




<p>Introduction</p> <p>How do I know? PhD (Desire to be better)</p> <p>Why is this so? Ideal selves Imago Dei (Exemplary Jesus)</p> <p>Am I sure? Recently Baptised (General Protestant)</p> <p>Implications: Talking about God Viewing people</p> <p>Conclusion</p>		<h1>God! I want to be like you!</h1> <p>Dr Lynne Taylor Theology Programme, School of Arts, University of Otago lynne.taylor@otago.ac.nz https://linktr.ee/lynnetaylor</p>  <p>Thanks to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Jess Bent (RA), Assoc Prof Daryl van Tongeren (Psychology mentor) • University of Birmingham Cross Training (Fellowship, fellows, funding) • John Templeton Foundation (Grant funder)
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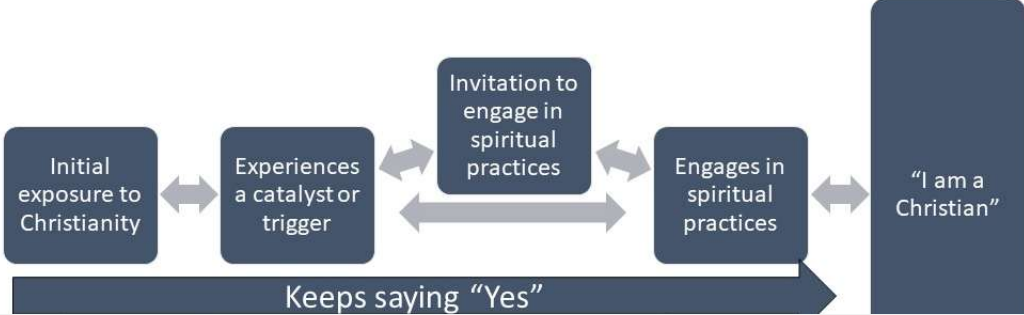


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How do I know this?

My PhD on recent converts (previous unchurched)

“Why do previously unchurched people become Christians today?”

- Grounded theory, open-ended questions, analysis (n=9)
- Desire to be a better person – self-discrepancy



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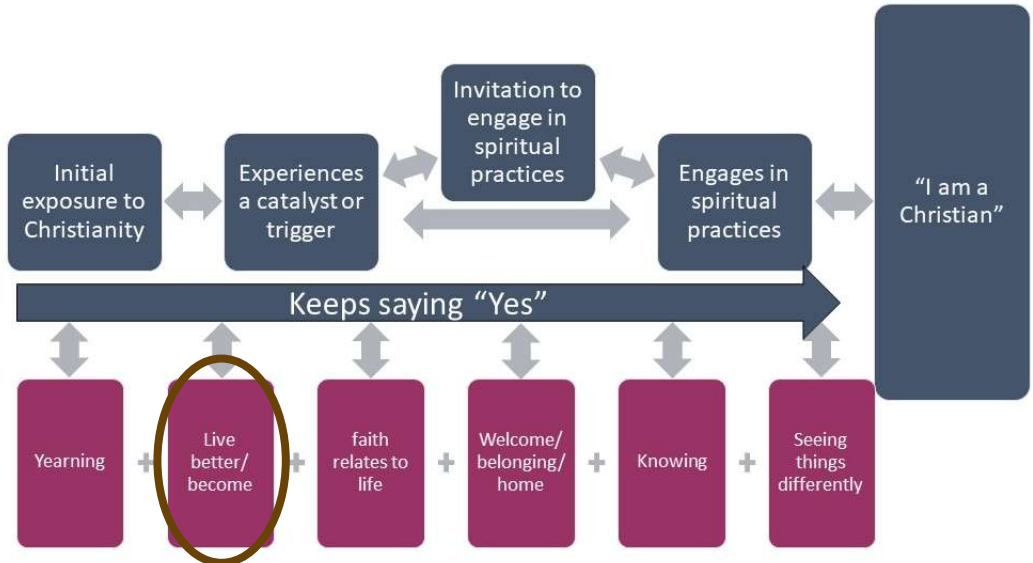
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graph LR
    A[Initial exposure to Christianity] <--> B[Experiences a catalyst or trigger]
    B <--> C[Invitation to engage in spiritual practices]
    C <--> D[Engages in spiritual practices]
    D <--> E["I am a Christian"]
    
    A --> F[Keeps saying "Yes"]
    B --> F
    C --> F
    D --> F
    E --> F
    
    F --- G[Yearning]
    F --- H[Live better/become]
    F --- I[faith relates to life]
    F --- J[Welcome/belonging/home]
    F --- K[Knowing]
    F --- L[Seeing things differently]
    
    G --- H --- I --- J --- K --- L
    
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Pilot study (recently baptised NZ Baptists) n=17

Online questionnaire

Beginning with open-ended questions


Used **God Attributes Measure (GAM)** we'd devised
(psychology tools, theology (inc Christian songs))

Inductive and deductive coding (helped refine GAM)

Everyone wanted to be like God


("Reflecting on what God is like makes me want to be more like God" – all agree/strongly agree)

(and identified priority of self-giving)




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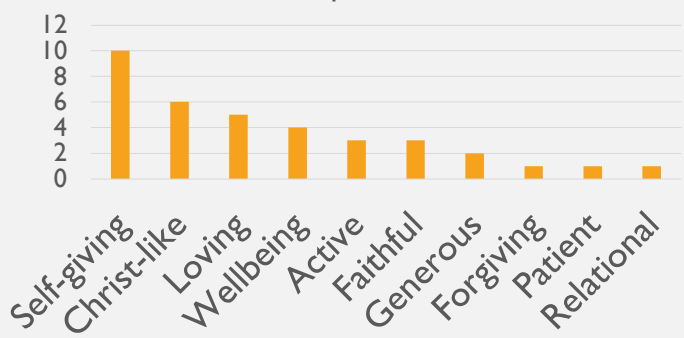
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Number of participants with each attribute-aspiration match




Attribute-Aspiration Match	Number of Participants
Self-giving	10
Christ-like	6
Loving	5
Wellbeing	4
Active	3
Faithful	3
Generous	2
Forgiving	1
Patient	1
Relational	1




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Main study (general Protestant population) n=123

Online questionnaire

Beginning with open-ended questions

Used refined **God Attributes Measure (GAM)**

Qualitative analyses

Statistical analyses



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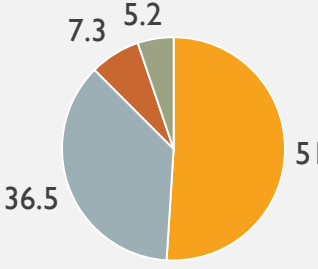
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Main study (general Protestant population) n=123

Reflecting on what God is like ...
Makes me want to be more like God




Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	51.0
Somewhat agree	36.5
Neither agree nor disagree	7.3
Somewhat disagree	5.2

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree
■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree




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People aspire to reflect attributes of God

- This can motivate faith formation
- This should shape evangelism (and worship and preaching)



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Want to explore more?

PAST 219/319

“Christian Witness in a Secular World” (Semester 1, 2027)



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