodology used in this study.

7.1 Methodology

Church planters construct a unique reality as they interact within their own social context. The challenges, struggles, successes and failures of Church planting create a unique milieu in which to work and a constructivist epistemology was chosen to manage the multiple realities that would be present from even a small number of participants. The theoretical stance of this study is interpretivist so as to gain insights by investigating the matter as a whole and the overall approach naturalistic. Two metaphors describe the framework of the data collection instruments for this mixed methods study. They illustrate the role that both the questionnaire and the interviews performed in assisting the participants to share their views about the critical issues of this research. The metaphor for the questionnaire, was that of a telescope that revealed the broad landscape of the field of Church planting through the prism of the lived experiences of Church planters. The metaphor for the interviews was a microscope that examined in finer and deeper detail, the perceptions of the Church planters on themes that could not be fully resolved by the more telescopic approach of the questionnaire. The microscope gave to the study the ability to investigate at greater depth the four critical issues as they relate to the Church planters. As the data emerging through the telescope set the scene, the data emerging from the interviews brought an understanding of the issues relating to training, coaching, formation and access by elaborating and clarifying them.

The results from the Likert items in the questionnaire came in the form of numerical scores, extracted from the Likert scales for each item. These were analysed by the calculation of mean scores, to determine the level of agreement of participants on each matter raised in the questionnaire. Responses to the Likert items were presented in the form of various tables and figures, in order to represent the responses of the participants according to a number of levels of experience among them.

The qualitative data from the five participants in the interviews gave the researcher the in-depth perspective of how these participants do Church planting and the part that training, coaching, formation and access play across that whole landscape. Four themes were chosen to provide a framework for the organisation of this data in the case studies. The first two of these themes were derived from the literature; the third

from the research questions; and the last emerged from the data. This framework was: a) the motivation to become a Church planter; b) the formal supports that were in place to find training and coaching; c) the strategies employed when planting a Church and; d) the individual vision of Scripture and ministry.

The next section outlines the main findings of this study with specific reference to each of the three research questions. Incorporated into each of the findings are descriptions of matters that contribute to the theory relating to Church planting in Australia.

7.2 Main Findings

The main findings of this research are grouped under the research question to which they relate. Included with these findings is a description of areas where some contribution to theory has been made as a result of this study.

Research Question 1: *What type and mode of the delivery of training and formation prepares Australian Church planters before they commence?*

The first research question was framed to enquire of the participants in this study about training and formation in the pre-commencement phase to starting their new faith community. There were two findings.

Finding One: a variety of training delivery methods was effective when delivering training before Church planters begin their work.

The participant's responses in the questionnaire included two-thirds who were able to confirm that training as a preparation for their work, had been valuable to them; and, that it had addressed the acquisition of skills and formation. In the interviews, the training experiences varied. For example, one had general ministry training that would be characterised as being formal training and delivered largely in a classroom setting. The participants who did have specific Church planter training before they had begun as Church planters had completed a competency-based training course at *The Training Centre* and this used formal and non-formal modes of delivery. The work of Hirst (2008) had concluded that effective training is training that is applicable to the workplace to which the learner will return; and, Connor (2008) had found that alternatives from formal classroom settings could provide more effective training. James described his training as "a focus on the key elements of Church planting"; and, Luke spoke of the value of the formal training in theology as good preparation. These

examples of the findings from the study verify that what the two authors discovered from within an Australian business context about training delivery was found to be applicable in the field of Christian ministry known as Church planting. Namely, that a variety of training types are helpful in assisting the learner to acquire the skills they need to do their work.

Finding Two: Formation is vital to Church planters regardless of the training they undertake.

Some of the participants in this study had experienced the successful mix of skills, theology and formation in a variety of training methodologies that were described in the literature (Brynjolfsen & Lewis, 2006; Gibbs, 2005; Logan, 2006). Two-thirds of the participants verified that the training they had undertaken in their preparation phase had contributed to their formation as a leader in preparation for Church planting. Of the participants who had undertaken training in the preparation phase for Church planting, James and Luke gave some insight. James spoke of formation arising from the 15-week competency-based training course where the training is delivered in formal and non-formal settings. He spoke of this course as something that provided him, referring to formation, with “the greatest asset”; Luke took the same course as James and while he makes no comment in his interview, he was part of the two-thirds of the participants in the questionnaire, who confirmed a positive connection between their formation and their training prior to beginning their Church planting work. This finding about formation and the connection of it to various forms of training, verified what the literature cited above, from within the field of Christian ministry but from non-Australian contexts, had observed. This confirmation argues powerfully for the inclusion of formation in all training options pertinent to Church planters in Australia.

Research Question 2: *What type and mode of the delivery of training, coaching and formation assists Australian Church planters once they have begun?*

This question relates to enquiries made of the participants about training, coaching and formation in the post-commencement phase of their Church planting ministry. There were two main findings in response to this research question and also a contribution to the theory of Church planting.

Finding One: a coaching relationship assists the Church planting leader in the field, with the transfer of the skills, acquired in the pre-ministry training.

As the themes from the semi-structured interviews emerged, it showed that they were indeed perceived differently and in noticeably subtle terms. For example, one participant who described a coaching relationship did so using the term “mentor”; another used the term coach with “supervisor”. A third participant spoke of “informal” coaching as his preferred experience. The final two participants had no coaching relationship to report. Flexibility and relevance seem to have been important insights about coaching from the perspectives of the participants in this study. These findings echoed the research of Wang & Wentling (2001), a study which emphasised the role that coaching plays to enhance the transfer of learning to the place of work; and, Crane (1999) who reported on the change to behaviour that occurs when a coach is involved as a post-training strategy. In its original context in the literature, the principle was that coaching assists in the transfer of skills. As reported in this study, this principle is found to be consistent from its original non-Australian and business context to also operate as a principle in the Australian Church planting context.

Finding Two: formation in the post-commencement phase of Church planting may be augmented by the effect of the ministry itself.

Item 8 had asked for the participants’ responses on the effect of ministry on formation and almost 75% of the participants verified that ministry does affect formation positively. This was not a repudiation of the value of formation in the pre-commencement training, but only to illustrate that formation is developmental and helps leaders to be effective and sustained throughout their ministry (Stoltzfus, 2005). Three of the Church planters who participated in the interviews with some experience of coaching were James, Matthew and Luke. James’ experience of coaching (what he called “more a mentor-ship”) led him to describe his future intention about coaching, as “I would be very strongly intentional to have people around me who could offer me resources and influence me in my decisions.” Matthew noted, that it helped him to “have someone to hear what was going on in my world and urging me on at different times and whether there was a better way to get things done.” Luke’s “informal coaching” which he described as a “new paradigm” was able to “deal with things that are far more personal.” Therefore, the finding cited from this study confirmed what was in the literature from a Christian context about coaching, as applicable in this Australian Church planting context as it is in its original context.

A contribution to theory and practice relating to coaching:

There is some evidence emerging from the study that coaching may assist a Church planter in the processing of the strategic aspects of their work. This finding initially emerged from the questionnaire and in particular in the responses made to item 3. Just over one out of two respondents felt that coaching had assisted them in resolving the strategic issues related to the development of the new faith community. In his case study, Aquila commented that he felt the progress of the new Church might have been faster if a coaching relationship to address issues to do with the development of the new Church had been in place. Luke felt that the informal coaching among his peers was instrumental as a different paradigm for coaching to address their questions about the new faith community they were leading. It was indicated in this study that coaching may do even more than enhance developing skills (Crane, 1999) and assist with the ongoing formation of a leader (Stoltzfus, 2005). A coach may also assist a Church planter in the processing of the strategies related to the work of Church planting that are unique in Christian ministry. This might include the approach of Church planters to evangelism; to a methodology for the discipleship process; to the timing and presentation of vision; and the empowerment and deployment of new leaders. Therefore, a coaching relationship that addressed the strategic aspects of Church planting may be found to address effectiveness and longevity in the work of Church planting.

Research Question 3: *What supports are most appropriate for Australian Church planters?*

Finding One: An existing relationship with a sending Church or Denomination is a significant factor that affects access to training, coaching and formation.

Those close to a sending Church had definite advantages when seeking formal training, formal coaching or supervision and formation. This access to training as a preparation and coaching that would promote formation and assist in the transfer of skills during Church planting was shown to be the appropriate support for Church planters found by this study. James' experience fits this scenario and to some extent so does Matthew's. But this is well established in the US, Europe and UK that the sending organisations arrange the access that the Church planter needs to develop ongoing expertise and personal transformation (Appleton, 2008; Smith, 2007; Stetzer & Bird, 2009).

James' sending Church proactively worked with him to organise different training options. This included a non-formal course in his own home Church as well as a formal and Church planting specific training course, as preparation for the new work. In addition, his own Pastor played a role that he described as "more like mentoring" than coaching, but a supportive role was planned and in place. Matthew had a less formal collaborative arrangement with his sending Denomination, but this relationship was collaborative in the sense that it assisted him to access key conference input and in providing supervision throughout the Church planting process. Therefore, the nature of the access as outlined in the literature is verified to be as relevant in this Australian Church planting context as it is in its original situation.

Finding Two: the supportive role played by the spouse of the Church planter was important to the success of planting.

There was a strong view that emerged in this study in the interviews relating to the role that the spouse played in the process of Church planting. Not only were they seen to be key players in the decision making process to commence the work, but were also involved in some way at every point. One spouse, (Priscilla), was seen by her husband and herself as a Church planter in her own right. Another planter (Matthew) would not have begun the work initially had his wife (Sarah) not been supportive of the decision. This study found that the views of the spouses were taken into account in matters relating to the work of establishing the new Church. This emerging issue that confirms the importance of the supportive role of the spouse requires understanding and acknowledgement by those who send Church planters to their work. It should also be considered along with every other factor relating to the access of ongoing support, training, coaching and formation.

A contribution to theory and practice relating to access:

Each Church planter involved in this study had a unique view of the world around them and, it is ventured, of the skills that they need to do their work. The wide variety of Church planters who participated in this study, would present an argument that a wide variety of training types and modes are required to maximise the development of new skills and formation in Church planting leaders. The advantage for a Church planter who has a collaborative relationship with a sending Church or Denomination, may be that those who support the Church planter are able to source and even develop

training options that will match the desired outcomes for the Church planter and negotiate these with them. Those without such a relationship in place, have to manage this alone. Therefore the process of identifying and weighing the value of training as well as the unique challenges that constantly arise in Church planting, may mean that this important decision will not always receive the attention it deserves. Aquila and Deborah did not undertake training decisions beyond the informal type of conferences, peers and personal research. Whereas James and Luke who were assisted with training before they began have both gone on to further training options.

This research found that some Church planters are being left to their own devices when deciding on and accessing, training, coaching and formation relationships that they would like to develop. This was the opposite to the experience of the Church planters in the US, Europe and UK where the research showed a greater level of intentionality among sending Churches and Denominations (Smith, 2007; Appleton, 2008). The difference in Australia may have a lot to do with the motivation for commencing the Church planting work in the first place, and, the tendency for some Church planters to enter their work without any collaborative relationships in place. For example, Deborah and Luke were disillusioned with their experience of the Church and their motivation for Church planting may have come at least in part, through that disappointment. Others, like Aquila admitted that there was simply no-one else to provide the leadership needed and so he and his wife took up the role. The supports these three participants employed were informal including peer networks and the relationships within their Church planting teams. Whereas James and Matthew who were in supportive relationships with their sending Church or Denomination found their support in those same informal peer networks and team relationships, but added the extra “layer” of support in coaching as supervision or mentoring.

This study points to the possibility that Australian Church planters and sending Churches and Denominations in this country, might usefully seek to develop collaborative relationships that identify and arrange access to training and coaching that will encourage formation. Such a development would intentionally address the preparation and sustaining of Church planters. This needs to be done intentionally and be carefully planned. This collaborative and intentional approach applied in James’ case and this might become a template for what is required.

7.3 Limitations and Delimitations

This section addresses the delimitations and limitations associated with this study and describe ways in which these were addressed and what the potential impact they may have upon the study.

7.3.1 Limitations.

The first limitation relates to certain difficulties that are experienced in using a mixed method design. A mixed method design is labour intensive; a lengthy process; and, the researcher has to constantly decide which aspects arising from the quantitative and qualitative results, require further investigation. However, in this case, the researcher's prior contact with the participants, provided a clear advantage, in that he already had an extended observation time of them as leaders, and of the work to which they were committed. This familiarity though, had potential negative impacts on the data. Firstly, that interpretation may be made on the basis of the prior contact and not on the data itself. To address this, the participants who volunteered for the interviews, were sent the descriptive analysis of their interview in the form of a case study based on the data from their interview, to check for accuracy. Given this limitation however, it is not possible to generalise about the views of Church planters on the themes of this study, in the rest of Australia.

Secondly, the number of participants involved in this purposeful selection is small, and therefore, it is not possible to generalise about what views of training, coaching, formation and access may exist in wider and larger studies. In response, the researcher, on the basis of the critical issues emerging from the literature, developed the questions for the interview phase from an initial examination of the results of the questionnaire, after it had been completed.

Thirdly, the study invited only Australian Church planters to be involved, and therefore as a result, this study cannot generalise about the views of Church planters in other contexts. In addition, the participants came from only a small number of Denominations in Australia, and therefore, the findings may not necessarily be applicable across all Denominations in this country.

Fourthly, because the questionnaire in this research was self-administered, there was no possibility for the researcher to be present to address any confusion or lack of clarity regarding the items. In most research studies the preference is for a longer

questionnaire as a way of bringing in better volumes of data for the researcher. However, one of the limitations of a longer questionnaire is that participants may be de-motivated about completing it, due to the extended time and effort required. Educational researchers report a response rate of 50% or better is desirable, and acknowledge that this rate will fluctuate (Creswell, 2005). In this respect, the response rate was influenced positively by the decision of the researcher, to limit the participants, to those already known to him or the staff of *The Training Centre*.

7.3.2 Delimitations

There are three delimitations that have been identified, as relevant to this research. First, only those who were involved in the process of leading as Church planters were invited to respond to the questionnaire. This ensured that the data came from leaders of this type of work and not from those only associated in a supporting role with the task of Church planting. Second, while this research looked at the preparation of a Church planter, it focussed specifically on their training, coaching, formation and access experiences. It did not therefore, address any ministry model employed by the Church planter, nor did it address the assessment of Church planters that may be employed prior to the commencement of a Church planter in his/her work. Future research might therefore investigate a wider range of factors that may be considered relevant to the Church planting process, but these were not included in this study. Third, the participants were all Australian Church planters who had experience of Church planting in Australia.

The section to follow will outline what are considered as areas that may be addressed in future research projects on Church planting in Australia.

7.4 Future possibilities for research

There are three main areas worthy of consideration for future research. Further research might be considered into the benefit of assessment of prospective Church planters before they begin, to confirm their viability for the role; future research into the role of the spouse in the support of a Church planter might be considered; and, the motivation behind the decision to plant and whether this can become a negative factor might also be usefully investigated.

7.4.1 Assessment

This study of perspectives about training, coaching, formation and access for Church planters in Australia found that not every Church planter involved had been prepared specifically for their role as a Church planter. It also found that not every participant entered a coaching relationship or were in a collaborative relationship with a sending Church or Denomination. However, the US research by Stetzer & Bird (2009) for example, referred to a process known as assessment being used to identify those who are suitable to be Church planters and points clearly to this factor as something that contributes strongly to the overall effectiveness and viability of both the Church planter and the new Church. This study was not large enough to incorporate this aspect. However, a broader study that considered assessment would potentially help the leaders of sending Churches and Denominations and the Church planters themselves, to prepare effectively. This research may lead to a greater understanding of what specific benefits assessment might bring to Australian Church planters. For example it might provide the context for identifying the kind of training, coaching and formation that a particular Church planter may require.

7.4.2 The role of the spouse

The role of the spouse emerged from the interviews. In three of the five interviews the importance of the spouse to the Church planter was noted. It was not a focus of this study. However, a larger study of Church planters across Australia, that would investigate support issues for Church planters including the role of the spouse in more depth, would be helpful to those who send Church planters into their work. This further study should be focussed on the role of the spouse but may also address the interplay between the spouse and that of the coach, mentor and/or supervisor.

7.4.3 Motivation for planting

Two of the five Church planters (i.e. Deborah and Luke) who were interviewed reflected on a level of dissatisfaction with their local Church prior to starting their new faith community. A study that looked into the area of motivation for Church planting across the whole nation is recommended. There are two reasons for recommending this research. First, it is not understood what role a negative motivation for Church planting may play in the ongoing health of a new Church and its leader. An increased

understanding of this matter will help to develop appropriate counselling and pastoral support. The other reason is that the motivation may be healthy and yet inappropriate for the individual. It is possible that some Church planters are beginning with the right intentions and motivation but without fully understanding themselves and this may be destructive for them. Further research would inform this importance aspect of support for those in the Christian ministry known as Church planting.

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APPENDIX ONE
INFORMATION LETTER



INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: The impact of training and coaching on church planters in Australia

NAME OF STAFF SUPERVISOR: Dr Paul Hansen

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: Rev Colin Stoodley

COURSE: Masters of Education Research

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in some research on church planting in Australia and, in particular, the impact two key elements in that work have on those involved in church planting. It is being undertaken for the completion of a Masters of Education Research. This project is investigating the way that that training and coaching contribute to the effectiveness of church planters in an Australian context. The purpose of the research is to ascertain the impact that training and coaching have on a church planter within the Australian context.

Four participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire on their experiences in church planting. These participants will be chosen by the Student Researcher in consultation with the research supervisors on the basis of the perceived ability of the participants to provide data that is relevant to the key questions relating to the research. Following this, the participants in this research will be interviewed and the transcripts of this interview included with the questionnaire as part of the data for this research. The questionnaire will be forwarded by mail and a return paid envelope provided. The interview, which will occur some time later, will be held at a mutually convenient time and a mutually convenient location.

- **Background questionnaire:** This questionnaire asks of you some introductory detail on your experience as a planter. It is estimated that this questionnaire may take between 30 and 40 minutes to complete.
- **Interview:** The interview will follow up on the details given in the questionnaire and allow the participants to add more information on their experiences, specifically in the areas of training and coaching. This interview will be audiotaped and may last up to one hour. The transcript of this interview will contain no personal identification and the tape will be held secure at the Australian Catholic University Banyo Campus.

The potential benefits for participants are that they may gain a greater understanding of the value of their own experience and contribute to research that will contribute to greater effectiveness in church planting in this country. In addition, they will be contributing to worthwhile research that may be published which will be the first of its kind in Australia and there are no foreseeable risks for any participant involved in this research.

It is emphasised that participation in this study is for the purposes of data collection and this study will not attempt to provide any specific answers to any issues the participant may have with their work.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any stage without giving a reason. If you take the decision to withdraw there will be no disadvantage to you in any future communication or work with the Student Researcher or The Pines Training Centre. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study and in any report of the study. All participants will be given a code and names will not be retained with the data. Individual participants will not be able to be identified in any reports of the study, as only the aggregated data will be reported.

If you have any questions about the project, before or after participating, please contact the Staff Supervisor, Dr Paul Hansen on 07 3623 7226 in the School of Education, McAuley Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 1100 Nudgee Road, Banyo Qld 4014.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or you have a query that the Student Researcher and Staff Supervisor have not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

C/- Research Services

Australian Catholic University

Brisbane Campus

PO Box 456

VIRGINIA QLD 4114

Tel: 07 3623 7429

Fax: 07 3623 7328

Any complaint will be treated in confidence and will be fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you are willing to participate, please sign the attached consent forms. You should sign both copies of the consent form and return one copy to the student researcher or staff supervisor and the other copy is for your records. Your participation in the research project will be most appreciated.

Rev. Colin Stoodley
Student Researcher

Dr Paul Hansen
Staff Supervisor

APPENDIX TWO
ETHICS CONSENT FORM



Australian Catholic University

Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne
Australian Catholic University Limited

ABN 15 050 192 660

Brisbane Campus (McAuley at Banyo)

1100 Nudgee Road Banyo

Queensland 4014 Australia

PO Box 456 Virginia

Queensland 4014 Australia

Telephone

Facsimile

www.acu.edu.au

CONSENT FORM

Copy for Participants to Keep

TITLE OF PROJECT: The impact of training and coaching on church planters in Australia

STAFF SUPERVISOR: Dr Paul Hansen

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Rev. Colin Stoodley

COURSE: Master of Education Research

Participant's section

I (*the participant*) have read (or where appropriate have had read to me) and understood the information in the letter to the participants invited to be a participant in this research. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to complete the questionnaire that may take between 30 and 40 minutes to complete and that the completion and return of this questionnaire will constitute consent. I understand that the audiotaped interview may take up to one hour to complete and that I can withdraw at any time from this process.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way. I agree to be contacted by telephone if needed to arrange a mutually convenient time to complete the research task and to provide my telephone contact details to the researcher.

Name of participant: (block letters)

Phone contact:

| |
|-----------------------------|
| Signature:Date: |
|-----------------------------|

Research Student: Rev. Colin Stoodley

Signature:Date:

Staff Supervisor: Dr Paul Hansen

Signature:Date:

APPENDIX THREE

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

For each question please choose from the following - 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4= Agree; 5=Strongly Agree by circling your response.

Name: _____

1. Time spent being prepared for my role as a church planter was helpful.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Training for my role as a church planter was good preparation for me as a church planter.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Coaching helped me with the strategic aspects of my role as a church planter.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I learnt important skills from the training I received before I began as a church planter.

1 2 3 4 5

5. The experience I had with a coach made the training I had received more valuable to me.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I believe that personal formation is crucial to me in my work as a church planter.

1 2 3 4 5

7. I received, in my training, instruction that led to the development to my formation.

1 2 3 4 5

8. There has been more effect on the formation of my life through the process of my ministry than in the training I received before I began as a church planter.

1 2 3 4 5

9. My coaching experience as a church planter convinced me that I need a coach in whatever work I am doing.

1 2 3 4 5

10. From my experience, getting training before you begin as a church planter is the best option.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I was offered training before I began my role as a church planter by my sending church/denomination.

1 2 3 4 5

12. I asked for and received training before I began as a church planter by my sending church/denomination.

1 2 3 4 5

13. I asked for training but was not given training before I began as a church planter.

1 2 3 4 5

14. I was not offered training before I began my role as a church planter by my sending church/denomination.

1 2 3 4 5

15. My sending church/denomination helped me find a suitable coach for me while I was a church planter.

1 2 3 4 5

16. I have been involved as a church planter –

0-1 years

1-3 years

3-5 years

5+ years

17. This is my first role as a church planter.

Yes / No

18. I have been involved in church planting for –

1 new church

2 new churches

3-4 new churches

5+ new churches

19. I don't believe I need either training or coaching to do the role of a church planter.

1 2 3 4 5

20. If I ever become church planter again I will make sure that I receive both training and coaching.

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX FOUR

CASE STUDY TRANSCRIPT
(One example included)

This is a recording of the interview with Aquila for the research on church planters in Australia. Good afternoon, Aquila,

*Ok. Aquila we've got a couple of straight-forward questions to ask you first that we've been able to send to you. Could you give us a description of any new churches established under your leadership? I know you and I have had some contact but, for the purpose of the research, could you assume I don't know anything?
(Place names are deleted from the transcript and pseudonyms used in the thesis itself)*

Ok, Sure. 1989 I started a church in (vvvv) on the coast of NSW. It was a (nnnn) Centre traditionally but we looked at a Community church with a (nnnn) connection. So that was planted then. From there in about 2005 we planted a church in another nearby centre in (www) and then in 2008 we planted again out of (vvvv) into another centre nearby, about 30km away in a place called (xxxx), we planted a church there.

Is there any other work in the planning process that you're looking at?

We're looking to continue to plant. We have a vision to plant in ten of these little country towns around our region. Next year we're probably going to start intensive work: I mean, we've already done some background work, intensively working in a place called (yyyy). We're looking at building a strategic hub out of (vvvv), (xxxx) and (yyyy), those being sort of the three biggest centres and then planting out of those three into other centres in the area.

Thanks. Can you describe the process whereby you came to be the leader? Initially you mentioned work starting up in 1989. Can you describe the process that led to you becoming the leader of that group?

Well A) Ask God or B) There was nobody else who was around to do any of the work.

Right

So, we moved to the district with the idea of being involved in the local church but because the local church wasn't there we built our own.

Right.

It's something God called us to.

Ok. The first church plant you mentioned?

(vvvv).

What was after that?

(www).

Now you would've been the primary planter for that work, I would presume?

Yeah. The story was, though, that we had done a lot of ministry work in the (www) community over a number of years from the (vvvv) base and some of the key figures from the (xxxx) community actually invited us on the basis that there was a lacking in their community. They felt that something had happened. I mean, traditionally country churches have been closing down faster than they've been starting up and they thought there was a lacking in the community and, because we had a basis in the community doing some ministry work, they invited us to come start services up. So, yes, my wife and I were the primary planters. We initially, probably, were just doing church but that led us to be able to build a team locally and send leaders, send a team.

So that pretty much stands alone now?

Right.

Describe some of the challenges and rewards that you've experienced in this whole business of planting.

I think the greatest challenge is there's a number. Number 1: you don't belong anywhere, you belong everywhere. So you lose a little bit of a church family when you have three separate churches. You're kind of a visitor of three churches rather than belonging to any one particular church family. Juggling your time is a challenge. Developing local leaders and training leaders is an ongoing challenge. Working within the pool of people we've got. I mean, these are small communities of 500 people. We don't have a huge pool to work from. Probably the different cultures of the three different towns and being careful not to translate something that works in one culture into another is a challenge. But however, all of those are overwhelmed by the joy of seeing people discover Jesus in a place where they were not discovering before. Also, secondly, seeing leaders blossoming and develop in their giftings in a way that they would have never done if we hadn't planted.

Excellent. What about any advice, before we get into any specifics, any advice you would give to those planning to be a planter?

Make sure it's of God. You can do a lot of things with your own energy but, if this is not of God, then it's not going to work. Stay very, very closely connected to God: it's essentially a spiritual thing rather than an organizational thing. However, third piece of advice would be, be really organized. I guess with three plants we have to be extra organized because we're overseeing three plants and, with plans to do more, so working out time is part of the organisation but you've got to know what you're doing. You've got to be trained. And probably the last thing is perseverance.

Ok. Thanks for that. Now we come to some of the training and coach's experiences mentioned in some of the documentation I sent you.

Yeah

If you had specific planting training before you began your work as a leader of a church. Did you?

No

Did you undertake 'on the job' training?

Not formally. We worked very, very intensively reading and asking questions for any issue we didn't know how to deal with but we didn't have any formal training.

So there's no formal training either before you began or really since?

Right. We had conferences and conversations.

Ok. Have you had general ministry training?

No.

Right. Would you think, given what you know of church planting now, is general ministry training sufficient for a church planter?

I would think so because a lot of things like knowing your Bible and knowing people are universal. However a lot of instinctiveness of planting; it's really important that you understand planting rather than just pastoring a church.

Right.

You gotta know more about the culture, more about evangelism, more about building from scratch, more about being alone; all those sorts of things. So I think the specifics about planting are not the same.

Ok, so you'd say some of those specifics would be useful to get access to?

Specifics yes.

Could you list those specifics again?

Understanding culture, how to investigate the culture of the place when you go to plant. Leadership development, that would be under that.

Yes, ok. Alright did you have coaching in your experience of planting so far?

Not formally, no. Same deal. We've done it informally and we've had conversations as we've gone.

So, no, your denomination didn't offer you coaching?

No. I don't think our denomination has coaching for planters.

Right. Ok. So you have sought a coach formally but you have informally?

Yeah. I think the reason has been there isn't a ready pool of coaches available for planters in our denomination. I think that's because we did the first plant. We were 15 years into the first plant without anything being available. So we had our own culture and finances rather than looking to the denomination to solve the answers.

Right. Ok. So no formal training or coaching and so you haven't had any particularly negative experiences with coaches because basically you haven't had formal relationships. Is that right?

No, no negatives.

Right. Ok. Well now, moving on from that, seeing that you didn't have either specific planter training or coaching what brought about your decision to get into church planting without that to prompt you? Was it just, as you mentioned before, just a sense of a call from God, is that what it was?

That, definitely which was a very distinctive call for both Priscilla and I to say that we had to plant. But that was probably caused by a general dissatisfaction for church. We had everything in place for a healthy church, thinking that we should be responsible for people from other districts, when the reality was no-one was going to travel from other districts to come to a successful church.

Right

It just wasn't happening. So that dissatisfaction with how to make the attractional model work, which we're not against. With the dissatisfaction there to prompt us to go to there.

Right. One of the things that's been interesting in the documents that I've sent to you is that school development is seen differently by different planters. I'm interested in how you see it. There are skills, as you mentioned before, and you've addressed them by informal means but how have you gained skills? Can you give me just a little bit more on how you've gained skills for the work you're doing?

I can remember a time when we came upon a problem we didn't know and we rang up some friends we had in ministry and asked them: What did you learn at Bible College about this? And they said: "We didn't actually cover it."

Right

So we started pretty much by saying ok, there's got to be an answer out there that we don't know, we got to find them because we can't necessarily turn to somebody who may intervene and have easy answers for us. We are very wide readers: we read a lot. We're huge fans of leadership material and we're subscribed to "Leadership". You know, we're very determined to find answers. We tried to go to lots of conferences. We're committed to learning; probably any answers we've come up against have been to a problem we've had to solve. So it's been practical.

Right. Sometimes people use the word 'mentor' and we at the Training Centre use the word 'mentor' to apply to a person that assists with personal learning goals plus character. And coaches, coaches to develop skills. Now you had no-one that's taught, that's been alongside of you, have you, to do any of that, have you?

I haven't had any particular mentor or coach. We've called on anybody who will listen to us.

So that informal process again?

Yeah, informal process. We probably have a mentor or one person who would give us leadership advice. You know? So no one particular person, just anyone we knew who could find the answer.

Right. Thank you. The next group of questions gather data about specific advantages that planters believe have been added to the effectiveness to their church planting through accessing designated planting. Now this will be different for you because you haven't actually done that formally. What sort of advantages were brought to you? What skills do you think you've been able to, by that informal means that you mentioned before, what skills do you think you have added to yourself as applying to church planting?

The first thing that comes to mind would be growing leaderships, understand conflict resolution, building teams using people and their gifts. All about building church leaderships. That would be something we have seen dramatic changes in so we have worked on making that better. I would think that we are very active in our study, bible study, so I think that would be number two. Not sure there's any other big things in challenges that come up. It's more to do with the little issues: how you deal with them, you know.

Right. Those skills could easily be argued as being relevant to all aspects of Christian ministry.

Yeah.

Were there any skills that you've added that you think are specifically relevant to church planting?

I would think things like vision is very much bigger than Christian ministry vision. So, yes, figuring out how to build our vision and how to build our team would be a big one.

Right. And the leadership's development? That, you've mentioned that a few times, would that be something that's specifically relevant.

Yes, because we're developing teams with local people in different communities so we're looking for people who can do the job. And so it's not so much looking at spots with church or within a ministry role: it's more, you know, where do we find leaders that can stand?

That's been really a pivotal underpinning of what's happened so far.

Yeah.

In terms of the effectiveness of those skills of developing teams, I mean how do you rate yourself there now?

I want to know more. I want to build better teams. However, I think if I'm objective enough to think that, I'm drawing a very small pool and as, initially, our leaders are people that have been saved under our ministry process, discipleship ends up as a process of leadership. So I think that we probably have, considering we have three churches in a total population of 3000 people.

If you received coaching, you received informal coaching, is there any advantage from that informal process that you've gained?

I think that, if we'd had formal coaching, we could have planted a lot quicker, a lot easier.

What makes you say that?

I think sometimes we came the long way round to try and find things. We didn't have a map. Who knows how the Spirit works. I think it would have been easier and less convoluted, certainly in the first fifteen years. We planted one church and didn't realise we would plant another. So I think if we'd had coaching or had known the right questions to ask Him we would have been able to move faster.

It's hard to estimate the value to the new churches, as well as yourself, of any training informally. Thinking about it, what has been the value to (www) and the others? What's been the value to them of this informal process that you've been experienced?

I think it's been that we've been modeling. A lot of their leadership development has been in watching us. I think it's been important for them to watch us and put these things into practice. They are going to be better at planting than us.

And you could be a good coach?

Yes.

How do you recognize a good planter?

Someone who is too dumb to say no! We look for people with character. For people who persevere in adversity. For people with a heart for a local community. Sometimes we parachute people into a local community: someone with a heart for that area. I think a planter has got a character to be accountable. There's a whole bunch of things that we grow in them. But what I am looking for in them is strong character and a heart for the community

The final three questions are general ones. From your experience, what are the key issues facing a leader as they start a new church?

There is a lot of work for little regard in kingdom building work and I think there is a challenge for endurance and a clear sense of where God is calling you. Knowing where you are going and what you are doing is what God wants you to do; and continuing to be faithful with what God wants you to do even if you are not seeing results.

How have you personally addressed challenges like that?

We've struggled with those but I think we have thought that all these things are about eternal values. You remind yourself that there is better things ahead and you must keep pushing.

Which has proven more value to you as a planter, the skills or the personal formation?

I think they are equal. The formation kept us there while we developed the skills. If we had been trained in the skills earlier I think then that would have been a benefit to us. But the skills are not as important to us for our survival as personal formation has been.

Are you saying the formation is critical for survival?

For endurance. Perseverance.

You may end up being a mentor or a coach given you have a number of plants growing up around you – what kind of things would you do for them?

We do training. We talk a lot about training about leadership skills. But at the end of the day we most try to model everything you need to be a planter. We would continue to work closely with people, which is what a coach does. I think the coach and mentor are wrapped up in one in the way we do it. We talk about family life as much as we talk about leadership skills.

You have a training process that you have been developing?

Yes – It's more to do with situations. As someone comes up with an issue we ask how we are going to address this issue.

It's just-in-time training?

Yes, but not exclusively. We also look at expanding on topics; to work through a book together and go to a conference together.

How can leaders who start new churches be made more effective as they do their work?

I don't think I can add anything to what I have already said on that. I think coaching and mentoring is really important. We are too old and these things were not invented when we started. But I think that it would help a lot. I wouldn't undervalue that at all.

So you would encourage those new guys to get training and coaching?

Yes. We work very much as their coaches. We work with them looking at other options helping them to look for their own answers.

To be life-long learners?

Yes. Very much.

What is the dominant leadership style of a planter?

Probably relational evangelism for a planter. But, for us, we looked to work at team building as very important for us because we were looking to plant again and again and again. The three skills a leader has to have is evangelism, organisational skills, relational and willing to work as a team.

Would you put that kind of relationship as being the key to a successful planter?

I don't think a lone ranger works in planter. You do have to have an individual strength to keep going but I don't think it's about being a lone ranger.

How would you describe your leadership style as a planter?

Tired! My leadership style – I am not by nature a team player. But I have taught myself and have seen the value of team work so I actually get more satisfaction out of building a team now than doing something myself. To me, my style would be team building.

From your experience and thinking of our country, what strategies from your experience would be important? Would training and coaching be up there?

Yes, I think. Just as valuable would be longevity. I think someone that wants to plant a successful church has to be prepared to stay in a community long enough to be part of that community; engaged and not just in for the short term to build and move. I think you have to be part of the community for the long term.

When we have talked prior to this interview there has been a lot of discussion about what we have learned about ministry. Is there a metaphor that applies to yourself?

I want to say to my people: "I am not the shepherd guarding the sheepfold from the wolves." I would rather teach the sheep to go out and catch wolves! I don't particularly identify with the shepherd. I don't think it's my role in the church or my calling to be just caring for a bunch of sheep. I'm not being disparaging about and I understand the role of pastoral care but my role is to train people to do the pastoral care. Team coach is probably a better word.

You have seen some of the documentation I have sent you. Do you have any insights about the research you have been a part of so far?

I found it interesting but nothing to add.

Thank you for taking the time my friend to answer those questions.

This is a recording of an interview with Deborah for research in the MEdR project about training and coaching church planters in Australia. Welcome, thanks for taking the time to talk to me.

First of all, could you describe the new church that's been established under your leadership?

The church we're talking about, 200 people attend but we have a service of about 140 and we have a range of ages. We have some babies and children, people in their thirties, probably 50 in that age group. We've got a lot of parents who come. We've got some family church. We've got some people in their sixties to eighties as well and it's mainly white Australians, probably middle class.

When was the work planted?

First Sunday in January 2000 and this will be its 11th year.

Did you do this on your own or did you have a team with you?

We stayed with a team, a few couples. We started out with 12. We had a few people who would give their house on a Sunday. We had about 23 there and that's probably where it started; and those 23 are still there today

You were saying you had a team of 12 in the beginning.

No 10. We had a team of ten, 5 couples. This has formerly been a Bible study group that we ran and that group was just for exploring what God was saying to us and leading us to and we've been doing that for a few years; and I had a call unexpectedly asking if I was interested in starting a (nnnn) church in (xxxx). We thought God was leading us somewhere and we thought God wanted us to start a mission in that area and so we spoke to the couples and they'd all had different feelings God has called them to something but didn't know any specifics.

This process took a couple of years you were saying?

The actual starting of the church.

Yeah the process in order that you recognised you knew what God wanted you to do.

Yeah probably only, I mean, I've been unsettled in the church for a while but as far as the idea goes for being on a mission, for 3 or 4 months we'd been feeling that God really wanted something of us. So for about 3 or 4 months there was a big cry for that. We'd been unsettled in our own church for quite a while.

This kind of work has incredible challenges and rewards, just give us hints of some of those challenges and rewards with this new church.

Probably the greatest reward is seeing new people come to the church and find the Lord. We started in an inner suburb where there was no church and we really tried hard to reach people and it wasn't an easy suburb and, probably from that, a few families came and probably 3 families came and found the lord. And those families went on to do mission work and they came back and they were probably really the town, I mean, they went to the local hotel. They're still strong. Another family came but then got caught up in other things. I mean, you see an incredible conversion and leadership and that's a great reward. That's probably been a great reward, to know the Lord and see the Lord become part of the church. It probably takes a bit to, you know see through conversion and upcoming plants from other churches. That's an incredible thing. The challenges is the fact that time is challenging and because of there's so many people, the original leaderships team had great hearts but probably a range of skills not all of which were maybe able to grow the church. There were probably some gaps there upon the church. So we had some key leaders. Out of the original five couples four couples up till the end of this year have been in the team and then one couple who have been really a major couple have stepped down from the team. So that was personally disappointing. And it will be challenging when you lose a key leader like that. So now the challenge comes. One leader can grow a church to fifty and we have four leaders and they can grow it to 200 and that has been significant when you consider that none of us have been fulltime. But, we recognise that the challenge is that we can't keep it growing and that's where I have been praying and looking at it at the moment.

Thank you for that. The next three questions seek information on whether some specific training and coaching has been accessed. I will read these questions and you can give your account. Did you have specific training before you began your work as a church planter?

Not church planter training. I have been trained as a (minister) some years before but there has been no training as a church planter at all. So it was just us seeking people out, going conferences. We had no training from the (nnnn) and we probably weren't mentored or coached along the way at all.

Given your experiences as a planter do you think general ministry training is sufficient?

I think that obviously there are certain skills that you can learn that you don't already have. Probably there are things that I don't know about. But I think the key thing for anyone that is planting a church is they basically become very good at listening to God. He is the One who is going to grow the church. He didn't say I would grow the church He said He will and so therefore I think there is a danger that you think that you can do it or your skills can do it and it's not. Its only God will do it. So yes, while God does develop us and training will help, I think that the times when the church really advances is when we are on our knees and we are hearing from God the most. I'm not being trite about that but that is the reality. Regardless of how well you are trained, and training is good, I don't that but, if you don't keep your devotional life

strong and if you don't listen to God no-one is going to see a Church grow because it is God who will grow the Church.

Thank you. I just want to clarify that you have never accessed coaching?

No

If you had neither specific training or coaching there was a situation to repeat what the situation was that led you to lead a new church without it?

Yes, what it was, that we were dissatisfied where we were and we felt that that the leadership model was inappropriate and I felt that it turned people away from being involved in all aspects of what church life is. You just tended to just going along and just sitting there and not being motivated. But God convicted me that I needed to reach out and I asked what am I doing in this church – nothing changes in this church and we are not reaching out. Nothing is changing so why be here. So I was at a point where I don't change churches easily and I haven't done but I felt the heart of what we are called to is all the world and I wasn't going anywhere. So I felt concerned about that.

Thank you. A question that leads on from that. If I understand you correctly you are saying that the key thing was the call of God for you to plant?

Yes the call of God came and we felt that meant going into all the world

Yes. Now you've obviously had, since taking up that call, you've made yourself aware of resources and training and other things. Can you explain some of those resources?

We joined Willow Creek Association because we thought there was a lot of material and support there and, in doing that, attending conferences, accessing training sessions, things that we thought were important. A whole range of things. We also did training on natural church development and we used the core values and so that was a part of what we did: going to church, evaluating ourselves, and finding out where our trends were and what we needed to work on. Also we went joined a network of Hillsong and went to small groups and conferences and that was an extremely inspiring, helpful to network with other pastors and, you know, you could email and contact and ask questions and they'd get onto you so those things were very helpful.

So, rather than formal training could I summarise your comments as saying that you sought informal training?

Yes that's exactly right. So, yes, it is training. Rather than getting it from one institution.

Thank you, that's good. The last section begins with this question. From your experience, could you summarise the key issues or changes facing a leader as they start a new church?

Yep. I think that there are some pendulum swings as you go along in the church between evangelism and discipleship. You're trying to work on reaching new people,

things you're going to have, things you've going to have to reach people. Trying to draw them, trying to have opportunities where the Lord can draw them so you're constantly on evangelism and opportunities, relationships. So, particularly, when you're new, and you've got no-one, you're trying to reach out. You get caught up in that and the danger is, the challenge I guess, and our greatest weaknesses, because you get called up and you're spending so much time and energy with that the discipling of people doesn't happen. If you don't do that then you've got a lot of people that are interested and because you want to keep doing stuff that maintains people then you miss the time to develop people. I think the pendulum swings and we think we better go disciple more people and then you're not putting as much time into evangelism so just trying to balance and it becomes difficult especially when you haven't got much time.

Thank you. Can you tell me how quickly you personally dealt with that balancing act?

We tried to make, and it was probably difficult because, we didn't have a lot of people too strong at that time. We were trying to meet people, having them in our home and doing it for more and more people. These people have been strengthened over the years but it's taken a long time and this is where coaching and training and understanding would've been helpful and we're picking up now that it's taking a long time to deal with that we've been trained to consider these things a lot quicker.

How did you use the team to address that?

We gave every member of the team an area of responsibility: you had to be a leader of something. We had prayer, teaching, youth. All areas of the church and they would be responsible for that. They still needed monitoring and so we were still supporting these people and that's where I think, where it runs out. I really think that God's saying to me at the moment to really concentrate on growing leaders. So the leaders have to grow or we as a church are never going to grow rather just relying on what Ian and I can do.

Which is more valuable to you? The skills you have or the personal formation?

Definitely spiritual formation. Because that's been a passion, what keeps you. God is the passion of my heart. Spiritual formation keeps you growing and becoming stronger and stronger and will teach you; otherwise I think that skills alone won't do that.

How can leaders who start from your experience and observations be made more effective as church planters?

An accountability person who is someone that you respect and feel that you don't have to support but they can support you. Praying for them. We have a local pastor who helps us and she has been incredibly helpful. That's been really important. So having someone to be accountable to and you need to have, it's essential that you keep growing spiritually. There needs to be a way to ensure that happens and I think once you've training, understanding the dynamics of church and how that is

structured so that you're effectively reaching people and helping them to grow at the same time.

Thank you. If someone came to you and said Deborah I'm going to plant a church next week, what would your advice be?

Probably to have someone who can be a coach/ mentor and someone who would pray for them.

Thank you. What the dominant style of leadership in your opinion?

It's got to be someone who's not authoritarian at all; it's got to be relational. It's got to be understanding, come alongside, work with, be able to motive them and go forward.

What strategies from your experience would be important to encourage the establishment of more churches in our country?

I think to understand the need to get a vision for the lost. That's why we have stayed in the (nnnn) because of the vision and because, if you don't have a vision, no-one's going to start new churches. The reason for the church is to reach the lost and it's important to grow people so that they reach the lost. That's got to happen and that's the thing that made us go out into the world. Unless people capture that, they're not going to go anywhere. I was reading Wayne Cordeiro and he said we should be a battleship not a cruise liner. On a cruise liner everyone is just being entertained whereas on a battleship everyone has a job to do. When we get that vision for the lost we'll go out and plant more churches.

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questions.

APPENDIX FIVE

A GLOSSARY OF THE KEY TERMS USED

Glossary of Terms

| Term: | Definition: |
|-----------------|---|
| Church planting | This term describes the process of developing new faith communities as a means of bringing the message about Jesus Christ to people everywhere; |
| Attractional | A model of ministry where a Church provides services and ministries at a particular venue and invites people to come to a venue to be a part of those services and ministries; |
| Incarnational | A model of ministry where the focus of the ministries of the Church is formulated around going to the people in their area rather than waiting for them to come to the Church; |
| Training | A term used to describe a learning experience designed to develop new skills in the learner; |
| Coaching | A relationship that is designed to assist someone to apply new skills to their area of work or influence. This kind of relationship can be a significant factor that may enhance the foundational learning experience that the training provided; |
| Mentoring | In this thesis, mentoring will be treated as part of the section on coaching because, like coaching, mentoring is based on a key relationship and because the two terms are often used interchangeably; |
| Access | This term is used describe the opportunity given to the Church planter to get the training, coaching and formation that they desire; |
| Convicted | A term which describes the inner belief of the Church planter that God has indeed desired for them to do the task of Church planting; |
| Formation | In the case of Church planter, formation is viewed as a result of the activity of God in the person; |
| Assessment | An assessment process is used to identify suitable leaders for Church planting. It is a process that makes enquiries into the past and present personal habits of the prospective Church planters; |
| Denomination | The central governance of a group of churches sharing common doctrinal settings and ministry praxis. |

APPENDIX SIX**EXTENDED VERSION OF TABLE 5.1**

Table 5.1 (extended version) A summary of the backgrounds of the participants in interview process

| Name of participant | Experience as a Church planter | Context | Resources provided | Participant Qualifications | Number of Churches planted |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Matthew | Over 10 years | Suburban – major city | Funded by his denomination; | Matthew and his wife Sarah share this work. Matthew has general ministry training at undergraduate and post-graduate level and coaching/ supervision being provided by their denomination; | They have experience leading three new Churches; |
| Aquila | Over 20 years | Rural | Part funded from the Denomination but also worked to provide his support his work as a Church planter; | Aquila and his wife Priscilla share this Church planting work and have not had any training experiences or coaching relationship; | They have experience of leading four new Churches in their region; |
| Deborah | Over 10 years | Regional city | Worked in her profession to support her work as a Church planter; | Deborah received general ministry training but has no specific Church planter training or coaching; | She has been the leader in one new church plant; |
| Luke | Over five years | Regional city | Worked in a related field to support his work as a Church planter; | Luke has had specialised Church planter training as well as general ministry training. He has however, very limited experience of coaching; | He is still leading his first new Church; |
| James | Three years | Regional city | Part funding provided. James continued in his profession to support his work as a Church planter. | James received specific Church planter training and coaching and is presently undertaking general ministry training. | After three years leading one new Church he was re-appointed by his superiors to another area of ministry. |

